MUSIC, SIN, AND REDEMPTION
IN VICTORIAN VISUAL CULTURE AND LITERATURE

By

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In memory of John Stewart Allitt, 1934-2007

Theology has always had to be liberated through poetry, through music, and through images.

– *Peter Sellars*

What the word says, the image shows us silently; what we have heard, we have seen.

– *Seventh Ecumenical Council of the Catholic Church (Nicea, 787 A.D.)*

Abstract

MUSIC, SIN, AND REDEMPTION IN VICTORIAN VISUAL CULTURE

by

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"Music, Sin, and Redemption in Victorian Visual Culture" seeks to identify the ancient theological tropes of the identification of music with sin and of its abandonment with spiritual conversion, and to demonstrate the cultural persistence of these tropes into the modern era. The appearance of music symbolism in the socially-committed, quasi-religious paintings of the Pre-Raphaelites and their circle, especially in works that treat the prominent Victorian theme of the "fallen" woman, provides evidence that music's connection to both sin and redemption survived at least as late as the nineteenth century, and that, even more remarkably, it was translated fairly easily into the cultural lexicon (Protestant, materialist) of Victorian Britain. My study examines this type of music iconography in close readings of the paintings *The Awakening Conscience* (1853) by William Holman Hunt and *Take Your Son, Sir* (1851-1892, unfinished) by Ford Madox Brown.

Moreover, the association of the abandonment of music with religious awakening (a process of conversion that, in Renaissance iconography, evokes the symbolism of both Saint Cecilia abandoning worldly music Mary Magdalene abandoning music altogether) found its way into the narratives of at least two Victorian novels, George Moore's *Evelyn Innes* and *Sister Teresa*, as well as giving a

formal structure to the notable religious conversion of pianist and composer Hermann Cohen, who laid aside worldly music to become a Carmelite priest.

Compounding the persistence of the music-sin-redemption *topos* in visual and literary culture, advances in audio technology in the nineteenth century elevated the sense of hearing to a new level of importance, giving the idea of religious conversion accomplished "through the ear" (as, I argue, the famous fourth-century conversion of Saint Augustine was) a place in both the Victorian imagination and in the historical narrative.

PREFACE

This study seeks to identify and define a now-forgotten theological trope that can be traced to the time of the Jewish captivity in Babylon, that was elaborated upon by the fathers of the early Christian church, and that can, as I contend, be detected as late as the nineteenth century in the painting and literature of Victorian Britain. This trope associates music with sin, and the abandonment of music with spiritual awakening, conversion, and redemption.

My first chapter, "Music, Sin, and Grace," introduces the music-sin-redemption *topos*, examines its origins in the Old Testament and its subsequent development in the writings of Saint Augustine of Hippo and his contemporaries, and identifies its importance to the Victorians in an uneasy atmosphere of social reform and religious upheaval. In my second chapter, "Of Music, Magdalenes, and Metanoia in *The Awakening Conscience*," I offer a close reading of William Holman Hunt's famous painting, paying particular attention to its music iconography, which, I contend, is a sign of radical spiritual conversion. My third chapter, "Music, Mirrors, and Marian Doppelgängers," examines Ford Madox Brown's unfinished painting *Take Your Son, Sir* (with a focus, again, on its music imagery) in the context of the nineteenth-century Marian revival. Finally, my last chapter, "Transformed Hearing and Musical Conversion in the Nineteenth Century," explores the music-sin-redemption theme in both two novels by George Moore and the real-life conversion narrative of Liszt's protégé Hermann Cohen, in the context of the new importance ascribed to the sense of hearing in the nineteenth century.

I have a great many people to thank for their help (provided both intentionally and accidentally) with this work. First and foremost is my advisor, Barbara Russano Hanning, for whose seminar on music iconography I wrote the paper that became the germ of this dissertation. I also wish to thank Allan Atlas, my first reader, for his unstinting support (as well as for his friendship and his irreplaceable collaboration with me in our ensemble, the New York Victorian Consort), and Anne Humpherys, who, in spite of her initial misgivings about the scope of the subject matter, agreed to be my second reader, a very felicitous decision for this work. And many thanks to the faculty of the music department (with special thanks to John Graziano) for their support of my work during my years in the D.M.A. program in voice: performance at The Graduate Center.

The staff of the Interlibrary Loan department at The Graduate Center library has been unfailingly patient and helpful during these past three years. The collective wisdom of the members of the victoria-l listserv has contributed greatly to my own understanding of my subject. Therese Schroeder-Sheker, Nicky Losseff, Sunie Fletcher, Elizabeth Carolyn Miller, and James Blount Griffin each drew my attention to sources that became vitally important to my argument. Richard Leppert generously provided me with a photocopy of Edward Lear's song "Tears, Idle Tears," and the North American British Music Studies Association afforded me the opportunity to present my second chapter in its early stages as a lecture-recital-slide show at their inaugural conference in 2004. Ralph Locke suggested that I send this chapter to the *Journal of Musicological Research*, which published it in an earlier form in 2005. Roseanne Benjamin went above and beyond the call of friendship with

her helpful reading of the manuscript, and Jocelyn and Peter Jaquiery helped me find a footnote in an eighteenth-century German novel that has since been digitized.

Not only did my parents provide help with childcare expenses while I was writing, teaching, and taking care of my very spirited two-year-old; my father, George J. Grella, also served as my unofficial sounding board and go-to man for questions about Victorian literature and culture. My husband Robert has been very supportive of my work, and he and our son Rónán have been patient with my distractedness as a wife and mother during the time of my preoccupation with it.

I wish to thank my former employers at Data Design, Inc., Douglas Yasso and Dan Goldberg, whose generosity, flexibility, and understanding made it possible for me to attend the doctoral program in music at The Graduate Center; skilled businessmen, they are also true patrons of the arts, and I wish that everyone could have bosses like them.

Thanks are also due to Francesco Izzo, Hilary Poriss, Jesse Rosenberg, and Susan Boynton, dear friends and supportive colleagues who knew me first as a performer of nineteenth-century Italian music, and who later encouraged me in my scholarly work. Thomas H. Connolly, whose book *Mourning into Joy* provided inspiration not only for this work, but also for my life (and who has since become a friend), generously agreed to serve on my dissertation committee. Roger Duncan, Tom's colleague at the lay Benedictine foundation Promisek, has given me invaluable emotional support and encouragement during difficult stretches.

Special thanks to Laurence Roussillon, David Clifford, and Yeo Wei-Wei, who in 2001 gave me the first opportunity to present my work as a scholar when they

accepted my lecture-recital on "Victorian Italian" music in their conference, "The Rossettis: Cosmopolitans in Victorian London" at Cambridge University. I never dreamt at that time that I would one day be writing about the Rossettis themselves, nor that I would be studying nineteenth-century British music iconography, nor, indeed, that I would join these friends as a colleague in Victorian studies. I am grateful and honored to be in their company.

Finally, I would like to extend my gratitude to my late friend and mentor John Stewart Allitt, the dedicatee of this work, and to his widow, Eleanor, for the great practical kindness and spiritual fellowship they have shown me over the years. My friendship with John was all too brief, lasting from 2000 until his death in 2007, but his influence on my life has been incalculable. John was an art historian who was also a musicologist, and we met during a time when we were both involved in Italian music, he as a scholar, I as a performer. Later, we both began working on British music; John's last book (for his Italian publisher), *La musica classica inglese 1800 – 1960: Da Bishop a Britten*, was published the year before his death. He was a true scholar of humane letters and a true Christian, and his wordless example as both provided many lessons for me. In one of the many felicitous coincidences that surrounded the writing of this work, I discovered shortly before he died that John's home (known as Thickthorn Cottage) in Kenilworth, Coventry, England had been one of the outbuildings of Thickthorn House, from which the Princess Belgioioso wrote to Franz Liszt in the 1840s of her concerns about their mutual friend Hermann Cohen, the subject of Chapter 4. My last correspondence with John was about this matter. *Requiescat in pace.*

A.M.D.G.

A note on spelling

When referring to Saint Mary Magdalene, I have used the commonly accepted American spelling of her name, which places an *e* at the end of "Magdalene," rather than the British spelling, which does not. However, when quoting from British sources or citing titles of works, I have left the British spelling intact.

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MUSIC, SIN, AND GRACE

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Psalm 32 (Latin Vulgate Bible)

The old song belongs to our old selves, the new song is proper to persons made new. . . . .Brothers, sing well.
Saint Augustine of Hippo, *Commentary on Psalm 32*

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The primary concern of this study is an investigation of historical perceptions of the states of sin and grace, the possibility of flux between them, and the manner in which these concepts were represented in Victorian art and literature, with particular reference to the role played by music in these representations. The conflicting and sometimes coexisting states of sin and grace, especially where women were concerned, can be said to have been preoccupations, even *idées fixes*, of the Victorian mind, making frequent appearances in Victorian painting, poetry, novels, and plays. The Victorian concern for matters of female purity (and its opposite) was also reflected in the popular press and in sociological writings by reformers such as Henry Mayhew and William Acton. Moreover, the Victorian era saw the rise (and later the fading away) of a widespread movement for the rescue and reform of both prostitutes and "fallen" women of a less professional stripe. Homes and charities for the fallen proliferated, staffed mainly by middle-class lay women; a number of reform institutions were also opened by Anglican nuns. Some prominent men, too, were involved in rescue work: William Gladstone roamed the seedier sections of London by night in search of lost women to save, and Charles Dickens founded Urania Cottage, a halfway house that prepared penitent prostitutes for new lives in Australia.

The figure of the prostitute was without a doubt at the very forefront of the Victorian social and literary conscience, and

> [the] interest was directed not to the hardened professionals who had amused the dramatists of the Restoration . . . nor upon the rustic laxity of morals typified by Fielding's Molly Seagrim [in *Tom Jones*]. For the Victorian, it was the fallen woman wakened into remorse for her past actions, and yearning for forgiveness and compassion.[1]

It is with the representation of female sin and grace in Victorian visual and literary culture, particularly in two paintings, *The Awakening Conscience* by Pre-Raphaelite William Holman Hunt, and *Take Your Son, Sir*, by Ford Madox Brown, also a member of the Pre-Raphaelite circle, as well as in two novels, *Evelyn Innes* and its sequel, *Sister Teresa*, by George Moore, an Irish writer associated with the Symbolist and Aesthetic movements. The fallen woman was a touchstone in particular for the artists and writers who came to maturity in the 1840s and 1850s; she can, in fact, be seen as "one of the structural underpinnings for [an entire] generation."[2] This fascination with a female type whose presence in British society was of long, if not ancient, standing bears some consideration. Murray Roston argues that prostitution, although it emerged as a societal obsession in the Victorian era, was not much more prevalent in the mid-nineteenth century than it had been in the two centuries previous, although the cataloguing and classifying of its practitioners by

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[1] Murray Roston, *Victorian Contexts: Literature and the Visual Arts* (New York: New York University Press, 1996), 41.

[2] Roston, "Disrupted Homes: The Fallen Woman in Victorian Art and Literature," in *Homes and Homelessness in the Victorian Imagination*, ed. Murray Baumgarten and Hillel Matthew Daleski (New York: AMS Press, 1999), 91.

sociologists like Acton and Mayhew may have made it appear so; as early as 1725, Daniel Defoe had written that London was "swarming with strumpets."[3]

The gulf between the previous century's casual tolerance of illicit female sexuality and the Victorians' preoccupation with female fallenness and repentance is marked by the religious upheaval of the mid-nineteenth century. The crisis in faith, precipitated by revisionist theological scholarship, the archaeological findings of Charles Lyell, and the publication of *On the Origin of Species* by Charles Darwin, was countered by a reassertion of spiritual conviction, seen for example in the Oxford Movement, which advocated a return to ritual and sacramentalism in the Anglican Church, as well as in a number of conversions to the Roman Catholic Church among prominent British intellectuals. The revivals of ritualism and sacramentalism coincided with, and were informed by, a reawakening of interest in medieval culture, in which the Pre-Raphaelite painters self-consciously participated. Indeed, Pre-Raphaelitism, with its insistence upon a complex symbolic visual language that in its intricacy was reminiscent of medieval art, can itself be seen as "a rebellion against the [widespread] loss of religious faith,"[4] and its adherents' preoccupation with female sin and grace aligned them with a key concept in medieval theology, that of the flux of sin and grace in the sinner's soul.[5] Moreover, the Victorians clung to a belief in the possibility of moral rebirth, and were deeply disquieted by what they saw as the

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[3] Roston, *Victorian Contexts*, 45.

[4] Diane Apotolos-Cappadona, "Oxford and the Pre-Raphaelites from the Perspective of Nature and Symbol," *Journal of Pre-Raphaelite Studies* 2/1 (1982): 95.

[5] See Thomas H. Connolly, *Mourning into Joy: Music, Raphael, and Saint Cecilia* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), *passim*.

widening gulf between what one should do according to Christian principle and what one actually did do in the worlds of business and society. The novels of Dickens provided not only a troubling exposé of the brutal conditions of factory, workhouse, prison, and slum, but also a testament of faith in the possibility of total moral regeneration. Not only is redemption a major theme in virtually all of Dickens's works, but he also wrote sympathetically of prostitutes, endowing his fallen female characters, such as Nancy in *Oliver Twist* and Martha in *David Copperfield*, with a sense of moral nobility formerly reserved only for upper-class literary characters.[6]

I assert that among the salient motifs used by Victorian painters and writers to depict the states of both sin and grace, and the possible transit from one state to the other, were those of musical instruments and music-making. Thus the two paintings I discuss (as well as the two novels) employ music imagery to illustrate female vice and purity and the belief that the former might be transformed into the latter. I argue, therefore, that musical symbolism played a special part in the Victorian cultural lexicon: it could be used to show radical spiritual conversion. The use of music imagery in these works is evidence of the persistence of a much earlier art-historical and theological tradition that associated music with both sin and virtue. Further, I argue that this tradition survived into the modern era, translated from religious painting and apologetics to secular painting and the novel. While I do not diverge from what is accepted wisdom about the religious sentiments and intentions of the Pre-Raphaelites (William Holman Hunt, for instance, pledged "to use my [artistic]

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[6] See Fred Kaplan, *Sacred Tears: Sentimentality in Victorian Literature* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), *passim*.

powers to make more tangible Jesus Christ's history and teaching"),[7] I assert that their use of religious symbolism is even more complex than has been previously understood, as demonstrated in the representations of music and music-making in the canvases I examine. In short, I argue that in the works I discuss, music appears, in the words of Friedrich Nietzsche, like a "cunning saint which seduces us back to Christianity."[8]

As already noted, the mid-nineteenth century was a time of great spiritual unease: (1) the geological findings of Sir Charles Lyell, whose *Principles of Geology* (1830-33) demonstrated conclusively that the earth was much older than previously thought; (2) the dissemination of works of revisionist theology questioning the divinity of Jesus and the authority of Scripture, such as German theologian David Friedrich Strauss's *Life of Jesus* (1835, translated into English by George Eliot in 1846) and Ernest Renan's *Vie de Jésus* (1863); and (3) the publication of Darwin's *On the Origin of Species* (1859) all contributed to a growing and disquieting crisis of religious faith. Paradoxically, however, the era also saw an increase of spiritual conviction. Indeed, although the expansion of technological innovation and the rapid accumulation of industrial capital firmly established materialism as the most persuasive creed of the nineteenth century, the Victorian era, partly in response to this triumph of soulless materialism, was a period rich in religious conversions, and the conversion narrative, both fictional and autobiographical, emerged as a prominent

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[7] William Holman Hunt, *Pre-Raphaelitism and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood* (New York: AMS Press, 1967), 349.

[8] Alisa Clapp-Itnyre, *Angelic Airs, Subversive Songs: Music as Social Discourse in the Victorian Novel* (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2002), 18.

literary genre.[9] The phenomenon of conversion can be seen across mid-century British society in such events as the already-noted return to religious ritual advocated by the Oxford Movement, whose members (including John Henry Newman and Henry Edward Manning, both of whom later converted to Catholicism and were created cardinals by Pope Pius IX) were disillusioned with increasing secularism in the Anglican church; the restoration of monasteries (including the first Benedictine Anglican monastery) for the first time since Henry VIII had dismantled British monastic life in the sixteenth century;[10] a resurgence of Marian spirituality in both the Roman Catholic and Anglican Churches, aided by a spate of miraculous apparitions of the Virgin in France (the most famous being at Lourdes in 1858); and a growing belief among both Catholics and Protestants, borne out in the movements to aid the fallen, that only social reform on a massive scale could pave the way for the spiritual redemption of British society. My dissertation, then, is situated in the paradoxical context of Victorian doubt and faith, at the crossroads where nineteenth-century materialism meets nostalgia for the pre-industrial Christian past. One might say that the patron saints of my study are Saints Cecilia, whose symbolism associated her not only with music, but also with profound spiritual change, and Mary Magdalene, who, as I discuss in Chapter 2, was also associated with music, and who lent both her name and her image to the fallen women of the Victorian era. In the chapters that follow, I will demonstrate the ways in which the imagery of the two saints, particularly that

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[9] See Chapter 2, footnote 70.

[10] The restoration of the Carmelite order in England by Hermann Cohen is discussed in detail in Chapter 4.

imagery which alludes to music, persisted into the Victorian era as signposts of the alternating states of sin and grace.

My dissertation seeks to identify in particular the gesture in painting and literature of abandoning music, or, more specifically, of abandoning worldly music for divine music. This gesture, I contend, signals the moment of spiritual conversion, or peripeteia, which the historian Karl F. Morrison has called a " mysterious transformation of heart."[11] And since the intangible nature of music is an apt analogy for the ineffable motion of change of heart, spiritual conversion has long been portrayed in the West through the use of musical imagery. I show that this association persisted into modern times, and that it is revealed in the use of music symbolism in the art and literature of Victorian Britain. Morrison argues that conversion is an aesthetic experience, one that naturally makes the transition from being "a thing felt" to "a thing made"; that is to say, the phenomenon of conversion is readily translated into its own representation in a work of art.[12] In order to "compel the emotions" of the audience, art about conversion "must conceal itself";[13] in other words, it must guard the essential nature of its narrative content. The heavily symbolic artistic lexicon of the Pre-Raphaelites lends itself naturally to this simultaneous revelation and concealment; indeed, both of the paintings and both of the novels that I discuss at

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[11] Karl F. Morrison, *Conversion and Text: The Cases of Augustine of Hippo, Herman-Judah, and Constantine Tsatsos* (Charlottesville and London: University Press of Virginia, 1992), xii.

[12] Morrison, *Conversion and Text*, 3.

[13] Morrison, *Conversion and Text*, xiii.

once reveal and conceal the crucial motion of conversion through their use of music imagery.

The trope of abandoning worldly music for penitential purposes dates back to ancient times. A famous and powerful early example is found in Psalm 137, a lament of the Jews in Babylonian captivity. In the psalm, a temple singer describes the captives' grief, and, because of it, their refusal to sing for their masters:

> By the rivers of Babylon we sat mourning and weeping when we remembered Zion.
>
> On the poplars of that land we hung up our harps.
>
> There our captors asked us for the words of a song; Our tormentors, for a joyful song: "Sing for us a song of Zion!"
>
> But how could we sing a song of the Lord in a foreign land?
>
> If I forget you, Jerusalem, may my right hand wither.
>
> May my tongue stick to my palate if I do not remember you, If I do not exalt Jerusalem beyond all my delights. [14]

The musicians have put up their harps as an evocative sign of mourning, and the psalmist, in essence, proposes his own penance of abandoning music forever if he should be untrue to the memory of the holy city. Another translation renders verses 5-6 more literally:

> May I never be able to play the harp again if I forget you, Jerusalem!

[14] *New American Bible* (Iowa Falls, IA: World Bible Publishers, 1986), 627.

> May I never be able to sing again if I do not remember you,
> if I do not think of you as my greatest joy![15]

The injunction to abandon music continued, in a different guise, into the early days of the Christian Church. The Church Fathers were unanimously opposed to the playing of musical instruments in liturgical practice, because instrumental music-making was associated in the pagan culture with that with which they had to contend: sexual immorality, prostitution, and the theater (associations, incidentally, that persisted well into the nineteenth century). In fact, the censure against instrumental music was so strong that aulos and kithara players could not be baptized unless they gave up their trade; as the third-century Christian apologist Arnobius asked rhetorically:

> Did God send souls [to earth] so that these members of a holy and noble race should here practice music and the arts of the piper . . . that they should sing obscene songs . . . ? Did he send them so that as males they become pederasts and as females they become harlots, harpists, and kitharists, giving their bodies for hire?[16]

While the Jewish musicians in exile abandoned music-making both as a sign of deep mourning and as a form of resistance in captivity, the patristic rule that musicians seeking baptism abandon music indicates the beginnings of a new *topos*, one linking

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[15] *Good News Bible* (New York: American Bible Society, 1992), 566.

[16] James McKinnon, "The Meaning of the Patristic Polemic Against Musical Instruments," *Current Musicology* 1 (1965): 70.

the renunciation of music with a movement towards virtue and purity. The literature of conversion dating back to the patristic era touches frequently on the thorny issue of what might constitute appropriate responses to music in the Christian context. A prominent example is the *Confessions* of Saint Augustine of Hippo, who before his baptism had written a treatise called *De musica*. Indeed, in the *Confessions*, Augustine makes use again and again of the metaphor of music to describe his conversion. Prior to his conversion (a conversion accomplished "through the ear," as I discuss in Chapter 2), Augustine had loved music for the sensual pleasures it conferred; and afterward, he struggled mightily to discern the proper way to acknowledge music's delights without militating against his striving for holiness. In Book 10 of the *Confessions*, he writes with palpable anxiety of the urge to

> [have] the melody of all the sweet songs with which David's Psalter is commonly sung . . . banished not only from my own ears, but the Church's as well.[17]

Augustine is ultimately able to reconcile his love of music with his hatred of the memory of sin that it evokes by rationalizing that it is not the singing that moves him, but rather the content of what is sung. Indeed, in Book 9, describing his conversion, Augustine writes of his desire to praise God for granting him the gift of faith by singing a song (invoking Psalm 26) from the very depths of his being:

> [Converts wish] to sing from the marrow of our bones, "My heart has said to you, I have sought your face, your face [O Lord] I will require."[18]

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[17] Augustine, *Confessions*, transl. Henry Chadwick (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 208.

Augustine also uses the powerful motif of penitential tears (which I will explore in greater detail in Chapter 2) to relate how, at his baptism,

> I wept at your hymns and canticles, moved deeply by the sweetly-sounding voices of your church. The voices flooded into my ears, truth seeped into my heart, and my feelings of piety overflowed, and tears streamed down, and to me it seemed they were good.[19]

The liturgical music performed at his baptismal rite seems thus to have entered as deeply into Augustine's physical body as into his soul, inspiring the tears that reflect the image of the waters of baptism. His tears of penitence are an example of an ancient motif of true conversion; Bruce W. Holsinger notes that "music had . . . become something [Augustine] could truly feel and experience . . . a liquid that entered his body, gushed through him like a river overflowing its banks, and erupted in his tears,"[20] the cleansing tears of conversion.

I contend that Augustine's transformed response to music also signaled a true change of heart. Later, as bishop, Augustine advised his congregation on how to

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[18] For this and the following passages, I have used Bruce Wood Holsinger's evocative and lyrical translations of Augustine, which appear in his book *Music, Body, and Desire in Medieval Literature and Culture: Hildegard of Bingen to Chaucer* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001). This quotation can be found in Holsinger, 70.

[19] *Confessions,* Book 9; quoted in Holsinger, *Music, Body, and Desire*, 71.

[20] Holsinger, *Music, Body, and Desire*, 73.

study and sing Psalm 123 in a fascinating homily suggestive of the experience of synaesthesia:

> Those whom we read [about in the text of Scripture] sing exulting . . . . And who exults here [in this world] except in hope . . . ? For us, too, that same hope is assured, and [so we, too] sing with exulting . . . . Hear [the psalm] as though you heard yourselves; hear it as though you were looking at yourselves in the mirror of the Scriptures. For when you look at the Scriptures as in a mirror, your face is transformed with gladness. When in exultation of hope you find yourself like the members of Christ who are singing these words, you will be in the company of those members, and you will sing these words.[21]

Augustine here not only describes a mystical technique of singing – a technique that transforms the singer – but he also goes so far as to base it upon transformed ways of seeing and hearing, suggesting that when we seek the truth in Scripture, we begin to sing with the true voice, and to appear as we truly are. The Scriptures then become a mirror that reflects the seeker/singer as he really is, a member of the communion of saints, which frees him to "sing exulting." This complex metaphor of a Scriptural mirror that transforms both the appearance and the voice of the believer is refracted many centuries later, as we shall see, in the appearance of mirrors as narrative devices in the "musical" paintings that I discuss below, and also in the prominent Victorian motif of the mirror as a double or doppelgänger. For Augustine, as well as for the Victorians I write about in the chapters that follow, the mirror reflects truths that would otherwise remain invisible.

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[21] Morrison, *Conversion and Text*, 4.

Saints Cecilia and Mary Magdalene, in addition to being the "patron saints" of this study, also appear throughout it as iconographical models for the artists and writers I discuss. Both saints, as I will explore at length in Chapter 2, were part of an art-historical and literary tradition that tied the moment of peripeteia to music, or, more specifically, to the abandonment of music. But in this introduction I will seek first to establish a connection between the laying aside of music by the Jewish musicians in captivity as a sign of mourning, and the laying aside of music by baptized aulos players in the early patristic era as a sign of conversion, and suggest an iconographic model that straddles both camps. The temple musician in Psalm 137 who, should he forget the holy city, suggests the abandoning of music as his own penance, foreshadows an actual ascetic practice later taken up and embraced by the early Christians. The motion from mourning to penitence to conversion is a short, if fluctuating, one, and there is one figure who transcribes that motion in both Jewish and Christian traditions: David, who was not only king, but also musician.

Not only is David commonly held to be a theological type of Christ (who descended from his lineage), but his life is also held in Christian thought to be a metaphor for the struggle of the soul toward God. David's history is full of the reversal and paradox that are central to the Christian ethos. A shepherd, he was anointed king; unarmed, he slew Goliath. Saint Paul called him "a man after God's own heart" (Acts 13:21-22), yet he was also an adulterer who contrived to have his mistress's husband slain (2 Samuel 11-12). David played music, sang, and "danced before the Lord with all his might" (2 Samuel 6:14),[22] but, like the Jews in

[22] *Catholic Bible, Revised Standard Edition* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2006), 230.

Babylonian captivity, he cast down his harp in mourning when he acknowledged his sin with Bathsheba. This recognition and repentance form the basis of Psalm 51, known as the *Miserere*, the centerpiece of the seven penitential psalms attributed to David.[23] And in making the Psalms "the foundation of its public prayer," the early Christian Church ordained that "consideration of David's life and words [would become] a constant occupation of the Christian mind."[24]

Thomas H. Connolly has identified the art-historical type of David-in-Penitence as a forerunner to images of Saint Cecilia (see Fig. 1, Appendix I). It was common from the ninth or tenth century for illuminated psalters to illustrate the penitential psalms with images of David kneeling, his crown and harp cast to the ground. In mourning, David gives up music as a penitential act, just as the temple musician in Psalm 137 vows to do should he forget Jerusalem. These images form a deliberate contrast to illustrations frequently used for other psalms, which show David playing his harp or psaltery.[25] As Connolly describes the transit from sin to contrition and conversion in the David-in-Penitence type:

> This is a man transformed, with the radical transformation that only true repentance would effect. He who had let himself be ruled by cupidinous love, by concupiscence, who had looked with hungry eye from his tower on the beauty of Uriah's wife [Bathsheba] as she bathed, who had brought her to his bed and then contrived her husband's death, has now by his heartfelt cry, "I have sinned against the Lord," given rein to true charity: the love of God now rules within

[23] While the Latin Vulgate Bible numbers this as Psalm 51, the Eastern Orthodox Church and virtually all Protestant translators number it Psalm 50.

[24] Connolly, *Mourning into Joy*, 84.

[25] See Connolly, *Mourning into Joy*, 79-110.

> him, and the love of creatures that conflicts with love of God . . . has been banished from his heart's throne.[26]

The image of David-in-Penitence, in other words, illustrates the very moment of peripeteia, which is accompanied by an abandonment of music. David, traditionally held to be the singer of the Psalms, leaves off singing in contemplation of and contrition for his sin.

The nineteenth-century paintings and novels that I discuss below represent, I believe, a continuation of this tradition. This is most abundantly clear in the case of the first painting, William Holman Hunt's *The Awakening Conscience* (Chapter 2), a complex scene of music being respectively made and rejected by each of a pair of lovers (one of whom is herself pictured in the very moment of peripeteia), and in the two novels in Chapter 4, George Moore's *Evelyn Innes* and *Sister Teresa*, which tell the story of a famed English opera singer who abandons the stage to become a nun. The painting I discuss in Chapter 3, Ford Madox Brown's *Take Your Son, Sir*, is not in itself a scene of leaving music. I have included it, however, because it beautifully illustrates the almost imperceptible motion from sin to grace in the figure of a "magdalene" who is also a Madonna, and does so using music imagery. *Take Your Son, Sir*, is, in a way, the most hopeful of all the works that I discuss, because it suggests that a fallen woman can be a possessor of virtue, even of spiritual glory. It is also, in a sense, the one among the four works most explicitly linked to medieval theological tradition, in that Ford Madox Brown has striven to represent the medieval concept that Thomas H. Connolly identifies as "the transformation that takes place

[26] Connolly, *Mourning into Joy*, 95.

within human souls in their passage – in both directions – between the states of grace and sin, or . . . between the suffering of repentance and the joy of grace."[27]

Thus this ancient trope of the triad of sin, repentance, and conversion, and the fluency with which the soul traverses them, continued to exert a strong influence on the culture of Victorian England; moreover, the old practice of depicting these changing, ineffable states with music imagery also persisted. In the paintings and books I discuss, a thread can be traced from patristic theology, through medieval and Renaissance art, to the social and moral concerns of an era that is not only very close in time to our own, but also very much like it in many ways. The mid-nineteenth century saw great social upheaval in a Britain that was rapidly modernizing, and amassing huge stores of capital, at troubling expense to human and religious values. As the paintings and novels I discuss below show, however, consciences were still awakened, hearts still changed, hands still outstretched to the fallen, conversions still experienced, and the transformation of society along the lines of true Christianity still a thing to be devoutly wished and assiduously worked for among the socially-conscious faithful.

[27] Connolly, *Mourning into Joy*, 87.

CHAPTER 2:

OF MUSIC, MAGDALENES, AND METANOIA IN *THE AWAKENING CONSCIENCE*[1]

William Holman Hunt's 1853 painting *The Awakening Conscience* shows a young kept woman in a gaudily decorated parlor rising from the lap of her lover, interrupting him as he plays and sings Thomas Moore's ballad "Oft in the Stilly Night" from the sheet music propped on the piano (Fig. 2, Appendix I).[2] Though it is day (the clock on the piano shows the time as five minutes to twelve), she is dressed in a nightgown, with a red paisley shawl tied around her waist; she clasps her hands – bedecked with rings on every finger except for the one that would wear a wedding

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[1] A shorter version of this chapter appeared in *The Journal of Musicological Research* 24/2 (2005): 123-143.

[2] Hunt has reversed the nineteenth-century *topos* of a woman playing the piano to a listening man. The nineteenth-century piano was nothing if not a "gendered" instrument, the province of women and the domestic sphere, and it was considered unseemly for men who were not professionals to play it. Julia Eklund Koza explains further that in the nineteenth century music itself "was considered so much a part of the feminine domain that the masculinity of men interested in [it] was . . . questioned" ("Music and the Feminine Sphere: Images of Women as Musicians in *Godey's Lady's Book,* 1830-1877," *The Musical Quarterly* 75/2 [1991]: 105), and Emma Sutton notes the existence in Victorian England of a "widespread perception that musicality denote[d] effeminacy or bisexuality" (*Aubrey Beardsley and British Wagnerism in the 1890s* [Oxford: Oxford University Press], 2002, 53). Musical performance, however, including that on the piano, was considered an acceptable masculine behavior when practiced by professional foreign males, whose masculinity was not held to the same high standard as that of Englishmen (see Phyllis Weliver, *Women Musicians in Victorian Fiction, 1860-1900: Representations of Music, Science, and Gender in the Leisured Home* [Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000], 21-24, and Laura Vorachek, "The Instrument of the Century": The Piano as an Icon of Female Sexuality in the Nineteenth Century," in *George Eliot-George Henry Lewes Studies* 38 [September 2000]: 30-31).

ring – in front of the shawl's knot.[3] Her gaze is directed upward, and she appears transfixed, her lips drawn apart slightly as if from a sudden intake of breath. She is reflected from behind in a mirror on the rear wall, in which we also see the natural world – trees in the lush garden, illuminated by brilliant light of morning – through an open French window. It is to the light that the young woman appears to be advancing, but her attitude is also one of intense listening, as if to a different song, one heard by her alone. Her lover, a well-dressed dandy in striped trousers and well-shined shoes, still wearing one glove (he has cast the other carelessly to the floor at her feet), watches her rise, ignorant of her interior experience. He is gesturing, perhaps in the interpretation of his song, or perhaps in protest over her abandoning him in his apparent enterprise of seduction. A malicious-looking cat follows the lover's gaze, pausing in the act of torturing a bird to watch as its mistress leaves the man's embrace;[4] another piece of sheet music, nonsense writer Edward Lear's setting

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[3] Hunt's sister urged him to add the shawl, since the young woman's state of undress at mid-day in the company of a man clearly not her husband would otherwise have been scandalous: "He was a realist, but on his sister Sarah's advice, as a sop to the squeamish, he had added an almost imperceptible line on the sleeves, to indicate that under her nightgown the whore was not *naked* . . . . . He decided she should clutch a Paisley shawl round her hips . . . . She must not actually sit on her lover's knee so scantily clad." (Diana Holman-Hunt, *My Grandfather, His Wives and Loves* [New York, W.W. Norton, 1969], 113).

[4] Kate Flint has suggested a link between *The Awakening Conscience* and Wilkie Collins's sensation novel *Basil*, published in 1852. Collins was a close friend of Hunt's, and Collins's brother Charles, a painter and writer, was a member of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood; Wilkie Collins and Hunt saw one another frequently during the time Hunt was working on *The Awakening Conscience.* In *Basil*, the title character has secretly wed Margaret, a linen-draper's daughter, in an unconsummated marriage, and moved her to a suburban villa where "[e]verything was oppressively new . . . not one leaf even of the music on the piano was dogs-eared or worn" (*Basil* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000], 61). Later in the novel, in another incident that corresponds to Hunt's painting, Basil observes Margaret undergoing a "paroxysm of passion" when her pet bird is killed by a cat (see note 35, below). (Kate Flint, "Reading *The Awakening Conscience* Rightly," in *Pre-Raphaelites Re-viewed*, ed. Marcia Pointon [Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1989]: 51-52).

of Tennyson's poem "Tears, Idle Tears," lies on the floor, still in its wrapper. Hunt inscribed a quotation from the Book of Proverbs on the picture frame: "As he that taketh away a garment in cold weather, so is he that singeth songs to a heavy heart."[5]

The Awakening Conscience was shown at the Royal Academy Exhibition of 1854, where it met with a response that was mixed at best. Fearing a scandal because of its subject matter, Hunt was initially reluctant to send the painting to the Academy, but allowed his friend and colleague, the painter Augustus Egg, to display it semi-privately in his home before submitting it to public view. Egg described his guests' unfavorable reaction to the painting, citing the "abuse . . . heaped upon it by many, I may say by the majority to whom I have shown it, in a most unfeeling and uncharitable manner."[6] The painting found an early champion, however, in John Ruskin, who wrote a letter to *The Times* in its defense, praising the power of Hunt's painting "to meet full in the front the moral evil of the age in which it is painted," and "to awaken into mercy the cruel thoughtlessness of youth, and subdue the severities of judgment into the sanctity of compassion."[7]

As Ruskin described the painting's narrative,

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[5] See Flint, "Reading *The Awakening Conscience* Rightly," for a close and compelling reading of the symbolism in *The Awakening Conscience* in the context of Victorian social narrative. She notes that the print above the piano, which Ruskin mistakenly identified as an image of the woman taken in adultery (John 7:53-8:11), is actually a popular engraving entitled "Cross Purposes," illustrating an incident from Walter Scott's *The Legend of Montrose* in which Annot Lyle moves the heart of Allan M'Anley with a song (49).

[6] Augustus Egg, letter to Thomas Combe, 20 March 1854. Quoted in Caroline Arscott, "Employer, Husband, Spectator: Thomas Fairbairn's Commission of *The Awakening Conscience*," in *The Culture of Capital: Art, Power, and the Nineteenth-Century Middle Class*, ed. Janet Wolff and John Seed (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988), 166.

[7] John Ruskin, letter to the editor, *The Times,* 25 May 1854, in *The Works of John Ruskin*, vol. XII, ed. E.T. Cook and Alexander Wedderburn (London: George Allen, 1904), 335.

> [the] poor girl has been sitting singing with her seducer; some chance words of the song 'Oft in the Stilly Night,' have struck upon the numbed places of her heart; she has started up in agony; he, not seeing her face, goes on singing, striking the keys carelessly with his gloved hand.[8]

Hunt himself, in his memoirs, explained of the painting's narrative that the girl, upon hearing her lover sing Moore's ballad, is seized by "the memory of her childish home," and breaks away from the man's embrace, and thus also "from her gilded cage with a startled holy resolve, while her shallow companion still sings on, ignorantly intensifying her repentant purpose."[9]

Parlor Music and the Perversion of Domesticity

"Oft in the Stilly Night" first appeared as the "Scotch Air" in Thomas Moore's 1818 compendium *A Selection of Popular National Airs.* Like his more famous anthology, *A Selection of Irish Melodies,* the *National Airs* were set to music by Sir John Stevenson, vicar-choral at Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin, and the music was published by J. Power in London. The song is simple and tuneful, and the composer has directed that it be sung "with melancholy expression." Set with a bare piano accompaniment, it never modulates from C major, nor does the melody stray from a very narrow range of *g'* to *f''* (see Example 1, Appendix II). Yet something in this simple, almost banal ballad has caused the girl's heart to change:

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[8] Ruskin, *The Works*, 333-34.

[9] William Holman Hunt, *Pre-Raphaelitism and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood*, Book II (New York: AMS Press, 1967 [reprint of original 1906 edition]), 430.

Oft, in the stilly night,
Ere Slumber's chain has bound me,
Fond Memory brings the light
Of other days around me;
The smiles, the tears,
Of boyhood's years,
The words of love then spoken;
The eyes that shone,
Now dimm'd and gone,
The Cheerful hearts now broken!

When I remember all
The friends, so link'd together,
I've seen around me fall,
Like leaves in wintry weather;
I feel like one,
Who treads alone
Some banquet-hall deserted,
Whose lights are fled,
Whose garlands dead,
And all but he departed!
Thus, in the stilly night,
Ere Slumber's chain has bound me,
Sad Memory brings the light
Of other days around me.

Richard Leppert, in his essay "Male Agony: Awakening Conscience," considers the two songs in the painting, "Oft in the Stilly Night" and Edward Lear's "Tears, Idle Tears," to be the essential keys to its meaning. He asserts that

> [t]he songs *must* drive the picture's primary narrative; otherwise there is no reason to incorporate a musical theme and to give it primary place in the composition.[10]

[10] Richard Leppert, *The Sight of Sound: Music, Representation, and the History of the Body* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1993), 207 (emphasis in original).

Leppert argues that both songs, and Thomas Moore's ballad in particular, are instruments for the seduction of the young woman:

> It seems safe to assume that the man in Hunt's painting bought the songs so as to engineer a sex act, or afterward, to serve as balm to the conscience and hence the pretext for the sex act next time.[11]

Thus Leppert seems to be arguing that the songs – and, by implication, parlor music as a genre – were responsible in the young woman's fall, or at least for keeping her in her fallen state. And if so, what in a ballad as tame as "Oft in the Stilly Night" would wield such power?[12] If in fact it was the aim of Hunt's lover to use "Oft in the Stilly Night" as an implement of seduction, his efforts have fallen flat. Moreover, if the lover's purpose in presenting his mistress with the sheet music for "Oft in the Stilly Night" was to "engineer a sex act," no doubt one in a repeated series, it is the devastating clarity of memory – the girl's recollection of her lost innocence, inspired by the simplicity of the ballad and the evocative nostalgia of its text – that has caused him to fail.[13] The painting's paradox, and its narrative crux, then, is in its portrayal of the moment of awakening as a moment of reversal: the fallen women rises, and

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[11] Leppert, *The Sight of Sound,* 207.

[12] The cleric and music scholar Hugh Reginald Haweis raised a similar question in the book *Music and Morals*: " . . . how can a piece of music, like a picture, be in itself moral [or] immoral, sublime or degraded[?]" (New York and London: Harper & Brothers, 1902, 51; originally published in 1871.)

[13] As Haweis notes, "musical sound is . . . one of many mediums which connect us vividly with the past . . . Memory is the great perturber of musical meaning. When memory is concerned, music is no longer itself; it ceases to have any proper plane of feeling; it surrenders itself wholly, with all its rights, to memory, to be the patient, stern, and terrible exponent of that recording angel." (*Music and Morals*, 99-100.)

the lover, until now an apparently generous, if not disinterested, benefactor, is suddenly transformed into the unfeeling man "that singeth songs to a heavy heart." Ironically, it is the very music that he has chosen to ease his mistress's heart that has made it heavy, and that ultimately causes it to change profoundly.[14] If music can seduce, Hunt strongly suggests that it can also redeem.

This unanticipated moment of reversal is implicit not only in the atmosphere created by the presence in the painting of "Oft in the Stilly Night," which would have been familiar to contemporary viewers, but also in the lover's choice of sheet music itself as a gift for his mistress. For, if Thomas Moore's ballad is an instrument both of the girl's fall and of her awakening, it is likely because it has shown her the irony of her situation, making her recognize that the ethos of happy domesticity conveyed by Victorian parlor music exists, at least for her, in appearance only. Sheet music like "Oft in the Stilly Night," and the parlors for which such pieces were destined, epitomized in the Victorian mind the vaunted values of home, which ostensibly kept at bay moral scandals like the one depicted in Hunt's painting. The journalist and poet Charles Mackay wrote of an equally popular parlor song, Sir Henry Rowley Bishop's "Home, Sweet Home!," that it had done "more than statesmanship or

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[14] Haweis explains that music, because of its essential abstractness, can have the opposite effect upon a listener from the one intended by the composer: "If one is by the death-bed of a friend, and a band passes in the street playing a cheerful tune, that tune will sound even more sadly than a really mournful air . . . An unhappy girl, out of her mind for the loss of her lover, singing a merry song to herself in a madhouse, will make the joyous melody sound [as] sad . . . as the raptures of an imprisoned skylark hanging caged in the London streets" (*Music and Morals*, 98).

legislation to keep alive in the hearts of the people the virtues that flourish at the fireside."[15]

Like "Oft in the Stilly Night," "Home, Sweet Home!" is a sentimental song that speaks with wistful nostalgia of simple joys lost ("An Exile from Home, splendour dazzles in vain, Oh! give me my lowly thatch'd cottage again!"); and, like the Moore song, it is set with deliberate – one might even say heavy-handed – simplicity, neither modulating nor making use of accidentals. Both ballads express a kind of stasis, an imagined stability that exists only in the memory of innocent pleasures past; and both are, ultimately, about the loss of those pleasures, located in the now-unattainable realm of "home." Hunt's young woman has leapt up upon hearing the song, struck by its mournful evocations of the past, and suddenly awakened to the truth of her situation: her present home is not a home. In spite of the luxurious material goods that surround her, she has no claim on "home," nor, for that matter, on her honor, as she is not the man's legitimate partner. For although he has established her in a pseudo-bourgeois home, replete with piano, and has brought her a gift of parlor songs to reassure her, it is a home, as Caroline Arscott describes it,

> that is not a home . . . The man does not live there but comes visiting, as hat and gloves show. . . The items are newly purchased and installed as she is . . . she does not belong there.[16]

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[15] Quoted in Derek Scott, *The Singing Bourgeois: Songs of the Victorian Drawing Room and Parlour*, rev. ed. (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001), 15.

[16] Arscott, "Employer, Husband, Spectator," 169-70.

John Ruskin observed that nothing in the room "has the old thoughts of home upon it, or . . . is ever to become a part of home," and, invoking the language of music pedagogy, said of the apartment's shiny, new contents that

> [they] thrust themselves forward with a ghastly and unendurable distinctness, as if they would compel the sufferer to count, or measure, or learn them by heart.[17]

Hunt makes it clear that the man is engaged not only in attempts at seducing the woman, but also at educating her. His top hat rests upon a small pile of books, one of which is identifiable as a treatise on handwriting, Henry Noel Humphries's *Origin and Progress of the Art of Writing*, published in 1853.[18] The sheet music he has brought with him could also be in line with these efforts, admittedly not disinterested, to "improve" his mistress socially, if not morally. To this end, he has

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[17] Ruskin, *The Works*, XII, 334. Martin Meisel has observed that the brand-new furnishings in the room, which he calls "a tawdry island of modern sin," are rendered with "hallucinatory realism" (*Realizations: Narrative, Pictorial, and Theatrical Arts in Nineteenth-Century England* [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983], 365fn, 368).

[18] Leppert, *The Sight of Sound*, 204. Hunt was himself engaged in similar efforts toward the betterment of the model for his painting, Annie Miller, a young woman from the London slums. She was fifteen when they met, illiterate and living "in a state of absolute neglect and degradation" (Diana Holman-Hunt, *My Grandfather*, 68). Hunt hoped to marry Annie after she had completed a course of education (prescribed by himself) in reading, writing, dancing, and elocution to rid her of her "strong Cockney accent" (Gay Daly, *Pre-Raphaelites in Love* [New York: Ticknor & Fields, 1989], 105). In the meanwhile, Hunt set off on a long-planned pilgrimage to the Holy Land just before the Royal Academy Exhibition of 1854 in which *The Awakening Conscience* was shown, leaving Annie in the care of a lady member of the Rescue Society, one of the many mid-nineteenth-century missions ministering to fallen women (on the rescue missions, see below). Annie, however, spent the money Hunt had left for her not on her lessons but on "fripperies," and, in his absence, seems to have become the mistress both of Hunt's close friend Dante Gabriel Rossetti and of Viscount Ranelagh (she later married Ranelagh's cousin). Hunt wrote of these setbacks to his friend and Pre-Raphaelite Brother F.G. Stephens with striking self-reference: "If she cannot be preached to from the texts of her own bitter experience, then she cannot be awakened at all" (Diana Holman-Hunt, *My Grandfather*, 217).

provided the music not only in order to seduce her, but also to impart to her compromised lodgings some semblance of a real home, in order to cause her to forget their true nature, and thus make her more willing to stay on in them. The mere fact, however, that the woman's conscience has been suddenly awakened throws both her home and her immediate future into doubt. In his letter to the *Times*, Ruskin envisioned the girl discarded by the man, her newly-awakened conscience having compelled her to flee his patronage, and now forced to walk the streets as a common prostitute. He imagined her cast out in her nightgown,

> at which the painter has laboured so closely, thread by thread . . . [its] pure whiteness . . . soiled with dust and rain, her outcast feet failing in the street.[19]

It is easy enough to read Hunt's painting as an indictment of the sexual exploitation of poor women by upper-class men. The practice was extremely widespread, well documented, and often decried, and it was Hunt's explicit intent to acknowledge it, if not expressly to condemn it. [20] The theme struck a familiar nerve

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[19] Ruskin, *The Works*, XII, 335. Indeed, contemporary visual representations of fallen women often portrayed them as poor or homeless; see the study for Dante Gabriel Rossetti's *Found*, a painting he began in 1853 but never finished (Figure 4, Appendix I), and the third panel of Augustus Egg's 1858 triptych *Past and Present* (Figure 8, Appendix I). It is notable that in both Rossetti's drawing and the first panel of *Past and Present* (Figure 3, Appendix I), as well as in other contemporary images, such as those of female suicides (Figs. 5-7, Appendix I), physical fallenness becomes a pictorial signifier of a moral state.

[20] Fallenness resulting from such exploitation, and the life of prostitution that was assumed to follow, were common themes in Victorian literature. Novels treating the subject include *Adam Bede* by George Eliot (1859), *Mary Barton* (1848) and *Ruth* (1853) by Elizabeth Gaskell, *David Copperfield* (1850) by Charles Dickens, *The New Magdalen* (1873) by Wilkie Collins, and *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* (1891) by Thomas Hardy. Examples of poetry dealing with the theme include Elizabeth Barrett Browning's *Aurora Leigh* (1857) and William Bell Scott's "Rosabell" (1846). Thomas Hood's wildly popular poem "The Bridge of Sighs"

with the reviewer for *Punch*, who hailed Hunt as "the painter preaching us a sermon," and exhorted him still more to

> [knock] at our hearts and [awaken] our consciences . . . Tell us more home truths. Set us face to face with our great sins again and again. Still paint our MAGDALENES, scared by the still small voice amid their bitter splendours, mocked in their misery by the careless smiles and gay voices of their undoers. Which of us is not better for that presentation of the woman waking from the dream of sin, meant not for the tempters only, but for the sisters of the tempted and the fallen? Why should our Exhibition lift up no voice to brand abominations against which the hard stones of our streets cry aloud, night after night?[21]

It is easy enough, too, to follow Leppert in criticizing Hunt for denying the young woman agency and for depriving her, post-awakening, of her source of

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(1844) is the tale of a fallen woman's suicide by drowning, a subject that was frequently represented in contemporary paintings and engravings; the subject also made its way into Chapter 47 of *David Copperfield*, in which the prostitute Martha sees the Thames's pollution as an analogue to her own impurity: "I know that I belong to it. I know that it's the natural company of such as I am. It comes from country places, where there was once no harm in it – and it creeps through the dismal streets, defiled and miserable – and it goes away, like my life, to a great sea, that is always troubled – and I feel that I must go with it!" (Dickens, *David Copperfield*, London, Edinburgh, and New York: Thomas Nelson and Sons [1906], 714-15). L.J. Nicoletti explains that "Until the 'black ocean' of prostitution was purified through hygiene and regulation, the nation symbolically cleansed itself of polluted and polluting urban women through their visualized – and ironically beatific – drownings . . . Victorian art and literature constructed suicide as a redemptive act for unchaste women" ("Downward Mobility: Victorian Women, Suicide, and London's 'Bridge of Sighs," *Literary London: Interdisciplinary Studies in the Representation of London* 2/1 [2004], accessible online at http://www.literarylondon.org/london-journal/march2004/ nicoletti.html). Indeed, this commonplace persisted into the twentieth century: in the 1940 film *Waterloo Bridge*, a young woman forced by hardship into prostitution commits suicide on the eponymous bridge – Thomas Hood's "bridge of sighs" – to avoid dishonoring her World War I army officer fiancé (my thanks to my father, George Grella, for drawing my attention to this wonderful film).

[21] *Punch* 26 (3 June 1854): 229, quoted in Flint, "Reading *The Awakening Conscience* Rightly," 61. Flint notes, however, that this review "may be unreliable in its moral relevance, coming from *Punch*," a journal known for its biting satire.

sustenance, for out of necessity "she waits and depends [upon the man]: he feeds her."[22] Leppert sees the fate of the girl as inexorable: having been inspired by what she has heard in Thomas Moore's ballad to shake off two betrayals – the original betrayal of her virtue that resulted in her fall, and the continuing betrayal by a system that keeps her fallen (there is nowhere to go from here but down, as the images in Figs. 4-8, Appendix I, imply) – she must now move into a third betrayal, the one wrought by the awakening itself. Being fallen, poor, and now awakened to the tenuousness and corruption of her present comfortable circumstances, the future that awaits her, as Ruskin suggests, can only be that of the outcast, the derelict prostitute, and quite possibly the suicide (see note 20 and Figs. 5-7, Appendix I). Because her livelihood is compromised along with her integrity, Leppert calls the painting "an *economic* scandal as well as an ethical one."[23]

Saint Cecilia and the Transformation of the Senses

Yet *pace* the painting's moral critics and moral apologists alike, I believe there is another way to read *The Awakening Conscience*: in the context of images of metanoia or transformation that involve or allude to music, especially in Renaissance paintings of Saint Cecilia and Mary Magdalene. These two saints were traditionally associated both with music and with profound changes of heart, and music has long been depicted in images of both to represent awakening: Saint Cecilia discarding worldly music for an inner music that marks her transformation from Roman

[22] Leppert, *The Sight of Sound*, 195.

[23] Leppert, *The Sight of Sound*, 193; emphasis in original.

noblewoman to contemplative musician; Saint Mary Magdalene rejecting music outright as she is converted from sexual sinner to contemplative. While Hunt and his fellows were attempting to supplant what they saw as the pernicious influence of the Italian Renaissance with a new, earnest religious art relevant to their own age, they nevertheless continued to refer to the iconography of spiritual change and redemption employed by Raphael and other painters of the late Renaissance and Baroque. As Suzanne Fagence Cooper notes,

> Pre-Raphaelite artists self-consciously drew on medieval and Renaissance pictures of Saint Cecilia [including the famous 1516 painting of her ecstasy in the National Gallery, Bologna, by Raphael himself; see Fig. 9, Appendix I]. They exploited the tensions implicit in her legend between desire and chastity, earthly and heavenly music. Throughout their careers, their favorite subjects were those in which the barriers between the natural and supernatural worlds break down . . . [and] men and angels come face to face.[24]

Indeed, the iconography of Saint Cecilia, emblematic of the possibility of profound spiritual change, continued to find its way onto the canvases of nineteenth-century English artists, and even into early experimental photography (see Figs. 10-13, Appendix I).

According to her Acts (the sixth-century *Passio Caeciliae*), Saint Cecilia was a Roman Christian noblewoman who, though she had consecrated her virginity to Christ, was forced to marry against her wishes. On her wedding night, she converted her husband, Valerian, to Christianity, and the two lived in a celibate marriage, doing

[24] Suzanne Fagence Cooper, "Playing the Organ in Pre-Raphaelite Paintings," *Music in Art* 29/1-2 (2004): 162.

good works and preaching the Gospel, until along with Valerian's brother Tiburtius they were condemned to death for refusing to honor the Roman gods. Cecilia's sentence specified that she be suffocated in the Roman bath of her home in Trastevere, but this proved miraculously ineffective, and she was finally martyred by the sword. Her association with music stems primarily from a passage in the *Passio* that refers to her wedding:

> while instruments played [*cantantibus organis*] . . . [Cecilia] sang in her heart to God alone: "May my heart and my body be kept immaculate lest I be cast into confusion."[25]

Although Saint Cecilia's iconography has traditionally shown her with various musical instruments, it does so, according to Thomas Connolly, not in order to associate her with music for its own sake, but with the intent of using music as a metaphor for the fluctuating states of sin and grace in the soul.[26] Connolly has shown that the musical imagery in representations of the saint is derived from the medieval iconographic type of David-in-Penitence (see Chapter 1, pp. 13-14). This popular devotional image showed David as both musician and king, with harp and crown cast down in penitence for his adultery with Bathsheba and his calculated murder of her husband Uriah (2 Samuel 11:2-18). One of the prominent liturgical texts used for the Lenten station day at the Church of Saint Cecilia in Trastevere, dating from the fifth century, was the prayer from the Book of Esther: "Turn our mourning into joy, and

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[25] Thomas H. Connolly. "Cecilia (i)," *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*, http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/05243.

[26] Thomas H. Connolly, *Mourning into Joy: Music, Raphael, and Saint Cecilia (*New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), *passim*.

do not close the mouths of those who sing thy praises"; thus, argues Connolly, medieval and Renaissance images of Saint Cecilia depict her in the fulfillment of this prayer, having taken up in joy the music lain down by David in grief as a symbol of the transformative power of God's grace.[27]

In *The Awakening Conscience*, the young woman's upturned gaze and attitude of attentive listening suggest Raphael's well-known image of Saint Cecilia hearing the angelic music as she stands with discarded instruments at her feet, surrounded by other saints who, like herself, are emblematic of metanoia: from left, Saints Paul, John the Evangelist, Augustine, and Mary Magdalene (Appendix I, Fig. 9). In Hunt the threads falling from the girl's discarded needlework sampler, carefully illuminated in a shaft of light at the corner of the piano on the painting's right edge, echo the pipes that slip out of the frame of Cecilia's organ in the very moment of her own transformation from worldly to contemplative musician. Saint Paul and Saint John, who stand at Cecilia's right in Raphael's painting, are associated with true vision: Paul's conversion on the road to Damascus was a journey through physical and moral blindness to a new, transformed sight,[28] while John is the visionary prophet of Revelation (as we will see below, Saint Augustine and Saint Mary Magdalene, standing on Cecilia's left, represent true, transformed hearing). Indeed, Raphael's painting anticipates William Blake's maxim that "[if] the doors of perception were

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[27] Connolly, *Mourning into Joy*, 79-110. In more recent writings, Connolly has argued convincingly that Cecilia was a member of the Roman Jewish community of Christian converts, which may account for the use of a reading from the relatively obscure Book of Esther as a liturgical text for her station day (see Connolly, "Traces of a Jewish-Christian Community at S. Cecilia in Trastevere," in *Plainsong and Medieval Music* 7 [1998], 1-19).

[28] Indeed, Paul's version was, like Augustine's, accomplished through the sense of hearing: blinded, he heard the voice of Christ (see Acts 9 and footnote 47, below).

cleansed every thing would appear . . . as it is, infinite."[29] By discarding worldly music, Cecilia has received the gifts of new vision and hearing, making it possible for her to see the angels above her and to hear their song.[30] Hunt's young woman is likewise startled awake, suddenly able to discern the call to a new life, and like Cecilila, she does not sing, but stands listening, transfixed by the otherworldly voice. A seventeenth-century commentator on Raphael's painting, the Bolognese monk and organist Adriano Banchieri, explicity associated its music iconography with the abandonment of worldly music, attributing to Saint Cecilia the words: "Away with you, sounds, songs, and all you worldly pleasures! . . . . Let me desire nothing else, but only to have a place in that holiest of choirs, among those elect and victorious musicians and organists who make music eternally before my most sweet spouse Jesus: 'Holy! holy! holy!'"[31]

Not only is Hunt's young woman depicted, like Cecilia, in the very act of leaving behind music-making, with its connotations of worldliness evoked by her lover's playing and singing "Oft in the Stilly Night," but like Cecilia, she also turns

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[29] From Blake's illuminated book "The Marriage of Heaven and Hell" (1790), plate 14. Victorian art historian Anna Jameson remarks that the figures of Saints Paul and Mary Magdalene "are here significant of the conversion of the man through *power*, of the woman through *love*, from a state of reprobation to a state of reconcilement and grace" (Anna Jameson, *Sacred and Legendary Art*, vol. I [London: Longman, Brown, Green, Longmans, and Roberts, 1857], 355; italics in original). Jameson notes further that in Raphael's original design for the painting, Mary Magdalene looks up, rather than out of the picture: "*she* also hears the divine music which has ravished Saint Cecilia," a painterly intention that Jameson considers "preferable in [its] sentiment" to that of the final version.

[30] Indeed, the Church of Santa Cecilia in Trastevere was originally the site of a temple dedicated to the Bona Dea Oclata, a Roman goddess who restored vision, curing blindness and other diseases of the eye. Cecilia's name derives from the Latin word for blindness, *caecitas* (Connolly, *Mourning into Joy*, passim, esp. 20-21 and 41-45).

[31] Connolly, *Mourning into Joy*, 15.

away from music at her feet, in this case the song by Hunt's friend Edward Lear (Ex. 2, Appendix II).[32] The inclusion of "Tears, Idle Tears" in the painting is suggestive of the futile, even false, pain (because the tears are idle) that the world gives.

> Tears, idle tears, I know not what they mean,
> Tears from the depth of some divine despair
> Rise in the heart, and gather to the eyes,
> In looking on the happy autumn-fields,
> And thinking of the days that are no more.
>
> Fresh as the first beam glittering on a sail,
> That brings our friends up from the underworld,
> Sad as the last which reddens over one
> That sinks with all we love below the verge;
> So sad, so fresh, the days that are no more.
>
> Ah, sad and strange as in dark summer dawns
> The earliest pipe of half-awaken'd birds
> To dying ears, when unto dying eyes
> The casement slowly grows a glimmering square;
> So sad, so strange, the days that are no more.
>
> Dear as remember'd kisses after death,
> And sweet as those by hopeless fancy feign'd
> On lips that are for others; deep as love,
> Deep as first love, and wild with all-regret;
> O Death in Life, the days that are no more.[33]

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[32] Lear "would wander into our sitting-room through the windows at dusk when his work was over, sit down to the piano, and sing Tennyson's songs for hours, composing as he went on, and picking out the accompaniment by ear." (Marianne North, *Recollections of a Happy Life*, 1892, quoted in Vivian Noakes, *Edward Lear 1812-1888* [London: Royal Academy of Arts, 1985], 131). Noakes notes that Tennyson "preferred Lear's settings to any others, for they seemed to throw a diaphanous veil over the words – nothing more." The title page of "Tears, Idle Tears" bears a dedication to Mrs. Alfred Tennyson.

[33] The lyric poem "Tears, Idle Tears" is one of several "musical interludes" in Tennyson's novel-in-verse *The Princess* (1847), which addresses the question of woman's place in modern society and formed the basis for Gilbert and Sullivan's satirical operetta *Princess Ida* (1884). The preamble to "Tears, Idle Tears," which Lear did not set, makes it clear that Tennyson's lyric is sung by a woman at the behest of his protagonist, Princess Ida:

> Then she, "Let some one sing to us: lightlier move
> The minutes fledged with music": and a maid
> Of those beside her, smote her harp, and sang.

The poem reinforces the melancholy nostalgia of "Oft in the Stilly Night," a longing to recapture innocence lost.[34] Tennyson explained the poem's ethos as "not real woe, [but] . . . rather the yearning that young people . . . experience for that which seems to have passed away from them forever," and described that yearning as "in a way like Saint Paul's 'groanings which cannot be uttered'."[35] The third stanza even suggests the Night of Sense, described by the sixteenth-century Carmelite mystic Saint John of the Cross in *The Ascent of Mount Carmel* as a darkness of the

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Following her performance of "Tears, Idle Tears," the maid

> . . . ended with such passion that the tear,
> She sang of, shook and fell, an erring pearl
> Lost in her bosom.

(Tennyson, *The Works of Tennyson with Notes by the Author* [New York: Macmillan, 1916], 182.)

[34] In 1855, Hunt's close friend and Pre-Raphaelite Brother John Everett Millais was inspired by "Tears, Idle Tears" to paint *Autumn Leaves,* considered to be his masterpiece (Figure 14, Appendix I). Malcolm Warner has said of the painting that "we can see [Millais's] autumnal landscape as a symbol of nineteenth-century culture in a fallen and degenerate state, mourning 'the days that are no more' in the sense of a past and lamented epoch in history . . . The sense of loss that moved Millais and his fellow Pre-Raphaelites to nostalgia for the Middle Ages, and fuelled nineteenth-century nostalgia in general, was a sense of lost religious faith. Millais wanted to touch feelings that came, like the tears in Tennyson's poem, 'from the depths of some divine despair' . . . Millais [and his fellow Pre-Raphaelites] tried to create a religious art for [their] time." Warner has also aptly dubbed the nineteenth century "a season of religious melancholy." (Malcolm Warner, "Words into Pictures: Millais and Tennyson," unpublished paper read at the conference "Locating the Victorians," The Science Museum, London, July 2001, http://www.fathom.com/feature/122426/index.html [accessed January 13, 2009]).

[35] Tennyon quotes Romans 8:26 (Kerry McSweeney, "Performing 'The Solitary Reaper' and 'Tears, Idle Tears'" [*Criticism* 38/2 (1996)]: 292). Suzanne Fagence Cooper notes that the poem "explicitly contrasts the happiness of innocent youth with the misery of a sinful maturity" ("Music, Memory and Loss in Victorian Painting," *Nineteenth-Century Music Review* 2/1 [2005]: 29).

soul in which there is "nothing, nothing, nothing, nothing, nothing, nothing,"[36] but in which state, under cover of darkness, God draws the soul to Himself. While Thomas Moore's "Oft in the Stilly Night" depicts a night scene in which the only light derives from the faint glow of memory, Tennyson's poem is set in the half-darkness of dawn, where the soul stands poised on the threshold of consciousness, and the creeping light of morning promises illumination and awakening. In his *Spiritual Canticle of the Soul and the Bridegroom Christ,* Saint John of the Cross further described this fleeting, redolent moment between night and day as charged with the "silent music" of the encounter with Christ:

> The tranquil night
> At the time of the rising dawn,
> Silent music,
> Sounding solitude,
> The supper that refreshes, and deepens love.[37]

In Tennyson's half-light, the day dawns gradually, slowly illuminating the window, to awaken the soul in mourning ("The casement slowly grows a glimmering square"). In Hunt's painting, however, the window is already fully illuminated by the light of day, underscoring the suddenness and completeness of his heroine's conversion.

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[36] Saint John of the Cross, *Selected Writings*, ed. Kieran Kavanaugh (New York and Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1987), 45.

[37] Saint John of the Cross, *Selected Writings*, 223. I am grateful to Nicky Losseff for directing my attention to this passage, and for letting me read an early, unpublished version of her essay "Silent Music and the Eternal Silence" (published in Losseff and Jenny Doctor, eds., *Silence, Music, Silent Music* [Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007], 205-222).

Mary Magdalene and the Tears of Conversion

Hunt reluctantly repainted the girl's face at the request of the patron who had commissioned *The Awakening Conscience*, the Leeds industrialist Thomas Fairbairn; originally, she was shown weeping as she rose from the man's lap. As Ruskin described her face before the repainting,

> I suppose that no one possessing the slightest knowledge of expression could remain untouched by the countenance of the lost girl, rent from its beauty into sudden horror; the lips half open, indistinct in their purple quivering, the teeth set hard, the eyes filled with the fearful light of futurity, and the tears of ancient days.[38]

The reviewer for the *Athenaeum* concurred, remarking that "the author of 'The Bridge of Sighs' [by Thomas Hood; see note 20, above] could not have conceived a more painful-looking face."[39]

Although we cannot see the girl's tears in the repainted version, they are likely no longer the "idle tears" of Tennyson's poem. Rather, they are the productive, healing tears of true conversion. As the theologian Benedicta Ward notes:

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[38] Ruskin, *The Works,* XII, 334. Martin Meisel suggests that the girl's face before repainting "represented . . . the birth agony itself" (*Realizations*, 367).

In Wilkie Collins's *Basil* (see note 4), the eponymous narrator describes his secret wife Margaret's agony after the cat has killed her bird in terms that anticipate Ruskin's: "Her large black eyes were flashing . . . through her tears – the blood was glowing crimson in her cheeks – her lips were parted as she gasped for breath. One of her hands was clenched, and rested on the mantel-piece; the other was pressed tight over her bosom, with the fingers convulsively clasping her dress" (Collins, *Basil*, 134).

[39] *The Athenaeum*, 6 May 1854, p. 561, quoted in Flint, "Reading *The Awakening Conscience* Rightly," 60-61.

> At each stage [of a conversion] there are tears, not the tears of self-pity or remorse, but the lifegiving tears that come from a heart suddenly open to life.[40]

Indeed, in the fourth century Saint Ephrem the Syrian insisted that a true change of heart can be accomplished only through the eyes, whose tears cause the heart to change:

> "Weep over your soul, sinner, shed tears and raise it up again. Its resurrection depends on your eyes, and its return to life on your heart."[41]

And Saint Augustine, on his deathbed, had the texts of the seven penitential psalms written out and hung on the walls about his bed, "where he continutally read them weeping."[42]

Weeping is also an emblem of the conversion of Mary Magdalene, who in a dramatic act of penitence washed Christ's feet with her tears at the house of Simon the Pharisee and dried them with her hair.[43] The long, unbound hair of Hunt's fallen

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[40] Benedicta Ward, S.L.G., *Harlots of the Desert* (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 1987), 2.

[41] *Sermones Exegetici, In Is 26.10*, "Tollature peccator et non videat gloriam," quoted in Irénée Hausherr, S.J., *Penthos: The Doctrine of Compunction in the Christian East*, transl. Anselm Hufstader, O.S.B. (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 1982), 29.

[42] Karl F. Morrison, *Conversion and Text: The Cases of Augustine of Hippo, Herman-Judah, and Constantine Tsatsos* (Charlottesville and London: The University Press of Virginia, 1992), 33.

[43] Luke 7:36-50. In fact, the sinful woman who washes Christ's feet with her tears is never identified in the Gospel as Mary Magdalene. In the sixth century, however, Pope Saint Gregory the Great conflated that woman with Mary Magdalene in his thirty-third homily, also declaring Mary of Bethany, mentioned in Luke 10:38-42 and John 11, to be the same woman

woman underscores this allusion, as one of the Magdalene's signifiers in medieval and Renaissance paintings is her loose, flowing hair, which before her conversion symbolized her sexual sin, and afterwards signaled her redemption: tradition has it that after the Ascension of Christ, the Magdalene lived in hermitage in the desert, where her long hair became her only garment when, after many years of labor and penance, her clothes fell away.

(Mary Magdalene is mentioned by name in Luke 8:2-3 and 23:49, Mark 15:40, Matthew 27:56, and John 19:25). Gregory's conflation, which was reversed in 1969, thus constructs a powerful figure of repentance and spiritual renewal, at once a reformed prostitute; a watcher at the Crucifixion; in her identification with Mary of Bethany, the first contemplative; and, finally, as the first witness to the Resurrection, *apostola apostolorum*, the Apostle to the Apostles. In the Middle Ages, she came to be identified, further, with the Samaritan woman living with her sixth "husband," without benefit of marriage (John 4:1-42) and with the woman taken in adultery (John 8:1-11). See Brian Cohen, "Saint Mary Magdalen as a Cultural Symbol in the Low Countries, c. 1450-1530" (Ph.D. diss., SUNY at Binghamton 2001), 31.

Elizabeth Gaskell explicitly associated the Magdalene's penitential tears with the Victorian fallen woman in the poem she chose as a frontispiece to her controversial 1853 novel *Ruth*, about an unwed mother (see footnote 20, above), Phineas Fletcher's 1633 "Hymne":

> Drop, drop, slow tears!
> And bathe those beauteous feet,
> Which brought from heaven
> The news and Prince of peace.
> Cease not, wet eyes,
> For mercy to entreat:
> To cry for vengeance
> Sin doth never cease.
> In your deep floods
> Drown all my faults and fears;
> Nor let His eye
> See sin, but through my tears.

Mary Magdalene has also long been associated with music. H. Colin Slim has explored the literary and art-historical traditions that portray her as a musician, [44] and this association seems to date as far back as the Patristic era of the early church. In an astonishing fifth-century sermon, Saint Peter Chrysologus described the Magdalene's conversion at the house of Simon the Pharisee as itself a musical phenomenon, with her body as the instrument:

> She mixed the drink wth tears in proper measure (*temperat in mensuram*), and to the full delight of God she beat a melody from her heart and body (*pulsat cordia sui et corporia symphoniam*). She produced the organ tones of her lamentations, played upon the cithar by her long and rhythmical sighs, and fitted groans to the pipe (*in fistulam*). While she kept beating her breast in reproach to her conscience she made the cymbals resound which would please God.[45]

In the sixteenth century, the Flemish painting studio known as the Master of the Female Half-Lengths produced a series of five paintings that depict Mary Magdalene before her conversion as a lutenist, playing from a part book showing the lute tablature of an erotic chanson, "Si j'ayme mon amy" ("If I love my friend more than I do my husband"; Fig. 15, Appendix I), and a contemporary painting by Bernard van Orley in the collection of the Duke of Devonshire at Chatsworth House (known as the Chatsworth Panel) shows her post-conversion, having lain aside her

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[44] See Slim, "Mary Magdalene, Musician and Dancer," *Early Music* 8/4 (1980): 460-473, and "Mary Magdalene, *Mondaine Musicale*," *Report of the Twelfth Congress, Berkeley, 1977* (Kassel: International Musicological Society, 1981): 816-824.

[45] Bruce Wood Holsinger, *Music, the Body, and Desire in Medieval Literature and Culture: Hildegard of Bingen to Chaucer* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), 40.

lute and the intabulation of another erotic song, "O waerde mont" ("Oh, praiseworthy mouth"), now reading contemplatively from a prayer book.[46]

Imagery associated with Mary Magdalene abounds in *The Awakening Conscience*, not only in the protagonist's unbound hair and the inclusion of music in the scene, but also in the colors Hunt used for her dress and shawl: the red and white chosen by Hunt are the colors in which the Magdalene's clothing was traditionally painted from the early Renaissance to the nineteenth century. Our fallen woman's hands, clasped before the loosely-tied shawl, further evoke images of the Magdalene clutching her clothing to herself, as if in the act of covering her shame, by Artemisia Gentileschi, Titian, Bartolomé Esteban Murillo, and Charles Le Brun, among others (Figs. 16-19, Appendix I).

These paintings, like *The Awakening Conscience*, all catch the Magdalene in the very moment of her conversion, with eyes upturned as if hearing interiorly the music of the true voice. And the Magdalene, like Cecilia, has long been associated with true hearing. After her conversion, she is said to have been caught up to heaven seven times a day in accordance with the canonical hours, where she would hear the singing of the angels (Fig. 20, Appendix I). Like Cecilia, then, Mary Magdalene renounced worldly music for true music, exchanging the worldly sense of hearing – hearing with Tennyson's "dying ears" – for a true hearing, a purified sense receptive of the divine voice.[47] Savonarola alluded to her association with purified hearing and

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[46] Slim, "Mary Magdalene, Musician and Dancer," 463, and Brian Cohen, "Saint Mary Magdalen as a Cultural Symbol," 205-209. Brian Cohen considers the Chatsworth panel to be an image of the Magdalene "at the very moment of her conversion."

[47] The trope of metanoia accomplished through the sense of hearing dates back at least as far as the fourth century, when Saint Augustine, weeping in a garden for his inability to free

true music in a hymn: "Up to that harsh mountain, where the Magdalene contemplates,/Let us go with sweet songs and a pure and serene mind."[48] The French theologian Jean Gerson also emphasized her conversion from sin to true hearing: "Happy are you, O Mary [Magdalene], whose many sins were covered over, who hear again and again the heavenly voices."[49] And the thirteenth-century Franciscan Luca da Padova noted in a sermon that Mary Magdalene expressed the principle of *ordo in contrarium*, perfect order in seeming opposition, because she rose from the depths of sin to the heights of heavenly glory.[50] Indeed, popular belief in the Middle Ages held that after her conversion, the Magdalene's virginity was restored.[51] Mary Magdalene's very ethos is reversal; she embodies not only the miraculous transit from great sin to great sanctity, but also the mysterious paradox of Christianity, whereby one state can be transformed by the grace of God into its utter opposite. As Christ says in the Gospel of John, "Amen, amen, I say to you, you will weep and mourn, while the world rejoices; you will grieve, but your grief will become joy."[52]

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himself from sexual sin (again, the *topos* of tears), "heard a voice . . . chanting . . . over and over again 'Pick up and read, pick up and read [*Tolle legge]'*." On opening the Bible, he read the words of Saint Paul to the Romans (Romans 13:13-14): "Not in riots and drunken parties, not in eroticism and indecencies, not in strife and rivalry, but put on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for the flesh in lusts," and his conversion was complete (*Confessions*, Book 9, 29, transl. Henry Chadwick [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998], 151).

[48] Stanzas 1-2 of one of Savonarola's two *laude* in honor of Mary Magdalene, quoted in Katherine Ludwig Jansen, *The Making of the Magdalen: Preaching and Popular Devotion in the Later Middle Ages* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 129.

[49] Connolly, *Mourning into Joy*, 132.

[50] Jansen, *The Making of the Magdalen,* 128.

[51] Slim, "Mary Magdalene, Musician and Dancer," 469-70.

[52] John 16:20. Thomas à Kempis, in *Imitation of Christ*, gives this passage a Magdalenian interpretation: "Did not Mary Magalene arise at once from where she was weeping when [her

Magdalenism and Reform

Devotion to Mary Magdalene spread throughout Europe in the Middle Ages, and from the thirteenth century on, convents were erected in her name for fallen women who had repented and taken vows as nuns.[53] In addition, lay Magdalene confraternities sprang up whose members were dedicated to the reform of prostitutes.[54] Mary Magdalene was a particularly popular saint in pre-Reformation England:

> Taverns and ships were named for her; both Oxford and Cambridge had collegiate foundations bearing her name . . . and the city of Exeter boasted of her finger, housed in a tenth-century shrine, the first dedicated to the saint in the West.[55]

Even after the Reformation, wayward women who had repented and were in need of rehabilitation were called "magdalenes," and the first institution erected for the purpose of reforming rather than punishing them was the Magdalen Hospital for

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sister] Martha said to her, 'the Master is here and calling for you'? Oh, happy hour when Jesus calls us from tears to spiritual joy!" (Book 2, Chapter 8, transl. William C. Creary [Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1989], 42).

[53] Slim, "Mary Magdalene, Musician and Dancer," 470.

[54] Jansen, *The Making of the Magdalen*, 110.

[55] Patricia S. Kruppa, "'More sweet and liquid than any other': Victorian Images of Mary Magdalene," in *Religion and Irreligion in Victorian Society: Essays in Honor of R.K. Webb,* ed. R.W. Davis and R.J. Helmstadter (London and New York: Routledge, 1992), 117.

the Reception of Penitent Prostitutes, founded in London in 1758.[56] The enclosure of English common lands in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, which forced large numbers of subsistence farmers off the land, followed by the Industrial Revolution, which drew unskilled rural laborers to poorly-paid factory work in the bustling metropolises of London, Glasgow, Manchester, Liverpool, and Leeds, spurred a dramatic shift in the population from country to city. The mass influx into urban areas of poor, unskilled laborers, usually earning wages insufficient to support a family, had as one of its results the swelling of the ranks of prostitutes, making it possible for the French observer Flora Tristan to observe in the 1830s that "[p]rostitution [in London] . . . is so widespread that it seems like an omnivorous monster," and to denounce the Anglican priest who,

> from his pulpit . . . will deliver a moving sermon on the loving kindness Jesus showed towards Mary Magdalen, but for the thousands of Magdalens who die every day in all the horrors of poverty and desertion . . . has no tears to shed.[57]

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[56] On the founding of the Magdalen Hospital, see Scott Thompson Rogers, "Rethinking Fallenness in Victorian Women's Poetry" (Ph.D. diss., Oklahoma State University, 2003), 20-32. Edward Bristow points out that "[the] British were the last Europeans to undertake [the work of rescuing prostitutes] and the delay is related to the popular association of this work with Roman Catholicism. When the idea was first mooted in 1749, there were protests in the *Gentleman's Magazine* against 'popish convents' and 'sacred prisons'." (Bristow, *Vice and Vigilance: Purity Movements in Britain Since 1700* [Totowa, NJ: Rowman and Littlefield, 1977], 64.)

[57] *The London Journal of Flora Tristan*, transl. Jean Hawkes [London, Virago Press, 1982], 89. The sociological literature of the period indicates that the fallen women of London and other urban areas commonly came from the country to the city to better their prospects, and were often seduced en route or upon arrival; see William Acton, *Prostitution, Considered in Its Moral, Social, and Sanitary Aspects in London and Other Large Cities* (1857, revised 1870, reprinted New York and Washington: Frederick A. Praeger, 1969); and Henry Mayhew, *London Labour and the London Poor* (1862, reprinted New York: Dover, 1968). Indeed, a review of *The Awakening Conscience* in the rescuers' magazine *The Magdalen's Friend and Female Homes' Intelligencer* assumes the rural origin of the painting's female protagonist: "Poor child! Your mother! You thought of her first, you know; and then the

Though they may have shed no tears, Anglican clergymen frequently delivered sermons of the same type on July 22, Mary Magdalene's feast day, "to the inmates of . . . the many penitential associations that bore her name."[58] By mid-century, Magdalene homes and asylums were commonplace in a Britain where an estimated 50,000 women worked as prostitutes in every major urban area.[59] The complicated Victorian attitudes toward prostitution, sex, marriage, and women in general are borne out not only by these numbers, but also by the aura of sin that the profession's visibility leant to a city. In 1858, a few years after Hunt's painting was completed, *The Times* noted that "in no capital city of Europe [is there] . . . daily and nightly such a shameless display of Prostitution as in London,"[60] while one year later James Miller remarked in *Prostitution Considered in Relation to Its Causes*:

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little cottage, and the shady lanes, and the still valley with the river, and the bit of garden, and the wide hayfields, and the cowslip glade and the foxglove banks!" ("The Awakened Conscience," *The Magdalen's Friend* 2 [1862], 268; quoted in Lynn Nead, "The Magdalen in Modern Times: The Mythology of the Fallen Woman in Pre-Raphaelite Painting" in *Looking On: Images of Feminity in the Visual Arts and Media*, ed. Rosemary Betterton [London, Pandora Press, 1987], 90.)

[58] Kruppa, "'More sweet and liquid than any other'," 117.

[59] See Eric Trudgill, "Prostitution and Paterfamilias," in *The Victorian City: Images and Realities*, vol. 2, ed. H.J. Dyos and Michael Wolff (London and Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1973), 693-706, and Judith Walkowitz, *Prostitution and Victorian Society: Women, Class, and the State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980). Figures for women working in prostitution varied widely, however: according to Michael Pearson, "In 1857, the medical journal *The Lancet* had estimated that one house in every sixty in the capital was a brothel and that one woman in every sixteen was a whore – which if true meant that there were roughly 6,000 brothels and 80,000 prostitutes in London, which conforms with other sources." (Pearson, *The Age of Consent: Victorian Prostitution and Its Enemies* [Newton Abbot: David & Charles, 1972], 25).

[60] *The Times*, 8 January 1858, 6 (Quoted in Trudgill, "Prostitution and Paterfamilias," 694).

> Let anyone walk certain streets of London, Glasgow or Edinburgh, of a night, and without troubling his head with statistics, his eyes and ears will tell him at once what a multitudinous Amazonian army the devil keeps in constant field service, for advancing his own ends. The very stones seem alive with lust, and the very atmosphere is tainted.[61]

Middle-class women – as the reviewer for *Punch* would have it, "the sisters of the tempted and the fallen" – rallied to the aid of those in prostitution, working in outreach "rescue missions" such as the Ladies' National Association, the Rescue Society, the Moonlight Mission, and the Social Purity Association, establishing and staffing magdalene institutions, and even supporting a journal targeted to them, *The Magdalen's Friend and Female Homes' Intelligencer* (edited by "a Clergyman").[62]

Several levels of prostitution existed in Victorian England, from the high-class courtesan to the self-supporting streetwalker to the domestic servant, seamstress, shopgirl, or factory worker who supplemented her meager income with selective part-time prostitution on the side – women who, the social reformer William Acton

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[61] Quoted in Barbara Littlewood and Linda Mahood, "Prostitutes, Magdalenes and Wayward Girls: Dangerous Sexualities of Working Class Women in Victorian Scotland," *Gender & History* 3/2 (1991): 160.

[62] See Deborah Logan, "An 'outstretch'd hand to the fallen': *The Magdalen's Friend* and the Victorian Reclamation Movement," Part I, *Victorian Periodicals Review* 30/4 (Winter 1997): 368-387. As noted above, prominent men, including the prime ministers Disraeli and Gladstone, were also involved in rescue work; Charles Dickens, who had written sympathetically about fallen women in *David Copperfield* and *Oliver Twist,* collaborated with heiress and reformer Angela Burdett Coutts on the founding of Urania Cottage, a halfway house for reformed prostitutes that prepared them for new lives as wives in Australia. Intriguingly, Dickens proposed music study for the inmates of Urania Cottage, writing to music educator John Hullah in 1847: "We want them to learn to sing in parts, on your system . . . I attach immense importance to [the] refining influence [of this instruction]" (quoted in Laura Vorachek, "Instruments of Desire: Women's Domestic Music-Making in Victorian Literature and Culture"[Ph.D. diss., University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2004], 31).

asserted, "ultimately [swelled] the ranks of prostitution through being by their position peculiarly exposed to temptation."[63] It is this last category – low-income women wage-earners –from which the ranks of lost girls and fallen women were thought mainly to come; in addition to being so poorly paid that only by resorting to casual prostitution could their survival be ensured, such girls were believed to be innocent but weak, and prone to a love of pleasure, making them easy prey for the supposedly rapacious sexual appetites of upper-class men like the lover in *The Awakening Conscience*.[64] Homes and rehabilitation centers were founded for this class of Magdalene in particular; the Magdalene Institution in Glasgow, for instance, focused its work on the "newly fallen," and on "victims of seduction," mainly young girls previously employed as domestic servants or unskilled factory workers, who were considered more disposed to salvation than their hardened sisters walking the streets.[65] We can assume that the young woman in Hunt's painting has risen from this

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[63] Acton, *Prostitution*, 129.

[64] Reformers also implicated "class-inappropriate vanity leading girls to dress 'above their station'" as a cause of prostitution (Logan, "An 'outstretch'd hand to the fallen'," 372). William Acton attributed fallenness to a confluence of male vice, including "natural instinct" and "sinful nature," and female circumstance, including "Necessity, imbued by the inability to obtain a living by honest means consequent on a fall from virtue" and "Extreme poverty." Acton elaborates: "[The] fall from virtue may result . . . from a woman's love being bestowed on an unworthy object, who fulfills his professions of attachment by deliberately accomplishing her ruin. . . many, no doubt, fall through vanity and idleness, love of dress, love of excitement, love of drink, but by far the larger proportion are driven to evil courses by cruel biting poverty . . . What wonder if, urged on by want and toil . . . and exposed to selfish tempters, a large proportion of these poor girls fall from the path of virtue?" (Acton, *Prostitution,* 117-129).

[65] Littlewood and Mahood, "Prostitutes, Magdalenes, and Wayward Girls," 165. Conversely, *The Magdalen's Friend and Female Homes' Intelligencer* relates with indignation, "A girl is reported to have applied for admission to one of the older Institutions in London for the rescue of the fallen. Upon examination, however, it was ascertained that *she had not fallen low enough* to merit the assistance she craved, and she was accordingly rejected because her moral character was not sufficiently depraved." (*The Magdalen's Friend*

class – her rise, ironically, having been predicated upon her fall. Yet, though she has fallen, Hunt shows her in the very moment of reversal, in the transformation from sin to salvation, from "whore-made-mistress"[66] to penitent Magdalene, undergoing the radical reform that is conversion.

William Holman Hunt and Metanoia

As demonstrated by the proliferation of women's missions to the fallen, this was an era that believed in the efficacy of both social and spiritual reform, often linking the two. It would make sense, then, that images of Mary Magdalene, the saint who epitomizes reform in its most dramatic and paradoxical state as *metanoia* or total conversion, were popular among Victorian and Pre-Raphaelite artists (as well as their contemporaries on the Continent; see Figs. 17-23, Appendix I). Hunt's teacher of life drawing at the Royal Academy, William Etty, seems to have been particularly fascinated with Mary Magdalene, exploiting the theme of her penitence for all of its erotic possibility (Figs. 21-23, Appendix I). And in their quest to define an art that would embody a true spirituality in contrast to both the soulless materialism of modern life and the formulaic painting and iconographic styles of their teachers and predecessors (Hunt was especially critical of Etty's "dead colouring" technique),[67] Hunt and Rossetti, as well as their contemporaries both in England and on the Continent, also produced images of Mary Magdalene (Figs. 24-29, Appendix I).

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and Female Homes' Intelligencer 35, quoted in Logan, "An 'outstretch'd hand to the fallen'," 376; emphasis in original).

[66] Leppert, *The Sight of Sound*, 193.

[67] Hunt, *Pre-Raphaelitism*, I, 79.

While Hunt's unfinished painting *Christ and the Two Marys* (Fig. 26, Appendix I) focuses on the resplendent figure of the risen Christ, showing the Magdalene bowing her head before him in humility, Rossetti's 1858 pen-and-ink drawing *Mary Magdalen at the Door of Simon the Pharisee* (Fig. 24, Appendix I) and 1857 watercolor *Mary Magdalen Leaving the House of Feasting* (Fig. 25, Appendix I) show the Magdalene respectively in the moment immediately before her conversion, when she first responds to the call of Christ, and in the moment immediately after as, now haloed, she leaves the house where she has encountered him, washed his feet with her tears, and been forgiven her sins. The 1858 drawing alludes to the Magdalene's earlier life as a musician, showing her in the company of a band of musicians passing by the house of Simon the Pharisee while Christ is dining within (He is shown in profile in the window). Drawn to Him, she begins to pull the roses, symbolic of prostitution, from her hair. In the sonnet Rossetti wrote to accompany the drawing, the Magdalene says to her lover, who is seen attempting to restrain her:

> Oh, loose me! See'st thou my Bridegroom's face
> That draws me to Him? For His feet my kiss,
> My hair, my tears He craves to-day: and oh!
> What words can tell what other day and place
> Shall see me clasp those blood-stained feet of His?
> He needs me, calls me, loves me: let me go![68]

William Holman Hunt, an Evangelical Protestant, was fascinated throughout his artistic career with depicting moments of "sudden illumination,"[69] and as a young

[68] Ernest Fontana, "Mary Magdalene and the Pre-Raphaelites," *The Journal of Pre-Raphaelite Studies* 9 (2000): 91-92.

man had himself had a powerful conversion that was to inform all his subsequent work.[70] George P. Landow notes that "[as] a radical Protestant, Holman Hunt did not depict a sacrament . . . but chose instead to portray a peculiarly Protestant theme – the Savior's visit to the individual sinner which produces conversion and a higher vision."[71] Hunt's young woman, portrayed in the moment of conversion, is shown receiving this Visitor, whose presence is made literal in the painting for which *The Awakening Conscience* was meant to be a pendant, *The Light of the World* (Fig. 30, Appendix I).[72] In *The Awakening Conscience*, we see the effect in time and space of

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[69] George P. Landow, "Shadows Cast by *The Light of the World*: William Holman Hunt's Religious Paintings, 1893-1905," The *Art Bulletin* 65 (1983): 480. Martin Meisel elaborates: "Holman Hunt's . . . solution to the problem of incorporating a story with an intense human significance in a pictorial configuration . . . was . . . a refinement of the pictorial moment into what was most essential and most nearly instantaneous in narrative: peripeteia, the moment of change . . . [this] intent was wholly in keeping with Hunt's lifelong faith in the indwelling presence of spiritual significance in physical reality and external events, and his sense of the painter's vocation to make that presence legible. The moment of psychological change in its deepest significance is the moment of spiritual conversion" (*Realizations*, 359).

[70] Indeed, notwithstanding the national crisis in faith precipitated by Charles Lyell's work on fossils and the publication of Darwin's *On the Origin of Species*, mid-nineteenth-century England proved fertile ground for spiritual seeking and religious conversion, including many storied journeys "from Oxford to Rome" among high-church Anglicans like John Henry Newman, whose conversion has been called "the pre-eminent religious scandal of nineteenth-century England" (Melanie McDonagh, "Let Cardinal Newman's sexuality stay buried," *The Times Online*, August 28, 2008, http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/comment/columnists/guest_contributors/article4615144.ece), in 1845, and Henry Edward Manning in 1851 (both men would be created cardinals by Pope Pius IX). Conversion is also a common theme in the literature of the period; see the discussion in Chapter 4 of George Moore's *Evelyn Innes* (1898) and *Sister Teresa* (1901) and, among others, *Loss and Gain* (1848) by Newman, *From Oxford to Rome* (1847) by Elizabeth Furlong Shipton Harris, *Lothair* by Benjamin Disraeli (1870), and *Helbeck of Bannisdale* (1898) by Mrs. Humphry Ward.

[71] Landow, "Shadows Cast by *The Light of the World*," 481.

[72] Hunt completed *The Light of the World* in 1853, and it was hung along with *The Awakening Conscience* at the Royal Academy Exhibition in 1854, where it met with scorn; the critic for the *Athenaeum* wrote: "The face of this wild fantasy. . . expresses such a strange mingling of disgust, fear, and imbecility, that we turn from it to relieve the sight . . . Altogether this picture is a failure." (Hunt, *Pre-Raphaelitism,* I, 405; Christina Rossetti had posed as the model for Christ's face). Unfortunately, the two paintings were hung in separate

the action taking place in eternity in *The Light of the World*: Christ, His lamp dispelling the surrounding darkness, knocking at the door of the sinner's heart, calling for awakening and imparting true hearing and vision. Hunt said of *The Awakening Conscience*: "My desire was to show how the still small voice speaks to a human soul in the turmoil of life,"[73] elaborating:

> When *The Light of the World* was on my easel . . . in 1851, it occurred to me that my spiritual subject called for a material counterpart in a picture representing in actual life the manner in which the appeal of the spirit of heavenly love calls a soul to abandon a lower life.[74]

Hunt explained of his symbolism in *The Light of the World*: "The music of the still small voice was the summons . . . to awaken," and "In making it a night scene . . . I had followed . . . [the words of] Saint Paul to the sleeping soul, 'The night is far spent, the day is at hand'."[75] Saint Paul's exhortation to the soul, like Tennyson's poem "Tears, Idle Tears," and Saint John of the Cross's "Spiritual Canticle," occurs between dark and dawn, the time when "dying ears" may be opened to the true voice,

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rooms rather than side by side, so that Hunt's intention to draw a parallel between them was lost on the public. Notwithstanding the critical response, *The Light of the World* became one of the most popular religious images of the nineteenth century (for further reading, see Jeremy Maas, *Holman Hunt and the Light of the World* [London: Scolar Press, 1984]).

[73] Hunt, *Pre-Raphaelitism,* I, 347.

[74] Hunt, *Pre-Raphaelitism,* II, 429. According to George P. Landow, "Hunt . . . created two images of the same "happening," each of which allows the spectator to perceive that even from a different perspective – the first [*The Light of the World*] from the vantage point of eternity and the second [*The Awakening Conscience*] from a specific historical moment" (Landow, "Shadows Cast by *The Light of the World*," 481).

[75] Hunt quotes Romans 13:12, the verse immediately preceding the one which precipitated Augustine's conversion (see note 47). Hunt, *Pre-Raphaelitism,* I, 350-351.

and "dying eyes" may receive new vision through the shock of peripeteia – the moment of reversal – and the subsequent cleansing of penitential (not idle) tears. The young woman in *The Awakening Conscience* hears the knock in *The Light of the World*, sees the truth of her situation, and stands startled in her nightgown, in a liminal state between sleeping and awakening, caught between the music of this world – the parlor music on the piano and on the floor – and the higher music, the still small voice heard only by her.

Hunt wrote in his memoirs that

> [t]he unintended stirring up of the deeps of pure affection by the idle sing-song of an empty mind led me to see how the companion of the girl's fall might himself be the unconscious utterer of a divine message.[76]

In *The Awakening Conscience*, then, he advances the notion that even the basest things of this world, and even the most compromised of lives, may act as agents of and actors in the drama of metanoia. Moreover, for all the personal nature of the young woman's response to the Eternal Visitor, and for all Hunt's Protestantism, I would argue that, according to Augustine's definition of the sacraments as "visible words,"[77] the sheet music Hunt has painted is also meant to be viewed as sacramental in its nature and its effect.[78] For (while the individual perception of the Christian

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[76] Hunt, *Pre-Raphaelitism,* I, 347.

[77] Stephen H. Webb, *The Divine Voice: Christian Proclamation and the Theology of Sound* [Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2004], 42.

[78] Interestingly, Hunt was inspired to paint *The Light of the World*, which became a *de facto* icon of nineteenth-century Protestantism, after being given a print from a Catholic bookshop illustrating Revelation 3:20, "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock," by Elizabeth Siddal, the

proclamation may be a Protestant notion), like the sacraments of the Roman Catholic church, which use the material substance of the earthly as a vehicle for the conveyance of the divine, the sheet music in the painting is an agent of spiritual change, a visible sign of Christ's word heard privately by Hunt's protagonist.[79] While it exists in the form of printed paper, it contains the symbols, in notes and words, of the melody that will change the girl's heart. Through actions taking place in the natural world, using even the most inanimate of objects and the most unconscious of actors, Christ, as shown in "The Light of the World," transmits the essence of a supernatural grace – he knocks at the door of the girl's heart through those notes so

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artist and model who later became Dante Gabriel Rossetti's wife (Hunt, *Pre-Raphaelitism,* I, 307). Among other critics, Thomas Carlyle vilified the painting for its "Catholic" imagery, disparaging it as "a mere papistical fantasy" (Hunt *Pre-Raphaelitism*, 355; the Pre-Raphaelites were often accused of pro-Catholic sympathies by the contemporary press; even John Ruskin took pains to downplay the Brotherhood's "Romanizing tendencies" [Letter to *The Times*, May 30, 1851, in Ruskin, *Works*, XII, 327]). Like Hunt, however, Carlyle also, in *Sartor Resartus* (1833-34), associated Christ's call to awaken with divine music: "Our highest Orpheus walked in Judea, eighteen-hundred years ago; his sphere-melody, flowing in wild native tones, took captive the ravished souls of men; and, being of a true sphere-melody, still flows and sounds, though now with thousandfold accompaniments, and rich symphonies, through all our hearts; and modulates, and divinely leads them" (Carlyle, *The Works of Thomas Carlyle*, I, Book III, Chapter viii [New York, Scribner's, 1903], 210).

[79] A frankly sacramental vision of Christ that is reminiscent of both *The Light of the World* and Rossetti's *Mary Magdalen at the Door of Simon the Pharisee* is James Tissot's *Behold, he standeth behind our wall*, the frontispiece of Tissot's illustrated New Testament (Figure 31, Appendix I). Tissot, a painter known for his scenes of Victorian social mores, returned to the Catholic faith in the 1880s after having had a vision of Christ. Thereafter he eschewed worldly subjects for religious ones, and, like Hunt, made a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. "Behold, he standeth behind our wall" shows the head of Christ looking out from behind a latticed window, surrounded by sunflowers meant to symbolize the Christian soul that bends toward Him as its sun. The face of Christ partially obscured by the grill (reminiscent of the head of Christ in Rossetti's drawing of the Magdalene at the Pharisee's door, Figure 24, Appendix I) calls to mind a priest in the confessional, and the grapevine near the window represents the Eucharist. Thus, in contrast to what Landow considers the Protestant imagery of *The Awakening Conscience*, Tissot's painting is meant to suggest that it is "through the rituals of the true Church the worthy soul may find Christ" (Nancy Rose Marshall and Malcolm Warner, *James Tissot: Victorian Life/Modern Love* [New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1999], 170).

casually played on the piano by her lover – and peripeteia, a complete reversal, is thus effected. The song conveys the knock, which in turn conveys the light of redemption. On hearing the song, she discards her old life, the life of the idle tears in the parlor song at her feet, for a new life of transformed vision, whose tears are not idle, but healing, and whose transformation we hope will be lasting and real.

CHAPTER 3:

MUSIC, MIRRORS, AND MARIAN DOPPELGÄNGERS

Ford Madox Brown (1821-1893), though never an official member of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, was a close associate of their circle and a champion of their painterly ethos. For a time he gave lessons to Dante Gabriel Rossetti, which, however, seem to have fallen "rather . . . on deaf ears."[1] Brown's own style was strongly influenced by the Nazarenes, a group of artists led by Johann Friedrich Overbeck who met at the Vienna Academy in the early days of the German Romantic movement and subsequently expatriated to Italy in 1810. Brown met Overbeck on an 1845 trip to Rome, where the Nazarenes had taken up a quasi-monastic communal lifestyle in an abandoned monastery (by the time of Brown's visit, only Overbeck remained). Like the Pre-Raphaelites a generation later, the Nazarenes took as their aim the revival of true spirituality in religious painting, and again like the Pre-Raphaelites, they ostensibly rejected much of the modern lineage of Western art, seeking inspiration in the art of the Middle Ages and early Renaissance.[2] While Brown also sought both technical and metaphysical models in the art of the past, his paintings, both religious and secular, are pointedly topical to his age, revealing "a fundamental Victorian tenet: the desire to conflate social realism and social

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[1] Sandra Forty, *The Pre-Raphaelites* (New York: Barnes and Noble Books, 1997), 28.

[2] Indeed, the influential Victorian architect and Catholic convert Augustus Welby Pugin emphasized that "[British] students who journey to Italy to study art [should] follow the steps of the great Overbeck . . . Italian art of the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries is the beau ideal of Christian purity, and its imitation cannot be too strongly inculcated" (Henry Augustin Beers, *A History of English Romanticism in the Nineteenth Century* [New York: H. Holt and Company, 1901], 371).

idealism."[3] Brown's inclination to an "ethos of painting modern morality works"[4] is evident in both his secular and his spiritual canvases, among the latter of which *Take Your Son, Sir* (Fig. 32, Appendix I) should be classed.

Towering Woman, "Teeny" Man

Brown began painting *Take Your Son, Sir* in 1851, and continued to work on it until 1892, leaving it unfinished at his death. The painting shows a young woman holding a limp, naked baby. In the mirror behind her head, we see the reflection of a well-dressed man, apparently still in his hat, and mustachioed like the lover in *The Awakening Conscience*, extending his arms to receive the baby from her. Murray Roston has noted that Brown's use of a mirror to reflect the father forces the viewer into "the uncomfortable position of the irresponsible parent . . . thereby compelled, as it were, to undergo the harrowing experience and share the guilt" along with him.[5] The mirror also reflects a rosewood piano like the one that figures so prominently in Hunt's painting. To the right of the woman is a cradle shrouded with a diaphanous veil. The woman's expression is defiant, her cheeks reddened as if by passion or anger, and she holds the child with a distinct lack of maternal tenderness. Martin

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[3] Gerald Curtis, "Ford Madox Brown's *Work*: An Iconographic Analysis," *The Art Bulletin* 74/4 (1992): 623.

[4] Forty, *The Pre-Raphaelites*, 29.

[5] Roston, *Victorian Contexts: Literature and the Visual Arts* (New York: New York University Press, 1996), 42. Kenneth Bendiner has suggested a Freudian interpretation, pointing out that, while "[s]everal writers have extravagantly interpreted [*Take Your Son, Sir*] as a picture of a kept woman, illegitimacy, guilt, and feminism. . . at the very least it [also] shows . . . [a] large female towering above a teeny male, who is visible only in the mirror reflection" (*The Art of Ford Madox Brown* [University Park, Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998], 96).

Meisel has speculated that the expression of the woman in *Take Your Son, Sir* is analogous to that of the woman in *The Awakening Conscience* before Hunt repainted her face: of *Take Your Son, Sir*, he says, "the complexities of pain, triumph, and exhaustion [visible on the young mother's face] result in a very strange expression indeed, with some affinities to . . . Hunt's woman in travail"[6] (as noted above, Meisel posits that William Holman Hunt had intended the expression of his female protagonist to represent the birth agony).[7] If Hunt did in fact intend the young woman in *The Awakening Conscience* to appear to be in the throes of labor, we can speculate that his intention was not literal, but symbolic, to indicate the painful bringing forth of her new, changed heart.

Thus, Ford Madox Brown's "startling vignette of an unmarried woman thrusting her child at the delinquent father"[8] can be read as both sister-image to and social commentary on *The Awakening Conscience*. If the woman in Hunt's painting is in figurative travail over the deliverance of her soul, the woman in Brown's painting has recently been in literal travail over the deliverance of a new soul, the baby that she holds out to his reluctant father. Indeed, one critic has observed that she even appears to be proffering the child *ex utero*; the placement of the naked baby in the midst of the circular opening of drapery surrounding him is reminiscent of anatomical sketches of the child's gestation in the womb that were reproduced in

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[6] Meisel, *Realizations: Narrative, Pictorial, and Theatrical Arts in Nineteenth-Century England* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), 367, note 29.

[7] Before repainting. See Chapter 2, note 38.

[8] Roston, *Victorian Contexts*, 42.

encyclopedias throughout the nineteenth century.[9] As the woman extends the baby forward, grasping him beneath the left shoulder and thigh, she seems almost to be extruding him directly from her womb, as if in a caesarian delivery. The child is the most realistically rendered of the three figures in the painting; his mother's stiff, frieze-like posture and stylized, equivocal expression give her the appearance of an allegorical figure, while his father reflected in miniature in the mirror seems almost cartoonish. In another parallel to Hunt's painting, the young mother's wedding-ring finger is "carefully left invisible."[10]

In his ambiguous representation of this awkward trio, Brown appears to be commenting upon the logical outcome of the relationship between the man and woman in *The Awakening Conscience* – logical, that is, if the woman had remained the man's mistress. Moreover, Brown's uncomfortable family portrait is a mirror of events in his own life around the time he began the work. The model for Brown's protagonist was his mistress, Emma Hill, a working-class London girl whom he had first met when he engaged her as a model, and who, as her grandson recalled, had "few accomplishments and very little *savoir-faire*."[11] Emma was the daughter of a poor farmer who had moved his family from Gloucestershire to London in the 1830s after an agricultural depression that had resulted in widespread rioting among farm

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[9] Marcia Pointon, *Naked Authority: The Body in Western Painting, 1830-1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 109-110.

[10] Marsh, *Pre-Raphaelite Sisterhood*, 40.

[11] Marsh, *Pre-Raphaelite Sisterhood*, 38.

workers.[12] As such, she fit the stereotype, at least broadly, of the nineteenth-century fallen woman, who was typically depicted as an innocent country girl displaced to the city, where she was particularly vulnerable to seduction.[13] Emma began modeling for Brown in 1848, and their relationship seems to have become sexual soon afterward; the artist noted in his diary on February 10, 1849 that his work had been disrupted by a visit from "a girl as loves me," which had caused him to stay "up late through foolery."[14] Emma gave birth to their daughter Catherine out of wedlock toward the end of 1850, a few months before Brown began work on *Take Your Son, Sir*.[15] Brown married Emma in secret in 1853, commemorating the event in his meticulously-kept diary only by noting that he had lost many days of work to "interruptions of a domestic nature."[16] Brown's first wife had died in 1846, leaving him a young widower with a small daughter; Jan Marsh speculates that although Emma was "neither socially fitted to be the wife of a gentleman-painter nor stepmother to his daughter [and] her moral position as an artist's model and 'fallen girl' was a further difficulty . . . Brown recognized his moral responsibility and duty as [her] seducer,"

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[12] In addition to higher wages, the rioting workers demanded an end to the use of threshing machines, which had severely compromised their employment; destruction of threshing machines was a prominent feature of the riots. Gloucestershire was one of the southern English counties most affected by the eighteenth-century acts of enclosure and the subsequent displacement of farm workers from the country to the cities (see Chapter 2, p. 41).

[13] See Chapter 2, footnote 57.

[14] Ford Madox Brown, *The Diary of Ford Madox Brown*, ed. Virginia Surtees (New Haven and London: Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art, 1981), 57-58.

[15] Catherine Brown's birthdate was amended to 1851 in the record of her baptism, which took place in April 1852, presumably to make her appear younger and therefore of a more usual age to be baptized (Brown, *Diary*, xiii).

[16] Brown, *Diary*, 80.

and finally consented to marry her when their daughter was about two-and-a-half years old.[17] The fact that the wedding was clandestine, as Catherine's baptism had been the previous year, reveals Brown's ambivalence about being officially joined to a socially inferior woman, and in fact it appears that before their marriage, he had set Emma upon a course of education similar to the one that William Holman Hunt devised for Annie Miller.[18]

Rather astonishingly, given the woman's expression, the diminutive stature of the man (and his relegation to a mere reflection in the mirror, as if his paternal delinquency merited such diminishment), and the painting's defiantly worded title, *Take Your Son, Sir* has been called "a celebration of marriage and parenthood," showing a young wife lovingly holding out a first-born child to his father.[19] But, as I have suggested, the painting is far more likely the image of a well-to-do man's working-class mistress, portrayed by Brown "as [a] haloed magdalen, presenting their bastard to the reluctant father,"[20] a scenario that would also more accurately reflect the circumstances of the artist's life. Seen thus, *Take Your Son, Sir* forms an ironic

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[17] Marsh, *Pre-Raphaelite Sisterhood*, 39.

[18] See Chapter 2, footnote 18. Hunt's granddaughter Diana Holman-Hunt notes tartly that "[m]any a distinguished man was inspired to save and improve a seedy soul. Pygmalion's example was popular. Madox Brown had hidden young Emma for years while he educated her: she was almost presentable now. Soon he would marry her" (Holman-Hunt, *My Grandfather, His Wives and Loves* [New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1969], 96). Virginia Surtees points out that, however, although such an education was "not unlikely at a time when this was no uncommon occurrence among artists aware of the inequality of background and upbringing of the women they hoped to marry," the only evidence of Emma's having undergone such instruction "is based on family legend" (Brown, *Diary*, xiv).

[19] *The Pre-Raphaelites*, Tate Gallery Catalogue no. 82 (1984), 149-50.

[20] Pointon, *Naked Authority*, 107.

pendant to *The Awakening Conscience*, hinting at what might lie in store for Hunt's kept woman.

The young mother is located in a room similar to the lodgings of the mistress in *The Awakening Conscience*: the piano, the prints on the wall above it, and especially the mirror all reference Hunt's painting. Kenneth Bendiner suggests, without directly naming *The Awakening Conscience*, that the mirror in the painting is an allusion not only to "other such objects in several Pre-Raphaelite paintings," but also to the round mirror in Jan van Eyck's *Arnolfini Marriage Portrait* (1434), a painting in which the bride appears to be pregnant, although she is actually holding up the full skirt of her long dress, which, gathered before her, mimics the swollen belly of pregnancy (see Figs. 33-34, Appendix I).[21] The *Arnolfini Marriage Portrait*, owned by the National Gallery, London, would have been accessible to both Hunt and Brown. The mirrors in both the Hunt and Brown paintings (as well as the one in Panel 1 of Augustus Egg's *Past and Present* [Fig. 3, Appendix I]) expand the claustrophobic interior worlds in which the paintings' domestic narratives are played out; likewise, van Eyck's mirror reflects the outer world, showing two figures (one thought to be the painter) and a window giving onto the street. In sharp contrast to the van Eyck portrait, however, Hunt and Brown (and also Egg) depict worlds in which the idea of marriage is treated not with solemn celebration, but with grim irony. Although Brown eventually married his Emma (and, as already noted, Hunt had sought to marry Annie Miller) once she had sufficiently overcome her humble origins, the possibility of marriage between men and women of such differing social

[21] Kenneth Bendiner, *The Art of Ford Madox Brown*, note to Figure 26 (no page number).

circumstances was generally distant at best,[22] as both Brown and Hunt allude in their iconographic references to the *Arnolfini Marriage Portrait*.

Through the Looking-Glass

Both the narrative and the iconography, then, of *Take Your Son, Sir* seem to mirror those of *The Awakening Conscience*, as well as the artist's own biography. The iconography of the mirror, moreover, reflects a prominent Victorian trope. The literature of nineteenth-century England abounds in images of mirrors and mirroring (as well as twins, doubles, and doppelgängers)[23] almost too numerous to mention; at a time of growing spiritual doubt, when the certainty of a life beyond this life was gradually eroding, what had been the former strong cultural consciousness of heaven and hell began to be transferred to vague beliefs in the presence of uncanny, parallel worlds.[24] Gothic and sensation fiction in particular made ample use of mirror

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[22] This was certainly the prevailing view, though doctor and reformer William Acton, based on the extensive interviews he carried out with prostitutes, claimed that "the better inclined" among them eventually became "the wedded wives of men in every grade of society, from the peerage to the stable" (Acton, *Prostitution, Considered in Its Moral, Social, and Sanitary Aspects in London and Other Large Cities* [London: Fryer, 1870, reprint New York and Washington: Frederick A. Praeger, 1969 (originally published 1857)], 73).

[23] The term "Doppelgänger" (sometimes spelled "Doppeltgänger" – literally, "double-walker," the ghostly counterpart of a living person), was coined by German Romantic novelist Jean Paul Richter (1763-1825) in his 1796 novel *Siebenkäs*. Richter explained of the word in a footnote to the novel's text: "so heissen Leute, die sich selber sehen" (thus are people called who see themselves [Richter, *Siebenkäs*, accessible at http://gutenberg.spiegel.de/?id=5&xid=1332&kapitel=12&cHash=19ae74cfc42#gb_found [accessed December 9, 2008]).

[24] The growing sense of the uncanny is evident in both the rise of horror fiction as a genre in nineteenth-century England and its effects upon mainstream literature. While the plots of sensation literature were dominated by elements of the supernatural, these devices are also evident in the work of the Brontës (for example, Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* and Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*, both 1847), Wilkie Collins (among others, *The Woman in*

imagery, especially where villains and dark deeds were concerned. The popular mystery writers J.S. Le Fanu and Angus Reach each wrote novels in which the hero catches a glimpse of the villain in a mirror;[25] Charles Collins (brother of Wilkie and also a painter associated with the Pre-Raphaelite circle)[26] published a short story, "The Compensation House," in Dickens's magazine *All the Year Round*, in which a man refuses to look in the mirror: having committed a murder years before, it is his victim's face he sees.[27] In *Jane Eyre*, Charlotte Brontë uses the mirror (as well as the doppelgänger figure of Bertha Mason) as a potent symbol of the hidden aspects of Jane's character. When young Jane is punished by being made to stay in the red room, she stands before the looking glass and sees a "strange little figure there gazing at me," whom she describes as "half fairy, half imp"; later, on her wedding day, she sees in the mirror "a robed and veiled figure, so unlike my usual self that it seemed almost the image of a stranger."[28] Perhaps the most famous example of a Victorian novel making symbolic use of the mirror is Lewis Carroll's *Through the Looking-*

White [1859-60]), and Charles Dickens, who wrote many ghost stories, the most famous of which is, of course, *A Christmas Carol* (1843).

[25] Respectively, *The Room in the Dragon Volant* (1872) and *Clement Lorimer* (1848-9).

Famous novels that make use of the twin or double include (among others) Wilkie Collins's *The Woman in White*, Mary Elizabeth Braddon's *Lady Audley's Secret* (1862), in which a Pre-Raphaelite portrait serves as the protagonist's "double," Charles Dickens's *A Tale of Two Cities* (1859), *Great Expectations* (1860-1), and *Our Mutual Friend* (1864-5), Robert Louis Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1882), and Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1891), another novel in which the protagonist's double is a painted image.

[26] See Chapter 2, footnote 4.

[27] Originally published in the 1866 extra Christmas number of *All the Year Round* (December 10, 1866), 28-35.

[28] Charlotte Brontë, *Jane Eyre* (Mineola, NY: Dover Thrift Editions, 2003), 14 and 269.

Glass (1871), the sequel to *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, in which the young protagonist appears to conquer reflection itself by entering a parallel world on the other side of her mirror (a world which, incidentally, is teeming with doubles – Tweedledum and Tweedledee, the Red Queen and the White Queen, the Lion and the Unicorn, etc.). In these and other works of fiction, the mirror reveals disturbing truths ordinarily concealed from view, showing the dark side not only of character but also, frequently, of society.

More pertinent to *Take Your Son, Sir*, mirrors also figure prominently in several poems that make reference to artists' models and their relationships to the men who paint them. In her unpublished poem "In an Artist's Studio" (thought to be about Elizabeth Siddal, her brother's muse, model, and later wife), Christina Rossetti compares the many paintings an artist has made of his model to a mirror which "[gives] back all her loveliness." Rossetti implies that the artist has sought, Pygmalion-like, to possess the woman by representing her, and in so doing has failed to see her suffering in love for him:

> A queen in opal or in ruby dress,
> A nameless girl in freshest summer greens,
> A saint, an angel; -- every canvass means
> The same one meaning, neither more nor less.
> He feeds upon her face by day and night,
> And she with true kind eyes looks back on him
>
> . . . . Not wan with waiting, not with sorrow dim;
>
> . . . .Not as she is, but as she fills his dream.[29]

[29] Christina Rossetti, *The Complete Poems* (London and New York: Penguin Books, 2001), 796.

Christina Rossetti thus touches upon the difficulty, if not the impossibility, of true love and marriage between artists and their models, men and women of such vastly different social stations. The model in her poem has grown "wan with waiting" for the artist to return her love; he, on the other hand, idealizes her in his work as "a queen . . . A saint, an angel," while apparently unable to love her for who she is. In this sense, the poem reflects the relationship between Lizzie Siddal and Dante Gabriel Rossetti. The pair were engaged for ten years, during which he broke with her several times, before they finally married in 1860. Lizzie had worked in a milliner's shop before being "discovered" by Rossetti's friend Walter Deverell and beginning her career as an artist's model. But ironically her very work as a model was a threat to her chances of a happy marriage, for "[it] was not only the legendary Mrs. Grundy [the imaginary personification of English prudery, from a character in Thomas Morton's 1798 play *Speed the Plough*] who believed that the expression 'artist's model' was a euphemism for 'whore'; so did just about everyone . . . [artists] were regarded simply as seducers."[30] Rossetti feared the disapproval of his mother and sisters and so waited five years to introduce his fiancée to them.

Another "mirror" poem about an artist's model in love with a painter, May Probyn's "The Model," is narrated by a poor young woman who, fulfilling the stereotype, has indeed been seduced and abandoned by the gentleman artist she once

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[30] Gay Daly, *Pre-Raphaelites in Love* (New York: Ticknor & Fields, 1989), 39.

sat for. Back home in her garret after meeting him by chance on the street three years after the end of their affair, she looks in the mirror:

> . . . this scrap of wretched looking-glass,
> Just big enough to hold my face, no more.
> 'Twas in this same, small, ragged bit of glass
> I looked, when first I wore the little pearls
> He gave me for my ears, three Easters back –
> Poor little paltry things enough they are!
> But then, they seemed almost too beautiful
> To wear in such a weekday world as mine.[31]

At this chance encounter, the artist has asked her to sit for a portrait of Herodias[32] – a telling contrast to the first painting for which she posed, a picture of "Mary Maiden, grave and innocent . . . Before the angel came." She understands that it is the corrupting effects of her fallenness upon her face and form (for which he is to blame) that have prompted him to hire her for Herodias:

> . . . had he loved me in those days,
> Never so little, only for one hour,
> To-day, perhaps, I were not all I am –
> Perhaps Herodias had not worn my face.

For, in the course of their brief, charged encounter, the artist has confessed that, though he seduced her, he never loved her: "a look was in your eyes/That said no

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[31] May Probyn, *A Ballad of the Road and Other Poems* (London: W. Satchell, 1883), 37-40, from which the two quotations that follow are also drawn.

[32] Herodias was the wife of Herod. The marriage was considered illicit according to Jewish law, because her first husband had been Herod's brother, provoking John the Baptist to publicly chastise the couple. In retaliation, Herodias urged her daughter Salome, whose dancing pleased Herod so much that he promised her anything she wished, to request the head of John the Baptist on a platter (Luke 9: 7-8; Mark 6:14-29; Matthew 14:1-12). In 1891, Oscar Wilde would base his play *Salome* on these accounts from the Gospels.

man could love you and be blest." In response, the model compares him to the accusatory John the Baptist, "the scorner, the rebuker" of Herodias, and finally slaps his face before walking away.

May Probyn, a poet about whom little, including her dates, is known,[33] here proposes a variation of the stereotypical relationship between a wealthy man and a poor woman,[34] as well as touching upon the exploitation implicit in the relationship of artist to model. But she goes further by venturing into the realm of theology, setting up a dichotomy of female innocence and sinfulness, using the Virgin Mary and Herodias to illustrate a duality more commonly expressed in the West by the opposition of the Virgin Mary and Mary Magdalene. The ease with which Probyn's nameless model has crossed the rather hazy line from artist's model to artist's mistress parallels the relationship between Ford Madox Brown and Emma Hill, and implies the ease with which Victorian women of a certain class could travel from a state of respectability to a state of moral ruin. But, although it has not happened in the case of May Probyn's model-narrator, this social and moral dichotomy could also be conquered, according to a centuries-old theological trope that conflated the Virgin Mary with Mary Magdalene – a trope to which I believe Brown alludes in *Take Your*

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[33] One of the few facts known about Probyn's life is that she was a Catholic convert. In 1891, after a silence of some ten years, her last book of poems was published, and included a note from the publisher explaining that "Miss Probyn is a convert to Catholicism and her new book will contain some fervent religious poetry often tinged with medieval mannerism. Her carols might have been written by some very devout and simple monk of the Middle Ages" (Angela Leighton and Margaret Reynolds, eds. *Victorian Women Poets: An Anthology* [Oxford: Blackwell, 1996], 525).

[34] See Chapter 2, footnote 20.

Son, Sir, portraying a fallen woman using symbols more commonly used to celebrate the holiest woman in the Christian church.

The mirror, then, is an important pictorial device in Brown's painting, serving not only as a narrative tool – without its reflection of the child's father, the painting would be even more mysterious than it already is – but also as a biographical allusion. It is, further, a pointed topical allusion to *The Awakening Conscience*, positing Brown's female protagonist as the reflection or double of Hunt's. Finally, the mirror is a potent and potentially loaded cultural trope of the Victorian era. But, most significantly for my argument, Brown's mirror is the location of his painting's music iconography, reflecting back to the viewer, among other things, a rosewood piano taking up the same position in the interior space (though reversed because reflected) that Hunt's piano occupies in *The Awakening Conscience*. I believe that Ford Madox Brown, in *Take Your Son, Sir*, is – like Hunt – using music imagery to show a Magdalenian figure in the moment of transformation. His painting draws upon a centuries-old tradition in Western spiritual thought by conflating Emma, Brown's "magdalene," with the Virgin Mary, and he uses music imagery as a signpost of this conflation. By painting Emma with the implements of music-making, Brown suggests that the state of fallenness can be absorbed into and overcome by the state of grace.

From Magdalene to Madonna

The conflation of the Magdalene with the Madonna illustrates a prominent ethos in medieval thought, that of the flux of sin and grace in the soul, and is strongly

associated with conversion.[35] For all the Victorian period's religious doubt, acknowledgment of the possibility of the transit from sin to grace persisted in the nineteenth century – the proliferation of rescue missions to the fallen is material evidence of this belief – and this possibility was embedded in the lexicon of Victorian visual culture. As we have seen, Mary Magdalene was still very much alive in Victorian Britain, and especially so for the Pre-Raphaelites and their circle (see Figs. 21-28, Appendix I). Concurrent with this "strong revival of interest in the legendary figure of Saint Mary Magdalene,"[36] a revived Marianism was sweeping through England, and, like the Magdalene, the Virgin Mary also found her way onto some prominent Pre-Raphaelite canvases.[37] As already seen, she held a particular fascination for Dante Gabriel Rossetti (Figs. 39-40, Appendix I), and she appears in his poetry as well as in his paintings; unlike William Holman Hunt, however, who strove "to use my powers to make more tangible Jesus Christ's history and

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[35] See Thomas H. Connolly, *Mourning into Joy: Music, Raphael, and Saint Cecilia* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1994), *passim*.

[36] Patricia S. Kruppa, "'More Sweet and Liquid than Any Other': Victorian Images of Mary Magdalene," in *Religion and Irreligion in Victorian Society: Essays in Honor of R.K. Webb*, R.W. Davis and R.J. Helmstadter, eds. (London and New York: Routledge, 1992), 118.

[37] Even Ford Madox Brown's young granddaughter, sent to convent school after his death by "some relations who were Roman Catholic" and later baptized Catholic herself, was aware of the Marian/Magdalenian dichotomy present in the Victorian consciousness, describing her convent chapel in her memoirs: "Over the altar there was a beautiful portrait of Mary Magdalene, who was wicked once but got better later on. She had a blue dress on too [like the Virgin Mary], and her hair was golden, but not tidily kept like the Virgin Mary's . . . . I liked her better than the Virgin Mary. I thought she looked as if she had a much better character. But, of course, she hadn't. She was very bad until she was converted, and then she tied her hair up and was sorry for her sins" (Juliet Soskice, *Chapters from Childhood: Reminiscences of an Artist's Granddaughter* [London: Selwyn & Blount, 1921; reprinted New York: Turtle Point Press, 1994], 70-72).

teaching,"[38] Rossetti's use of Marian imagery was detached from its essential Christian meaning, serving instead to picture his own inner life:

> When Rossetti paints the Annunciation he is not depicting one of the mysteries of the Christian faith in any theological sense . . . . he is depicting something that has really been a content of his own soul – a sense of awe, of humility, and of revelation, in which many of the emotions that attach to Christian mystery are included.[39]

The nineteenth-century Marian revival was spurred by a spate of miraculous apparitions of the Virgin in France: in Paris in 1830 to the uneducated nun Catherine Labouré (canonized in 1947); at La Salette in 1846 to two shepherd children; and, most famously, at Lourdes in 1858 to Bernadette Soubirous, a poor girl who later entered a convent, and was canonized in 1933. When the young Bernadette asked the apparition her name, she replied: "I am the Immaculate Conception." The Immaculate Conception of Mary – the belief that, alone among mortals, the Virgin Mary was born free from the stain of original sin (a controversial concept that had been debated among churchmen for centuries and had in fact been rejected by Saint Thomas Aquinas) – had been promulgated as Catholic doctrine only four years earlier by Pope Pius IX, who, in the encyclical *Ineffabilis Deus*, declared that any believer who dissented from this newly-defined dogma "has suffered shipwreck in the faith."[40]

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[38] Hunt, *Pre-Raphaelitism and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood* (New York: AMS Press, 1967), 349.

[39] Graham Hough, *The Last Romantics* (London: University Paperbacks, 1961), 53-4.

[40] *Ineffabilis Deus*, Apostolic Constitution of Pope Pius IX on the Immaculate Conception (December 8, 1854), http://www.newadvent.org/library/docs_pi09id.htm (accessed January 14, 2009).

Four years prior to promulgating *Ineffabilis Deus*, Pius IX had restored the Catholic hierarchy in England for the first time since the Reformation, an act that had occasioned widespread popular resentment and parliamentary opposition. Effigies of the newly-appointed English bishops were burnt, priests assaulted, and Catholic properties vandalized, and Parliament enacted the Ecclesiastical Titles Act, which made it a crime for anyone outside the Church of England to use the title of bishop.[41] The culture of anti-Catholic hostility, however, did not dampen the spirits of English Catholics, among them the newly-minted convert John Henry (later Cardinal) Newman. Newman preached at Westminster in 1852 in a widely-quoted sermon, from which the mid-century Catholic revival known as the "Second Spring" took its name (a sermon that also invokes music, the pains of childbirth, and the imagined sound of the Virgin Mary's voice):

> Something strange is passing over this land . . . . It is the coming in of a Second Spring; it is a restoration in the moral world . . . . I listen, and I hear the sound of voices, grave and musical renewing the old chant, with which Augustine greeted Ethelbert in the free air upon the Kentish strand[42] . . . . Arise, Mary, and go forth in thy strength into that north country, which once was thine own, and take possession of a land which knows thee not. Arise, Mother of God, and with thy thrilling voice, speak to those who labour with child, and are in pain, till the babe of grace leaps within them![43]

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[41] Gerald Parsons, "Victorian Roman Catholicism: Emancipation, Expansion, and Achievement," in *Religion in Victorian Britain*, I, ed. Parsons (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988), 148.

[42] Newman is referring not to Saint Augustine of Hippo but to Saint Augustine of Canterbury, sent from Rome by Pope Gregory the Great in 597 to convert the British Isles to Christianity, and known as the Apostle to the English.

[43] John Henry Newman, *Sermons Preached on Various Occasions* (London: Burns, Oates, 1881), 167, 169, 177. Newman was himself a musician: an accomplished amateur violinist

Ford Madox Brown has posed his fallen woman in a deliberately Marian stance that calls to mind many images of the Madonna and Child from the Middle Ages and the Renaissance that use music imagery (see Figs. 35-38), including the type known as the *sacra conversazione*, or "sacred conversation." The *sacra conversazione* is a depiction of the Virgin and Child surrounded by saints; many paintings of this type also include music imagery. In addition to serving as a device for advancing his painting's narrative, as an allusion to other paintings about fallen women and marriage, and as a marker of the Victorian fascination with the double, Brown's round mirror forms a halo around the woman's head, and the dark wallpaper background with its pattern of gilt stars suggests the heavenly firmament. Thus, at the same time that he is making a pointed reference to the fallen state of his protagonist and her complicated relationship to the diminutive, reflected "Sir" of the title, Brown is also, by invoking the Madonna, suggesting that the young mother has some claim to the Virgin Mary's own purity. In fact, I believe that, as Hunt did in *The Awakening Conscience*, Brown intends to show the moment of transit from sin to

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and the composer of a violin sonata, he often described his own conversion in musical terms, speaking, for instance, of the "musical words" used by Pope Leo I to defend Catholic doctrine (Karl F. Morrison, *Conversion and Text: The Cases of Augustine of Hippo, Herman-Judah, and Constantine Tsatsos* [Charlottesville and London: University Press of Virginia, 1992], 148). Newman gave up playing the violin when he became a Catholic priest, believing that such a pursuit would compromise the dignity of his vocation. In 1864, however, after the publication of *Apologia Pro Vita Sua*, he was given a violin as a gift; in his letter of thanks, he surmised, "Perhaps thought is music" (Drew Morgan, C.O., "Awakening *The Dream of Gerontius*," *Newman Studies Journal* 2/2 [2005]: 39. In addition, Newman's own voice was much commented-upon by those who heard him preach, and variously described as "thrilling . . . sweet[,] musical, almost unearthly" (David J. DeLaura, " 'O Unforgotten Voice': The Memory of Newman in the Nineteenth Century," in *Sources for Reinterpretation: The Use of Nineteenth-Century Literary Documents*: *Essays in Honor of C.L. Cline* [Austin: Department of English and Humanities Studies Center, University of Texas, 1975], 26).

grace in his protagonist's soul, and to suggest that a sinful woman may be capable of restoration to a state of purity.

In order to understand the importance of musical imagery to Brown's Marian/Magdalenian conflation, we must remember that music imagery has traditionally carried two opposite meanings in Western art, as a signifier both of vice (as noted above) and of virtue. In the late Middle Ages and the Renaissance, images of music-making, and especially of the lute, were often used to convey sexual immorality; the series of paintings of Mary Magdalene playing the lute by the Master of the Female Half-Lengths is an example already mentioned (see Chapter 2, p. 38 and Fig. 15, Appendix I). The lute was a standard sign of prostitution in Renaissance painting, as it was common practice for prostitutes to bring their lutes into taverns, where they would play them in order to attract customers; moreover, if a brothel happened to be searched by the police, the women in residence typically brought out their lutes, attempting to convince the authorities that the house was a music school and that their clients were their students.[44]

Notwithstanding its association with sin, and with female sin in particular, music imagery also served the opposite purpose, functioning as a signpost of holiness in religious paintings of the late Middle Ages and Renaissance. In the art-historical type of the *sacra conversazione*, music played by angels, including angels playing lutes, is meant to emphasize the glory of Christ and His Mother. The presence of music and of celestial musicians in this pictorial tradition underscores the holiness and praiseworthiness of the divine Child and His Mother, and is even more

[44] Brian Cohen, "Saint Mary Magdalen as a Cultural Symbol in the Low Countries, c. 1450-1530" (Ph.D. diss., SUNY at Binghamton, 2001), 203.

noteworthy in light of the traditional injunction against the use of musical instruments in the liturgy of the Mass (see Chapter 1). The presence of angelic musicians illustrates the exhortation to play music as praise and tribute to God which appears throughout the Bible: Psalms 32, 96, 98, and 149, for example, urge the believer to "sing a new song to the Lord," and Psalm 98 commands the earth itself to "praise [God] with songs and shouts of joy," a command echoed in Isaiah 42:10. In Revelation 14:2, the redeemed of Christ who have maintained their sexual purity sing a new song before the throne of God, which sounds like the music made by musicians playing their harps.[45] The psalmist declares to God in Psalm 138, "before the gods [i.e., the angels] to you I sing."[46]

While the modern-day viewer may assume that Ford Madox Brown intended his association of a so-called magdalene with the Virgin Mary to be ironic, there is abundant theological precedent for such a conflation. As noted above, popular belief in the Middle Ages held Mary Magdalene to have been miraculously restored to the state of virginity: thus Modest of Jerusalem, one of the Greek Fathers of the early church, asserted in the seventh century that the Magdalene had remained a virgin all her life, while a sermon by a Syrian monk from the eleventh century calls her "Our Lady Magdalene," using an honorific term usually reserved for the Virgin Mary, and a thirteenth-century calendarium refers to her as "Magdalene virginis"[47] (this belief appears to have persisted into the Renaissance: in a sermon for Mary Magdalene's

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[45] All passages from the *Good News Bible* (New York: American Bible Society, 1992).

[46] *New American Bible* ((Iowa Falls, IA: World Bible Publishers, 1987), 627.

[47] H. Colin Slim, "Mary Magdalene, Musician and Dancer," *Early Music* 8 (1980): 469-70.

feast day, the fifteenth-century Dominican priest Leonardo da Udine "state[d] flatly that, though a sinner, she recovered her virginity)."[48] And, intriguingly, Saint Godric, a twelfth-century English hermit, received a vision in which the Virgin Mary and Mary Magdalene appeared to him and taught him a song, an astonishing example of two saints of distinctly different, almost opposing, ethos, mystically joined together in music.[49]

One might be forgiven for wondering what the voices of the two holy women might have sounded like, a question to which the Victorians themselves ventured some answers: Cardinal Newman, as already noted, asserted in his "Second Spring" sermon that the voice of the Virgin was "thrilling," while another famed English clergyman, the Baptist Dissenter Charles Spurgeon, mused in an 1855 sermon:

> When the grand orchestra shall send out its music, when the organs of the skies shall peal forth their deep-toned sounds, we shall ask, "what was that sweet note heard there, mingling with the rest?" . . . Ah! Mary Magdalene's voice in heaven, I imagine, sounds more sweet and liquid than any other.[50]

Indeed, in a nineteenth-century echo of the fifth-century Saint Peter Chrysologus,[51] Spurgeon saw Mary Magdalene as a musical instrument herself:

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[48] Connolly, *Mourning into Joy*, 332.

[49] Benedicta Ward, *Miracles and the Medieval Mind: Theory, Record, and Event, 1100-1215* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1982), 79.

[50] Kruppa, "'More sweet and liquid than any other,'" 121.

[51] See Chapter 2, p. 39.

> She had been a "bruised reed" . . . but Christ had taken the bruised reed, mended it, and fitted it into the pipes of heaven.[52]

Mary as Mirror of the Magdalene: "A Legend of Provence"

This conflation of Mary Magdalene and the Virgin Mary seems to have continued in various guises into the nineteenth century. At mid-century, as noted previously, two religious-cultural movements swept across Great Britain: the movement for the rescue and reform of fallen women, and a renewal of Marian spirituality in both the Catholic and Anglican Churches . In some instances, the rescue movement and the Marian movement overlapped. There is, for example, the case of the poet Adelaide Anne Procter, a convert to Catholicism, who opened Providence Rowin 1860, the first Catholic refuge for fallen women in Great Britain. Procter believed that a return to the social teachings of the medieval Catholic Church, which England had essentially abandoned when Protestantism was solidified as the religion of state in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, would bring about a much-needed transformation in Victorian society, especially in its treatment of poor women and children.[53] Procter's poem "A Legend of Provence," which originally appeared in the 1859 Christmas issue of Dickens's *All the Year Round*, is the tale of a fallen

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[52] Kruppa, "'More sweet and liquid than any other,'" 125.

[53] See Christine A. Colón, "Lessons from the Medieval Convent: Adelaide Procter's 'A Legend of Provence'," in *Beyond Arthurian Romances: The Reach of Victorian Medievalism*, ed. Jennifer Palmgren and Lorretta A. Holloway (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 95-115. Colón notes that for Procter, "Catholicism is, at heart, a mystical religion in which . . . God [through] the Virgin Mary can miraculously transform individuals" (102).

nun for whom the Virgin Mary intercedes in a miraculous way.[54] The poem's narrative is framed as a waking dream experienced by the speaker after seeing an oil painting in an old house:

> . . . Perhaps the night,
>
> My foolish tremors, or the gleaming light,
> Lent power to that Portrait dark and quaint –
> A Portrait such as Rembrandt loved to paint –
> The likeness of a nun.[55]

Procter's heroine is the young and beautiful Sister Angela, a nun at the Provençal convent of Our Lady of the Hawthorns, who nurtures a special devotion to

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[54] The narrative of "A Legend of Provence" seems indeed to be an old legend that was known in northern as well as southern Europe. "Gunnhilde lebt gar stille und fromm," the seventh of Brahms's 1894 settings of German folk songs to folk texts (some of them spurious) collected and published by Zuccalmaglio, tells the same story, adding a post-Reformation, anti-Catholic twist by replacing the seducing knight with a lascivious priest, the nun's own confessor. The legend was also the subject of the 1911 musical pantomime *Das Mirakel* (The Miracle), with a libretto by Karl Vollmöller (more famous for the screenplay of the 1930 film *Der Blaue Engel*) and Max Reinhardt, and music by Engelbert Humperdinck. When the pantomime opened in New York, the critic for H.L. Mencken's *American Mercury* magazine called it "an ancient and familiar legend . . . . Many a Sister Beatrice and Sister Megildis, in literature and in drama, has found her place taken in an old gray nunnery since first the legend grew" (*American Mercury* [January-April 1924]: 369-70). In the play, which had enormously successful runs in Vienna, London, and New York, the nun's redemption is facilitated by a miraculous statue of the Madonna that comes to life (the Boosey & Hawkes edition of Humperdinck's score substitutes a painting for the miraculous statue, out of which the Virgin emerges to stand in as a double for the nun, named Megildis). Vollmöller's last published work was the 1948 novel *The Last Miracle*, based on the play. He updated the action of the legend to the 1790s, and gave his heroine the full name of Maria Magdalena Megildis Herckenrath, as well as the gift of a remarkable singing voice; in a plot development that reads like the mirrored obverse of *Evelyn Innes/Sister Teresa* (see Chapter 4, below), Megildis seeks fame on the opera stage upon leaving the convent with her lover.

[55] Adelaide Anne Procter, *Legends and Lyrics and Other Poems* (London: J.M. Dent & Sons, 1927), 142.

the Virgin. She is seduced away from the convent, however, by a wounded knight whom she nurses, and becomes a fallen woman. Eventually abandoned by her lover, she spends many years in disorderly living, and, as was the common fate of Victorian fallen women,[56] is reduced to begging and prostitution:

> Years fled, and she grew reckless more and more,
> Until the humblest peasant closed his door,
> And where she passed, fair dames, in scorn and pride,
> Shuddered, and drew their rustling robes aside.[57]

Finally, Angela's conscience is "awakened" (the term used by Procter), and she decides to go back to her old convent to die. When she arrives there, however, she is met at the door by a nun who looks strangely as she herself might have looked had she not fallen into a life of sin, "a grave woman, gentle and serene." As Angela watches astonished, the nun – her doppelgänger – is transformed into the Virgin Mary: the Virgin had been interceding for her by taking her place in the convent during the intervening years, thus allowing Angela to return to her life as a nun and assuring her of heavenly forgiveness. In her original use of the Victorian trope of the double, Procter thus provocatively posits Marianism as the mirror – as Saint Augustine might say, the transformed face – of magdalenism,[58] and thus "[creates] a

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[56] See Chapter 2, footnote 20.

[57] Procter, *Legends and Lyrics*, 147.

[58] See Chapter 1, p. 12.

truly radical portrait of a 'fallen' woman," one who is able to overcome "the sin and shame that [have marked her] on earth."[59]

Fallen Angels

In setting up the Virgin Mary as the double of the fallen Angela, Procter implies a mystical relationship between the abyss of sin and the height of holiness, and suggests that the distance between them is not as vast as the Victorians purported to believe, ideas that are also echoed in Brown's painting. Indeed, nuns who worked for the redemption of the fallen in Magdalene institutions referred to a mystical relationship between themselves and their charges, based on the dialectic of their purity counterpoised with their clients' sinfulness; as one sister of the Community of Saint Mary the Virgin, an Anglican "penitentiary"[60] for the rehabilitation of fallen women, noted:

> In Penitentiary Work we learn . . . the strange power of weakness . . . . We can only work in the power of the vow of Chastity: the penitents' lives are *broken*, they can only be mended by the perpetuity of this our vow.[61]

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[59] Colón, "Procter's 'A Legend of Provence,'" 109.

[60] In the case of rescue work, the term "penitentiary" was not meant to evoke the specter of prison, but rather the spiritual reform brought about by the penitence or the rescued.

[61] Susan Mumm, " 'Not Worse than Other Girls': The Convent-Based Rehabilitation of Fallen Women in Victorian Britain," *Journal of Social History* 29/3 (1996): 529. In fact, the mid-nineteenth-century revival of Anglican sisterhoods owed much to the Tractarians' advocacy for a return to religious traditionalism. Before his conversion to Catholicism, Newman had opined that convent life could keep single women from falling, offering them "protection . . . [and] thus saving numbers from the temptation of throwing themselves rashly away upon unworthy objects, transgressing their sense of propriety, and embittering their future life" ("Letters on the Church of the Fathers," *British Magazine* 6 [June 1835]: 667, quoted in Susan P. Casteras, "Virgin Vows: The Early Victorian Artists' Portrayal of Nuns and Novices," *Victorian Studies* 24/2 [1981]: 159).

Not only were the fallen and the chaste bound together, according to this nun, by a mystical spiritual relationship; they were also deeply connected by virtue of the changing social structure of mid-nineteenth-century Britain. The rapid accumulation of capital by the rising urban middle classes had led to a new concept of home as separate from the place of work. While, formerly, an urban man of business installed his family in premises above the shop or office, now a wife and children must be kept in a place apart and untainted by the crassness of commerce. Women presided over the domestic sphere, where the wife became (in the term popularized by Coventry Patmore's eponymous 1854 poem) the "Angel in the House"; her main function was to provide a haven of peace for the husband exhausted by his daily sorties into the marketplace, and also, just as importantly, to nurture his religious sentiments and practices, which would otherwise be compromised by the taint of the business world. But because the rapid expansion of commercial and industrial capital was in fact based upon the "appalling conditions in the sweat-shops, factories, and mines . . . created by . . . remorseless cost-cutting . . . and often ruthless self-advancement,"[62] the Angel in the House and the fallen woman were joined together in material as well as spiritual ways. The home over which the Angel presided was dependent for its very existence upon such unscrupulous business dealings as the use of child labor and the payment of unjustly low wages, which caused many a working-class woman to fall in

[62] Roston, *Victorian Contexts*, 51.

order to be able to eat.[63] Thus, the middle-class wife and the fallen woman were mirror images of one another – doubles – in that each was corrupted by Victorian "wealth accumulated by callous methods," and in nineteenth-century British painting and literature,

> [t]he Angel of the House, representing the virtues of gentleness and charity, becomes . . . transformed allegorically into the Fallen or Prostituted Woman, a symbol of moral purity seduced by the heartless self-interest of the male.[64]

Furthering this angel/fallen, Marian/Magdalenian conflation, Scott Thompson Rogers has made the astonishing observation that "in addition to her role as intercessor, [the Virgin Mary herself] is also in many ways a kind of fallen woman. Indeed, insofar as she finds herself pregnant outside of wedlock, she meets the Victorian requirements for fallenness."[65]

The Penitent Bride

Adelaide Anne Procter's choice of Provence as the setting for her Magdalene-to-Madonna story is a resonant one. As Cardinal Newman suggested in his "Second Spring" sermon, England, a country once known as "Our Lady's Dowry," had long since forfeited its special relationship with the Virgin, a loss, Procter believed, whose

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[63] See Chapter 2, note 64. As one reformer noted, "We talk of 'fallen women'; but for the far greater number there is no *fall* . . . They are starving, and they sell themselves for food" (Mumm, "'Not Worse than Other Girls'," 533).

[64] Roston, *Victorian Contexts*, 52.

[65] Scott Thompson Rogers, "Rethinking Fallenness in Victorian Women's Poetry" (Ph.D. diss., Oklahoma State University, 2003), 125.

direct and indirect results were the corruption of British commerce and society.[66] The trope in British literature of looking to the Mediterranean for inspiration dates back at least to the Elizabethan poets Wyatt and Spenser,[67] and would appear again at the end of the Victorian era in the novels and short stories of E.M. Forster, Henry James, George Gissing, and Ouida (Maria Louise Ramé), among others; throughout the nineteenth century, moreover, bourgeois and upper-middle-class British travelers made pilgrimages to the southern lands, seeking a sense of the pure, the unspoiled, the natural, the uncorrupted – in short, the cultural and social traits that Britain had lost with the rise of industrialism, and which had been mourned since before the turn of the century by the Romantic poets. Especially noteworthy in the location of Procter's narrative is its traditional association with Mary Magdalene. During the Middle Ages, the Magdalene was believed to have journeyed from Judea to the south of France by sea, to have spent her final years of penitence in the wilderness there in the grotto of Ste. Baume (Holy Balm, a reference to the ointment with which she anointed Christ's feet in the house of Simon the Pharisee), and to have been buried at Aix-en-Provence.[68]

In "A Legend of Provence," Adelaide Anne Procter shows the possibility of transformation from a Magdalenian state to a Marian one as a process of the soul's movement from sin to grace. The idea of a unity between these hermeneutical pairs

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[66] Colón, "Lessons from the Medieval Convent," 102-3.

[67] See Reed Way Dasenbrook, *Imitating the Italians: Wyatt, Spenser, Synge, Pound, Joyce* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press), 1991.

[68] Susan Haskins, *Mary Magdalen: Myth and Metaphor* (New York, San Diego, and London: Harcourt Brace, 1993), 98-133.

of opposites – sin and grace, Magdalene and Madonna – is of long standing in Christian theology. The Catholic Church, although it began to identify itself with the Virgin Mary in the twelfth century, retained remnants of an earlier tradition that looked to Mary Magdalene, the penitent sinner, as its most potent symbol. In the third century, the theologian Origen wrote a commentary on the Song of Songs, the great erotic poem of the Old Testament that is usually interpreted as representing the love of Christ for His Church, in which he equated both the soul and the Church with the bride. In a detailed exegesis of verses 1:5-14, in which he expounds virtuosically on the dichotomy of light and dark, Origen further suggests the similarity of the bride in the Canticle to Mary Magdalene:

> I am beautiful through penitence and faith . . . she who now says "I am black and beautiful" has not remained in her blackness . . . She became black . . . because she went down, but once she begins to come up . . . she will shine with the enveloping radiance of true light.

And, foreshadowing Augustine's trope of Scripture as a mirror that transforms the very appearance of the believer, he continues:

> [The bride] has repented of her sins; beauty is the gift conversion has bestowed; that is the reason that she is hymned as beautiful.[69]

[69] Origen, *The Song of Songs: Commentary and Homilies*, transl. and ann. R. Lawson (Westminster, MD: Newman Press, 1957), 93, 106, 107, 109, 276.

Origen, taking as his theme Chapter 1, verse 5, from the Song of Songs, "I am dark, but lovely" (in an older translation, "I am black, but comely"), thus conflates both the individual soul and the Church with, simultaneously, the sinful woman of Luke 7:36-50 and the bride of Christ – a bride in need of purification, "black by reason of her sinfulness but comely . . . because of her repentance [and] because she was loved by Christ."[70] The bride's darkness, as Origen construes it, is not a physical trait, but a spiritual one, for, though she is penitent, she is not yet wholly purified from sin.

The woman in Ford Madox Brown's painting is, like the Virgin Mary, a mother, but not a bride; and like Mary Magdalene, she is a sexual sinner, here handing over the fruit of her sin to his reluctant father. And yet, as we have just seen, Mary Magdalene was associated with marriage in her identification with the bride in the Song of Songs, and therefore with the Church in its guise as the spouse of Christ. What is more, according to medieval legend, the Magdalene was a bride herself – the bride at the wedding at Cana where Christ performed his first miracle, turning water into wine (John 2:1-11). This legend held that her bridegroom was none other than Saint John the Evangelist, who, upon witnessing the apotheosis of Christ's divinity in the miracle of the wine, abandoned his bride to become the "beloved disciple." In anger, Mary Magdalene embarked upon a life of carnality, until, encountering Christ

[70] Regina Stefaniak, "Raphael's Santa Cecilia: A Fine and Private Vision of Virginity," *Art History*, 14/3 (1991]: 368, footnote 23.

herself, she was called to conversion and penitence, and eventually, through years of penance, rose from the depths of sin to the height of heavenly glory.[71]

This brings us back to Raphael's image of Saint Cecilia surrounded by four saints (see Fig. 9, Appendix I), among whom are the "bridal couple" of Saints John and Mary Magdalene. Thomas H. Connolly has suggested that Saint John is in fact looking at Mary Magdalene.[72] Another critic, Regina Stefaniak, elaborates further that the appearance of Mary Magdalene on the scene of Cecilia's ecstasy – she seems to be just stepping into the picture, the only figure in motion in the otherwise static group, and the *chiaroscuro* shading of her drapery suggests the motion from darkness to light that Origen describes – has caused Saint John to indicate his heart in a gesture of renewed faith in Christ and denial of his bride, in spite of the fact that she is now "continent, repentant and recast into an image of the reforming Church." Saint Augustine, who struggled mightily with sexual temptation in his own life, appears in this interpretation to be urging John towards reconciliation with her.[73]

As noted above, Mary Magdalene expresses *ordo in contrarium*, perfect order in the seeming state of opposition. She simultaneously embodies the opposites of sin and grace. In portraying his mistress Emma as at once Magdalene and Madonna, Ford Madox Brown drew on an ancient Christian tradition of which the Magdalene is perhaps the most potent symbol, one which acknowledges not only the flux of sin and

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[71] Connolly, *Mourning into Joy*, 331-32, footnote 3; see also Joseph Szövérffy, "Peccatrix Quondam Femina: A Survey of the Mary Magdalen Hymns," *Traditio* 19 (1963): 104.

[72] Connolly, *Mourning into Joy*, 331.

[73] Stefaniak, "Raphael's *Santa Cecilia*," 357.

grace in the individual soul, but also the simultaneous purity and corruption of the Church on earth. Brown has painted a fallen woman, perhaps a victim of her own passion as much as of the lust of the upper-class "Sir" and the rapacious greed of Victorian commercial interests, as a holy woman. By using Marian and musical imagery, Brown pictures the young mother as not only capable of purity and redemption, but even, perhaps, in the very process of being purified and redeemed. By referencing the Marian musical iconography of the Middle Ages and early Renaissance, Brown suggests that, though spiritually "dark," his fallen woman is "lovely"; though sinful, she is also pure. Origen referred to the opposites of falling and rising, of blackness and whiteness, that fluctuate in the human soul and in the Church; Ford Madox Brown implies in *Take Your Son, Sir* (in a theme also taken up by the poet Adelaide Anne Procter) that the fallen are capable of purity, that the despised should be venerated, and, as William Holman Hunt suggested in *The Awakening Conscience,* that the ascent of the soul toward holiness is possible even through its descent; that rising, so to speak, can come through falling. In his complex and poignant allegory of music and mirrors, fallenness and holiness, Brown calls to mind George Eliot's metaphor of a common household mirror that becomes splendid when the light is shined upon it:

> [The] pier-glass . . . made to be rubbed by a housemaid, will be minutely and multitudinously scratched in all directions; but place now against it a lighted candle as a centre of illumination, and lo! the scratches will seem to arrange themselves in a fine series of concentric circles around that little sun. . . These things are a parable.[74]

[74] George Eliot, *Middlemarch* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998; originally published 1872), 248.

CHAPTER 4:

TRANSFORMED HEARING AND MUSICAL CONVERSION IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

I have argued in the preceding chapters that the patristic theological association of music – and its abandonment – with the fluctuation of the soul between the states of sin and grace persisted into the Victorian era. The evidence lies primarily in the visual culture of nineteenth-century Britain; as I have shown, I believe that the music-conversion *topos* was mapped out symbolically in certain nineteenth-century British paintings that took for their subject matter the possibility of radical spiritual change, and used musical elements in their iconography. The most explicit such painting is William Holman Hunt's *The Awakening Conscience*. Hunt's penitent sinner, though, is not a musician herself; she is, rather, a young woman from the working classes, for whom music has become a tool in both her lover's enterprise of seduction and his experiment in her social betterment.[1] In this chapter I will discuss examples of the musical conversion trope in the world of nineteenth-century professional musicians as it appears in two novels, *Evelyn Innes* and *Sister Teresa*, by the Irish writer George Moore (1852-1933),[2] and also in the real-life story of the pianist Hermann Cohen

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[1] See Chapter 2.

[2] I have chosen to focus on the relatively minor novelist George Moore, rather than on his Victorian contemporaries whose fiction has been more widely embraced as "musical," because these two novels describe a transit from the state of sexual sin to that of sexual purity which coincides with the protagonist's abandonment of music, thus illustrating my argument for the persistence of the music-conversion theme. George Eliot in particular is widely recognized as the nineteenth-century novelist most concerned with, and most skilled at, using music imagery as narrative and symbolic device, especially in her last novel *Daniel Deronda* (1876); see, among many others, Delia da Sousa Correa, *George Eliot, Music, and Victorian Culture* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003); Ruth Solie, "'Tadpole Pleasures': *Daniel Deronda* as Music Historiography" in *Music in Other Words: Victorian Conversations* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004, 153-186); Shirley Frank Levenson, "The Use

(1821-1871), a protégé of Franz Liszt.[3] These examples illustrate my belief that, far from being restricted to visual culture, the trope of musical conversion was both known and experienced in the nineteenth century, not only through artistic expressions across genres but also in the interior lives of what I call "musical converts." I also suggest that, although the sense of sight began to ascend to primacy in the nineteenth century, hearing also achieved a new prominence, making itself readily available as a channel for the trope of musical conversion.

Sex, Early Music, and the "Music of the Future"

Evelyn Innes (1898) and its sequel, *Sister Teresa* (1901), are essentially one novel, the story of an English Wagnerian soprano who abandons her career in the wake of a profound, though unstable, spiritual conversion. George Moore, the scion of a prominent Catholic family from County Mayo in the west of Ireland, was one of the chief exponents of the *fin de siècle* cult of Wagner. In the early 1870s Moore had moved to Paris to study painting, and it was there that he first encountered Wagner's music and philosophy. Paris was at that time the European capital of the movement known as Wagnerism, a loosely-allied amalgam of social, religious, aesthetic, political, emotional, and sexual ideologies whose adherents found inspiration and

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of Music in Daniel Deronda" in *Nineteenth-Century Fiction* 24/3 (1969): 317-334; Phyllis Weliver, "Music as a Sign in Daniel Deronda" *The George Eliot Review* 27 (1996): 43-48; and Robert Louis Jacobs, "The Role of Music in George Eliot's Novels," in *The Music Review* 45/3-4 (1984): 277-282.

[3] Liszt was long believed to be the model for the musician Klesmer in Eliot's *Daniel Deronda*, but Gordon S. Haight has made a compelling case, based in part on the correspondence of Eliot's companion George Lewes, for Anton Rubinstein (1829-1874) as Eliot's true model (Haight, "George Eliot's Klesmer," in *Imagined Worlds: Essays on some English Novels and Novelists in Honour of John Butt* [London: Methuen, 1968], 205-214). Interestingly, Rubinstein, like Cohen (as we shall see), was a Jewish convert to Christianity.

support for their beliefs in Wagner's operas. Moore himself quickly fell under the sway of Wagner's music and its French literary corollary, symbolism.[4] Later, in England and then in his native Ireland, he sought through his writings to advance what Emma Sutton has called British Wagnerism,[5] which, if not quite all things to all men, was a far-reaching blend of heterodox philosophies that overlapped with the Decadent and Aesthetic movements in literature and painting and included such writers and artists as George Bernard Shaw, Oscar Wilde, Aubrey Beardsley, Ernest Dowson, and Arthur Symons among its devotees.[6] The British Wagnerians were a diverse lot: while Shaw, for instance, saw the *Ring* as "a socialist allegory of the evils of late nineteenth-century capitalism," other adherents of Wagner (including Moore) restricted their responses to his music to the private sphere, regarding it rather as a highly personal catalyst to the emotions rather than a metaphor for contemporary political realities.

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[4] The *Révue Wagnérienne*, founded by symbolist poet Édouard Dujardin, was the mouthpiece of both symbolism and Wagnerism; Paul Verlaine, Stéphane Mallarmé, J.-K. Huysmans, Villiers de L'Isle-Adam, and Catulle Mendès all published in its pages. For a comprehensive biography of Richard Wagner, see Barry Millington, *Wagner*, rev. ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992).

[5] Emma Sutton, *Aubrey Beardsley and British Wagnerism in the 1890s* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 1; see also Theresa Muir, "Wagner in England: Four Writers Before Shaw" (Ph.D. dissertation, City University of New York, 1997).

[6] There was also a prominent homosexual element in Wagnerism. To Aubrey Beardsley and Oscar Wilde, Wagnerism was a synonym for decadence, dandyism, and homosexuality, an association that made its way into the public imagination through Beardsley's drawings of Siegfried and other Wagnerian heroes "as decadents or degenerates" (Sutton, *Aubrey Beardsley*, 39) and Wilde's Wagnerian references in *The Portrait of Dorian Gray* and other works. Indeed, an 1899 German questionnaire formulated to help readers determine whether they might have homosexual leanings included the question "Are you particularly fond of Wagner?" (Sutton, *Aubrey Beardsley*, 54).

Evelyn Innes and *Sister Teresa* together make up the minutely-detailed *Bildungsroman* of an English singer who rises from her lower-middle-class origins – her father is a church musician – to become a great Wagnerian soprano. Her rise, however, is accomplished through her "fall"; Sir Owen Asher, a dandyish aesthete and Wagner devoté, seduces Evelyn and takes her to live with him in Paris, where she studies voice with the venerable Madame Savelli and makes her debut on the opera stage. At first, able to suppress her scruples about this arrangement and the pain and scandal it causes her father, Evelyn achieves great success, especially in Wagnerian roles. Her particular triumphs in this intensely dramatic repertoire owe much to her uncanny ability to enter the inner lives of the characters she sings. This innate theatrical gift, however, begins to make her life increasingly problematic, for "[to] sing Isolde and live a chaste life, she did not believe it . . . possible."[7]

The music of Wagner is a ubiquitous backdrop to the plot of *Evelyn Innes*; Wagner's operas represent the world of unbridled sensuality into which Evelyn, in pursuit of her musical ambitions, has fallen. The struggle in Evelyn's soul between living the virtuous life of a dutiful daughter and the "fallen" life of a professional singer and nobleman's mistress is played out in the choice she must make between "early" music and "the music of the future," as Wagner's music was known.[8]

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[7] George Moore, *Evelyn Innes* (New York: D. Appleton, 1907), 208; all further references are to this edition.

[8] Wagner's German critics had used the term *Zukunftsmusik* as a pejorative for his music as early as the 1850s (Barry Millington, *The New Grove Guide to Wagner and His Operas: A Guide to Wagner's Life and Music* [Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2006], 173). The term was popularized in England by Francis Hueffer, Ford Madox Brown's son-in-law (he married Brown's daughter Catherine in 1872; see Chapter 3, p. 56), in his 1874 book *Richard Wagner and the Music of the Future*. The term was also applied to Liszt's music, and George Eliot, who had met Liszt on an 1854 trip to Weimar and been introduced

Evelyn's father, a Catholic convert and the organist at a suburban London church, is deeply devoted to early music, a devotion which began many years earlier when he encountered the term "viola d'amore" in an old book; Mr. Innes also looks to the Pre-Raphaelite painters for inspiration in his endeavor to "return to the original sources of an art . . . without loss of originality."[9] Moore shows him attempting to spur an early music revival of sorts in his parish church by introducing the liturgical music of

> John Ockeghem . . . Thomas da Vittoria [*sic*]; and after having made known the works of Palestrina . . . he hoped to disinter the masses of Orlando di Lasso, of Goudimel and Josquin des Près, the motets of Nannini, of Felice Anerio, of Clemens non Papa . . . He would go still further back. For before this music was the plain chant or Gregorian, bequeathed to us by the early Church, coming down to her, perhaps, from Egyptian civilisation, the mother of all art and all religion, an incomparable treasure which unworthy inheritors have mutilated for centuries . . . . the supple, free melody of the Gregorian was lost in the shouting of operatic tenors and organ accompaniments.[10]

In addition to his liturgical efforts, Mr. Innes hosts salon concerts in his modest home, which is pointedly named "Dowlands."[11]

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by him to Wagner's music, wrote an essay entitled "Liszt, Wagner, and Weimar" for *Fraser's Magazine* the following year, in which she defended the importance of both composers to the future of music in evolutionary terms (see Solie, "'Tadpole Pleasures'," 153-186).

[9] Moore, *Evelyn Innes*, 198.

[10] Moore, *Evelyn Innes*, 3.

[11] Moore based the character of Mr. Innes on the musician, instrument maker, and early-music scholar and advocate Arnold Dolmetsch (1858-1940), who, like Innes, lived in the London suburb of Dulwich (see Elizabeth Roche, "George Moore's *Evelyn Innes*: A Victorian 'Early Music' Novel," *Early Music* 11/1 [1983]: 71-73).

As the novel opens, we come upon him repairing an Elizabethan virginal, a significant choice of instrument both for its name and its historical provenance, as the novel is primarily concerned with Evelyn's Augustine-like struggle between the powerful lures of sensuality and religion; and to Moore, while the "music of the future" is a metaphor for carnality, early music is a symbol of purity. Mr. Innes's passion for the old music is in fact

> that of an evangelist: he describes plainsong and Renaissance liturgical music as a "musical gospel" . . . . [He perceives] musical heritage . . . as the locus of immutable Truth . . . . [and] music history as an evolutionary progression loaded with moral and metaphysical value.[12]

Early music, then, is the repository of rectitude, and of a certain moral rigor – Mr. Innes is convinced that "a revival of the true music [would make many] converts to Rome"[13] – whereas the music of Wagner embodies all the spiritual and moral chaos of the post-Romantic world. For the Victorians, whose faith in religious orthodoxy had been seriously shaken by both industrial capitalism and Darwin, some of the appeal of Wagner's operas lay in their juxtaposition of Christianity with elements of paganism. In the decades following the publication of *On the Origin of Species* – a period that coincided with the rise in popularity of Wagner's music in Britain – the operas provided a touchstone for the conflict between religious belief and doubt

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[12] Emma Sutton, *Aubrey Beardsley*, 152.

[13] Moore, *Evelyn Innes*, 198.

among some Victorian intellectuals.[14] Wagner's medievalism also provided a balm for the soul of an age wearied by the demands of commerce and the social problems wrought by unregulated industrialism; in this regard, British Wagnerism was a more cosmopolitan manifestation of the Romantic nostalgia for the past that had begun late in the eighteenth century with Blake, Wordsworth, and Coleridge, and continued into the nineteenth century with the medieval iconography of the Pre-Raphaelites and the utopian visions of John Ruskin and William Morris.

In an early scene in the novel, the "old morality" of early music and the new dispensation represented by Wagner come face to face. Evelyn must choose between an obscure career singing early music in her father's drawing-room concerts and a brilliant career on the international opera stage. Her choice, and her future, hinge upon her acceptance or rejection of Sir Owen's sexual advances, for without his financial and practical assistance she could never hope to become the singer she might be. In a telling moment, Sir Owen comes to visit her at Dowlands, sits down at her father's harpsichord, and proceeds to play "love music out of *Tristan*," which causes "little shudders [in Evelyn's] flesh."[15] As William F. Blisset has suggested,

> the idea of *Tristan* on the harpsichord is indubitably as creepy as the writer intends; and he gets the desired effect of an irruption of the sensual into the chaste, of the demands of the present into the arrangements of the past; and the

[14] There were in fact a number of prominent "Wagnerian clergy" among Wagner's British devotees, including H.R. Haweis and the decadent poet (and later Catholic priest) John Gray; "Wagnerism was also promoted by Theosophists, Buddhists, [and] Christian evangelists" (Sutton, *Aubrey Beardsley*, 18). Several prominent British Wagnerians, in addition to Gray, converted to Catholicism, including Aubrey Beardsley, the decadent poet Ernest Dowson, and, on his deathbed, Oscar Wilde.

[15] Moore, *Evelyn Innes*, 73.

> description fits both Wagner and the harpsichord. The only snag is the practical impossibility of playing [Wagner's] sustained groping oceanic harmonies on that instrument.[16]

To complicate matters, once Evelyn has become used to her "fallen" state as a singer and Sir Owen's mistress, she takes on other lovers. The most prominent among them is Ulick Dean, an Irish Wagnerite and composer (George Moore, a fellow member of the Irish Literary Revival, based the character of Dean on W. B. Yeats). While Owen Asher is, like Evelyn, a lapsed English Catholic, Ulick Dean is an apostate in both the Catholic and the Wagnerian senses; he is a fervid partisan of the old Celtic-pantheistic natural religion, and "[believes] in Angus and Lir and the Great Mother Dana."[17] Ulick is composing an opera based on the Irish legend of the adulterous lovers Diarmuid and Grania, for which he wants Evelyn to sing the lead soprano role.[18] In a creative *coup* that encompasses both the moral rigor of the old music and the sensuousness and moral ambiguity of the "music of the future," the orchestra for *Grania* is to include early music instruments such as lutes, viols, and

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[16] William F. Blisset, "George Moore and Literary Wagnerism," *Comparative Literature* 13/1 (1961): 54.

[17] Moore, *Evelyn Innes*, 341. In Celtic cosmology, Angus mac Óg is the god of love; Lir is the god of the sea; and Dana (also known as Anu or Danu) is the earth goddess. According to William Blisset, "[while] Sir Owen is an orthodox [Wagnerian], Ulick [is] a dissident Wagnerian," having replaced his membership in the cult of Wagner with his allegiance to the old Celtic gods (Blisset, "George Moore and Literary Wagnerism," 54).

[18] The tale of Diarmuid and Grania (in Irish, Gráinne) bears many similarities to that of Tristan and Isolde. Gráinne, the intended wife of the Irish warrior Fionn mac Cumhaill, falls in love at their betrothal feast with Diarmuid, a young soldier in Fionn's army who is also the foster son of Angus mac Óg (see note 17, above); she administers a sleeping potion to the guests at the feast so that she can flee with her lover to a forest stronghold. Moore and Yeats collaborated on a play called "Diarmuid and Grania" in 1901, which is "full of Wagnerian motifs accommodated to Irish legend" (Blisset, "George Moore," 65). Edward Elgar wrote the incidental music.

virginals, and Ulick is writing it in "the ancient modes," explaining that "the musicians of the future [will] have to return to the older scales."[19] While Evelyn prepares to make her English debut as Isolde, she travels with Ulick to Ireland to visit the legendary birthplace of Isolde at Chapelizod. As she wavers between her two lovers, Evelyn also wavers in her beliefs, vacillating between Sir Owen's studied atheism and Ulick's passionate pantheism. She has long since rejected the Catholicism of her pre-Wagner days as sanctimonious and unsatisfying, but a return of religious scruples occasioned by her unfaithfulness to Sir Owen puts an end to her career as she is about to sing Isolde on the London stage. Torn between Ulick and Sir Owen, and at the same time gradually conscious of a great spiritual longing, she visits a priest to seek absolution for her many sins in a scene that includes an interchange on the subject of contraception that is shockingly frank for its time:

> "You have lived with this man as his mistress for six years, but what is more important, is whether you deliberately avoided the probable consequences of your sin – I mean in regards to children?"
>
> "If we sin we must needs avoid the consequences of our sin. I know that it is forbidden – but my profession – I had to think of others – my father – "
>
> "Your answer, my dear child, does not surprise me. It shows me into what depths you have fallen."[20]

Her confessor, Monsignor Mostyn, seeing Evelyn's struggle with sexual temptation as a crisis to which her career has particularly predisposed her, and

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[19] Moore, *Evelyn Innes*, 214-5.

[20] Moore, *Evelyn Innes*, 359.

observing that she is scheduled to appear as the penitent Kundry in *Parsifal* the following year, advises her to leave the stage instead. Mostyn also notes that *Parsifal* is a "parody of the Mass,"[21] and that, as such, it represents the entire pseudo-ecclesiastical ethos of the stage, which can never give Evelyn true spiritual solace: ultimately, "it is not as Kundry but as Sister Teresa that Evelyn finds . . . fulfillment, the true church triumphing over the specious theatricalities of Bayreuth."[22]

For indeed, Evelyn has "discovered two instincts in herself, an inveterate sensuality and a sincere aspiration for a spiritual life."[23] Although membership in the cult of Wagner would seem to afford some accommodation between the two, Evelyn cannot, as a good "cradle Catholic," reconcile her proclivity for sensuality with her desire for God, and she goes through Magdalenian temptations and torments as the fluctuating propensities for sin and grace do battle for her soul. These two states, in proper Wagnerian fashion, have already blended together in her singing: at her audition for Madame Savelli in Paris, in a foreshadowing of her future spiritual-sexual dilemma, she has performed signs of the flux between eroticism and religion in her performance of an aria from Purcell's *The Indian Queen*:

> . . . she poured all her soul and all the pure melody of her voice into this music, at once religious and voluptuous,

[21] Moore, *Evelyn Innes*, 333. Kundry in *Parsifal* is a deeply Magdalenian figure. Present at the Crucifixion, she laughed at Christ on the cross, and as punishment is constrained to wander the world under the curse of laughter, all the while praying for the gift of penitential tears. The curse is lifted when she washes Parsifal's feet in Act III and he baptizes her.

[22] Raymond Furness, "Wagner and Decadence," in *Tristan und Isolde: A Casebook*, ed. Joan Tasker Grimbert (New York and London: Routledge, 2002), 422.

[23] Moore, *Sister Teresa* (New York: Brentano's, 1918), 19; all further references are to this edition.

> seemingly the rapture of a nun that remembrance has overtaken and for the moment overpowered.[24]

While Moore's biographer Adrian Frazier insists that *Evelyn Innes* is "[a novel] about love,"[25] the work is dominated by the conflict between sensuality and religion, a conflict which becomes increasingly confounding for Evelyn as she advances in her opera career, and the juxtaposed Wagnerian themes of Christian devotion (as in the role of Elisabeth in *Tannhäuser*, in which, in spite of "six years of *liaison* with Owen Asher," Evelyn is able to embody convincingly "the divine penitent who, having no sins of her own to do penance for, does penance for the sins of others")[26] and sensuality begin to seep from her roles into her life. As Ulick Dean, Moore's spokesman for his own belief in a spirituality based in nature,[27] explains, with another nod to Pre-Raphaelitism:

> Wagner had been all his life dreaming of an opera with a subjective hero. Christ first and then Buddha had suggested themselves as likely subjects . . . but both subjects had been rejected as impractical . . . . [for in] neither Christ nor Buddha did the question of sex arise . . . [and Wagner] was

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[24] Moore, *Evelyn Innes*, 137.

[25] Adrian Frazier, *George Moore, 1852-1933* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 183.

[26] Moore, *Evelyn Innes*, 167.

[27] Moore, who formally renounced his Catholicism in 1903, treated a similar subject in his 1905 novel *The Lake*, the story of a provincial Irish priest who eventually comes to adopt a pantheistic spiritual philosophy.

> as full of sex – mysterious, subconscious sex – as [Dante Gabriel] Rossetti himself.[28]

For Evelyn, the lure of Wagner is, finally, the lure of the erotic, which she ultimately must reject in order to gain peace. The 1901 sequel to *Evelyn Innes* is *Sister Teresa*, the story of Evelyn's Magdalenian abandonment of music and retreat from the world into the Passionist convent where she was educated,[29] and which she eventually joins as a nun, taking the name Teresa after the Carmelite Saint Teresa of Avila,[30] whose writings, certainly passionate themselves, have helped propel Evelyn back to her childhood faith. She enters the convent as a postulant, and intends to stay only long enough to help the nuns pay off their debts by singing at weekly Benediction services, to which a famous singer in nun's garb will surely draw a curious, moneyed crowd. The death of her father, however, who had been summoned to Rome to reform the papal choir, sends her into a fresh spiritual tailspin, and she returns to the convent from his funeral with the intention of becoming a fully-professed Passionist sister. Because her singing has indeed attracted many wealthy patrons, the prioress rushes Evelyn through the novitiate, in spite of the doubts some of her superiors harbor about the sincerity of her vocation. Evelyn is professed to the order, but soon after is revisited by a spiritual crisis when she finds that she can no longer believe in the real presence of Christ in the Blessed Sacrament, a central,

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[28] Moore, *Evelyn Innes*, 193-4.

[29] The order of Passionist sisters, whose full name is Sisters of the Cross and Passion, was founded by an English convert, Elizabeth Prout (1820-1864, later Mother Mary Joseph of Jesus), in Manchester in 1852. The cause for her canonization was opened in 1993.

[30] For more on the Carmelite order, see below.

inarguable tenet of the Catholic faith. She resolves to leave the convent, but, after a serious illness occasioned by her spiritual and emotional upheaval, she gradually reverts to Ulick's nature religion. While walking in the convent garden during her convalescence, she sees

> . . . the beautiful earth quiescent like a nun watching before the sacrament. The plants lifted their leaves to the light. Everything knew it, even the stones in the centre of the earth . . . her soul dilated and knew its light . . . her flesh and spirit seemed to become one with it; her immortal spirit seemed to ascend into the immortal light.[31]

In order to remain in the convent, Evelyn must reach some sort of accommodation between her life as a cloistered nun and her newfound belief in the principles of natural religion. This accommodation is made possible, finally, by the loss of her voice, a result of her long illness. As an unmarried woman without family, now in her mid-thirties, Evelyn has no way to earn a living; the loss of her voice makes working as a singer impossible. In the meantime, the convent's debts have been paid up; her self-imposed obligations to the order have been discharged. She cannot sing in the world, and, though singing had formed the basis of her vocation, she is now freed from the responsibility of singing in the convent. After carefully planning her escape, however, she decides to remain; no other life than that of a cloistered religious seems possible to her, and she accepts her lot, and her future as a kind of pagan nun, with equanimity.

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[31] George Moore, *Sister Teresa*, 372-3.

Throughout the course of his life and work, George Moore progressed from lackadaisical indifference to open hostility toward the faith of his childhood. His later stories and plays are often harshly anticlerical; in the midst of the Irish movement for independence from Britain, he declared that "Catholicism and statehood are incompatible";[32] he wrote to his younger brother that his "hatred for Catholocism [*sic*] is limitless, it is the strongest fiber in my body";[33] and he finally became a Protestant in 1903.[34] In light of Moore's anti-Catholicism, then, the treatment of religion in *Evelyn Innes* and *Sister Teresa* should perhaps be read as ironic;[35] nonetheless, the novels' extended expostulation upon the themes of music and conversion revive the old theological trope, discussed throughout this study, of music's association with sin and conversion. Emma Sutton suggests that in finally turning from the stage to the convent, Evelyn is only fleeing from the popular late-nineteenth-century Wagnerian

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[32] Frazier, *George Moore*, 310.

[33] Jennifer Stevens, "Faith, Fiction, and the Historical Jesus: Theological Revisionism and its Influence on Fictional Representations of the Gospels (c. 1860-1920)," (Ph.D. dissertation, Institute of English Studies, University of London, 2006), 193.

[34] While Moore declared that Protestantism "leaves the mind free, or very nearly" (Stevens, "Faith, Fiction, and the Historical Jesus, 193), his conversion to the Church of Ireland seems to have been based far more on self-regard, as well as spite for his family and for the involvement of the Catholic Church in Irish politics, than on any real inner conviction. His brother Maurice wrote that Moore "contemplated with absurd delight . . . 'the shock his apostasy would be to the whole Catholic community & the pressure that would be brought on the episcopacy to reconsider its loyalty [to King Edward VII]. Then also there would be the joy in the Protestant hearts at the accession of so eminent a man. The Protestant Archbishop of Dublin must of course perform the ceremony. What a fine advertisement it would all be to his vanity'" (Frazier, *George Moore*, 332).

[35] William C. Frierson, however, calls Moore's treatment of the religious themes in the two novels "sympathetic" (Frierson, "George Moore Compromised with the Victorians," *The Trollopian* 1/4 [1947]: 44).

cult of the sensual and turning toward "'true,' spiritual Wagnerism,"[36] an inner movement that somehow, according to Sutton, is able to encompass adherence to orthodox religious forms, even including claustration. By Evelyn's own assessment, however, she cannot hope to be chaste while continuing to sing Wagner, and her rise as an opera singer has been directly predicated upon her moral fall as Owen Asher's mistress. To gain spiritual peace, then, she must reject Wagner's music outright. When she enters the convent, this rejection comes to extend to other music as well; in the course of singing for Sunday Benediction, she begins to find nineteenth-century sacred music equally impure. At one service,

> [s]he was so weary of singing Gounod's "Ave Maria" that she had intentionally accentuated the vulgarity of the melody, and wondered if the caricature had been noticed. "The more vulgarly it is sung, [she thought,] the more money it draws."[37]

Ironically, it is this "vulgar" performance that brings in the donor's check that pays off the last of the convent's debts.

Later, in the midst of the dark night of the soul that she experiences after her profession as a Passionist, Evelyn wickedly begins singing snatches of Isolde's music to her fellow nuns, relishing the little disturbances its eroticism causes to their peace of mind; nothing, Moore suggests, could be more incongruous than Wagner's music in a convent. Earlier, Moore has implied that any music that is not "the old music" carries the kernel of sin within it, and that any music that departs from the purity and

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[36] Sutton, *Aubrey Beardsley*, 139.

[37] Moore, *Sister Teresa*, 304.

rigor of plainchant and early polyphony is morally suspect. But in spite of her impressive musical skill, these are not repertoires that Evelyn can resurrect, or, indeed, that she can even continue to sing after her baptism at the font of Wagner. Several years earlier, upon her triumphal return to England after her yeoman's years singing on the continent, her father had asserted that "[t]he piano has destroyed the modern ear," and suggested that her own ear had gone the way of her morality (Evelyn replies, "My ear is all right, I think," to which her father counters, "I hope it is better than your heart").[38] In essence, then, her sense of pitch has been corrupted by her immersion in modern music, a failure of hearing that has progressed simultaneously with her moral failure as she continues to live as Sir Owen's mistress. Like David and the aulos players of old, and like the medieval Mary Magdalene-as-musician, Evelyn must cast off music in order to grasp at salvation. Moore suggests that it is only the complete abandonment of music, reinforced by her claustration and finally the total loss of her voice, that can save Evelyn from a life of sin.

It has been supposed that Moore modeled the character of Evelyn Innes on Pearl Mary-Teresa Richards Craigie (1867-1906), an American-born English novelist who wrote under the pen name John Oliver Hobbes. In addition to being a prolific novelist and playwright, Craigie was a gifted pianist who gave public lectures on Brahms and other musical subjects,[39] and also a convert to Catholicism. Craigie and Moore collaborated on some plays in the 1890s, and it is unclear whether or not their relationship was sexual; Moore wrote in his memoirs that he had assumed and hoped

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[38] Moore, *Evelyn Innes*, 185.

[39] It is intriguing that, while Moore was a professed Wagnerite, Craigie championed the music of Brahms, whose aesthetic and philosophy were distinctly anti-Wagnerian.

that they would become lovers, but that he was rejected. His response to her unwelcome refusal was, in what would become an incident famous in literary Britain, to kick her in the rear as they walked together in Hyde Park.[40] Moore's account of this incident, however (and of their relationship in general), may be unreliable, since Moore, "even by the testimony of his friends, was an incorrigible liar";[41] an early biographer described him as the type of lover who "didn't kiss but told."[42]

Abandoning Music in the Nineteenth Century

While *Evelyn Innes*, then, may have been the cynical portrait of a frivolous lady convert painted by a spurned lover, there are real-life models of nineteenth-century musical conversion that mirror Moore's theme of a musician's change of heart and subsequent abandonment of music. Certain prominent nineteenth-century musicians were known to have had dramatic spiritual conversions, including the great violinist Joseph Joachim, who converted from Judaism to Christianity,[43] and Franz Liszt, who left a life of notorious profligacy to become a Franciscan tertiary. Perhaps the most dramatic of nineteenth-century musical conversions, however, was that of Liszt's pupil and disciple, the composer and pianist Hermann Cohen, later Père Augustin-Marie du Très Saint Sacrement (1821-1871). Cohen, who became a Carmelite priest and who passed most of his life on the continent, spent the 1860s in

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[40] Vineta Colby, *The Singular Anomaly: Women Novelists of the Nineteenth Century* (New York: New York University Press, 1970), 213.

[41] Colby, *The Singular Anomaly*, 210-11.

[42] Colby, *The Singular Anomaly*, 215.

[43] According to Brahms biographer Jan Swafford, Joachim's conversion was accompanied by "a fierce repudiation of the religion of his birth" (Swafford, *Johannes Brahms* [New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1997], 134).

London, where he had gone at the request of Pope Pius IX and Nicholas Wiseman, Archbishop of Westminster in the newly restored English Catholic hierarchy, to restore the Carmelite order. His preaching, which had already made him famous on the continent, made him infamous in England, and he would certainly have been known to George Moore.

Hermann Cohen was born in Hamburg, the son of a wealthy (at the time) banker in an assimilated, religiously liberal Jewish milieu. He showed a gift for music at a young age, beginning his piano studies at the age of four; he later studied with Edouard Marxsen, who would also be the teacher of another precocious son of Hamburg, the young Johannes Brahms. After his father lost everything in the financial speculation following the French Revolution of 1830, Cohen began giving public concerts, initially against his father's wishes. In the hope of furthering his training, Cohen's mother brought him to Paris in 1834.

Paris in the early 1830s was the European capital of the piano,[44] home at that time to Chopin, Liszt, Camille Pleyel, and Sigismond Thalberg. After hearing Cohen play, the twenty-three-year-old Liszt took him under his wing as both pupil and protégé, christening him "Puzzi," an Italianization of the German *putzig*, meaning cute or adorable. The young Puzzi soon became Liszt's frequent companion in the brilliant salons of Paris. According to Dom Jean-Marie Beaurin, Cohen's great-grand-nephew and a Benedictine monk,

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[44] As Cohen biographer Jean-Bernard Desagulier puts it, "Après Vienne, Paris est aussi la capitale musicale de l'Europe romantique qui'il faut conquérir car c'est ici que se font les consecrations indispensables qui permettent de conduire une grande carrière" (Desagulier, "Hermann Cohen: Élève de Franz Liszt" [Ph.D. diss., Université de Paris IV, Sorbonne, 1998], 21). The translation of this passage and all subsequent passages from French sources are my own.

> In his pupil, Liszt encountered [a younger version of] himself; from that point on, it pleased him to have his triumphant genius accompanied by the charming shadow that was Hermann . . . Liszt and his pupil were inseparable.[45]

Cohen seems to have inspired affection and admiration in a number of prominent writers, musicians, and thinkers of the era. The noted Italian patriot Cristina Trivulzio, Princess Belgioioso, became his patroness, and Cohen frequently accompanied her husband, Prince Emilio Barbiano Belgioioso, a gifted amateur singer, in salon concerts. Liszt described his pupil accompanying the prince at one such concert in Geneva:

> Hermann's pale and melancholy appearance, his beautiful dark hair and frail physique, provided a poetic contrast to the prince's confident manner, blond hair, and open and ruddy face. The dear boy gave further proof of that precocious understanding and profound feeling for art which already set him apart from the ordinary run of pianists and lead me to predict a brilliant, fruitful future for him . . . . I would not be surprised to learn that more than one pretty young lass was tenderly drawn to him by some naïve and ardent passion.[46]

Cohen even followed Liszt on his scandalous elopement to Switzerland in 1835 with the Countess Marie d'Agoult, who had left her husband and child behind in

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[45] "En son élève, Liszt se retrouvait; dès lors, il se plût à faire accomapagner son genie triumphant de cette ombre charmante qu'était alors Herman . . . . Liszt et son élève sont inséparables" (Beaurin, *Flêche de feu: Le père Augustin-Marie du Très Saint Sacrement, Hermann Cohen 1821-1871* [Paris: Éditions France-Empire, 1981], 28-9). This and all subsequent translations are my own.

[46] Franz Liszt, *An Artist's Journey: Lettres d'un bachelier ès musique, 1835-1841*, transl. and ann. by Charles Suttoni (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 9.

Paris. Indeed, Liszt's attention to Cohen during the couple's sojourn in Geneva, on what was supposed to have been a honeymoon of sorts, sowed seeds of friction between the lovers that would contribute to the demise of their liaison several years later. George Sand later joined the trio, and the little party traveled through Switzerland on a jaunt,

> some aspects of which [Cohen later] probably would rather have forgotten. The fourteen-year-old fit right in with this androgynous band of bohemians smoking drug-laced cigars. . . . Given Madame Sand's all-too-inclusive erotic preferences and the life-style [*sic*] of her coterie of friends, one might surmise that Hermann's Swiss adventure provided him with a sex education second to none.[47]

It was in Switzerland, however, that the young Cohen received an experience of the divine through music, a phenomenon that would later help spur him toward a profound and complete religious conversion. The traveling party arrived in Freiburg and made their way to the cathedral, where Liszt sat at the great Mooser organ and improvised on the "Dies irae" from Mozart's *Requiem.*[48] Cohen was deeply affected,[49] and would later write in his (now lost) *Confessions*, drawing a parallel

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[47] Richard Cross, "'Puzzi' Revisited: A New Look at Hermann Cohen," *Journal of the American Liszt Society* 36 (1994): 23.

[48] George Sand and many Liszt biographers identify the Mozart excerpt as the piece Liszt played; Humphrey Searle, however, disputes this claim and asserts that it was the plainsong "Dies irae" (Searle, "Secondary Liszt," *The Musical Times*, 113/1557 [1972]: 1088).

[49] In George Eliot's *Middlemarch* (1871-72), Dorothea (whom Eliot compares to Saint Teresa of Avila) relates a similar experience to her fiancé, Dr. Causabon: "When we were coming home from Lausanne, my uncle took us to hear the great organ at Freiberg [*sic*], and it made me sob" (Eliot, *Middlemarch* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998], 61).

between the (Cecilian) organ and the harp of David,[50] as well as alluding to the passage from Revelation illustrated by William Holman Hunt in *The Light of the World*:

> Liszt touched the great organ, that colossal harp of David, whose every majestic tone gives some vague notion of your grandeur, oh my God! Was I not then penetrated with the impression of your holiness? Did you not then cause my soul to vibrate with a religious presentiment? . . . . Oh beloved Jesus, you stood at the door of my heart, and I did not open to you![51]

While there was of course no nineteenth-century male equivalent of the "fallen woman," Cohen might have come close. In his teens and early twenties, he lived a life of notorious dissipation in Paris, Italy, and England, the hallmarks of which were illicit love affairs and compulsive gambling, to which Cohen was already hopelessly addicted while still an adolescent. His gambling finally caused Liszt, formerly so indulgent toward his young pupil, to break with him when Cohen was accused – unjustly, it appears – of embezzling from Liszt's concert proceeds.[52]

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[50] Hermann's reference is especially apt in light of new scholarship showing that Cecilia may have herself been a member of the Roman Jewish community of early Christians; see Thomas H. Connolly, "Traces of a Jewish-Christian Community at S. Cecilia in Trastevere," *Plainsong and Medieval Music* 7 (1998): 1-19, and Chapter 2, note 27, above.

[51] "Liszt toucha les grandes orgues, cette colossale harpe de David dont tous les sons majestueux donnent une vague idée de votre grandeur, ô mon Dieu! Ne fus-je pas alors pénétré d'une impression de sainteté? Ne fîtes-vous pas vibrer dans mon âme un pressentiment religieux? . . . O Jésus bien-aimé, voust étiez à la porte de mon coeur, et je n'ouvrais pas!" (Beaurin, *Flêche de feu*, 38).

[52] Richard Cross, "'Puzzi' Revisited," 26-7.

In the salons of 1840s Paris, as Cohen later wrote to another famous nineteenth-century Jewish convert to Catholicism, the French Jesuit priest Marie-Alphonse Ratisbonne,[53] he had encountered for the first time the philosophies of

> atheism, pantheism, Fourierism, Saint-Simonism, socialism, riots, the massacre of the rich, the abolition of marriage, terror, sharing of goods, the common enjoyment of all the pleasures; these notions soon found a place in my fourteen-year-old head . . . . I soon became one of the most zealous propagandists of those sects which had vowed to renew the face of the earth.[54]

In a sort of gender reversal of the events pictured in *The Awakening Conscience*, however, Cohen may have received his spiritual conversion in part through the unwitting actions of one of the most famous fallen women of 1840s Paris, the circus rider and courtesan Céleste Mogador. The two met in 1847 at a tea party hosted by Alphonse Royer, the French playwright who had translated Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor* and *Don Pasquale* for the Parisian stage, and they soon began an affair. As Mogador notes in her memoirs, which were published to great scandal after she married a nobleman in 1854:

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[53] Ratisbonne (1814-1884), whose older brother Théodore was also a convert and a priest, had declared himself hostile to religion, but experienced a remarkable (and unsought-for) conversion upon witnessing an apparition of the Virgin Mary in the Church of San Andrea delle Fratte in Rome (Roy Schoeman, *Honey from the Rock: Sixteen Jews Find the Sweetness of Christ* [San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2007], 1-32).

[54] "Athéisme, panthéisme, fouriérisme, saint-simonisme, socialisme, émeutes, massacre des riches, abolition du marriage, terreur, partage des biens, jouissance commune de tous les plaisirs, il y eut bientôt place pur cela dans une tête de quatorze ans . . . je devins bientôt l'un des propagandistes le plus zélés des sects qui ont juré de renouveler la face de la terre . . ." (Beaurin, *Flêche de feu*, 29).

> My love affair with H – is a sad example of the dangers of passion. Thinking I was satisfying a whim, I might have altered his life instead.

Early in their relationship, Mogador had made it clear to Cohen that she could never really love him because "you are Jewish, and I could never love a Jew." Cohen responded, "with a gravity that did not lack wit":

> I swear, Céleste . . . that it is not my fault that I am of Jacob's race. If we could be born as adults and if we could choose our religion, I would become a Catholic to please you.

Mogador relates how Cohen played the piano "with so much soul and improvised such beautiful things that my heart melted"; once, while playing for her, he told her: " I am . . . between the two great passions of my life." Soon, however, his love took an obsessive turn. Cohen declared that if Mogador would only love him in spite of his Jewishness, "I would deny my God for love of you"; when he played for her now, "the music was melancholy and his piano sounded like a church organ." Céleste saw him one day entering the Église de la Madeleine (fittingly, for a musician-penitent, the church of the Magdalene), where he remained for two hours; then, "[a] few days later I received a letter in which he told me that his life was not his own and he was putting his trust in God. This letter was so lofty that I wanted to see him, to ask his forgiveness! . . . He would not see me."[55]

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[55] Céleste Mogador, *Memoirs of a Courtesan in Nineteenth-Century Paris*, transl. Monique Fleury Nagem (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2001), 123-5.

At this time, at the height of his popularity, Cohen was in spiritual turmoil. Fêted by the smart set of the Faubourg Saint-Germain, tempted by "all the seductions of the world . . . living from day to day without a thought for tomorrow . . . worthy of envy in the estimation of so many,"[56] he nevertheless felt himself to be enslaved by his untamable passions. He had gotten into the habit of visiting churches in Paris, and in May 1847 was asked by the Prince of Moscowa, who led concerts of sacred music, to substitute for him as choral director at the church of Sainte-Valère (interestingly, the church may have been named for Saint Valerian, the husband of Saint Cecilia; the church no longer exists). Cohen conducted a skilled amateur choir at the service of Benediction (the same service for which Evelyn Innes, as Sister Teresa, sang at her Passionist convent in Moore's novel), and felt his heart profoundly changed.[57]

After his conversion Cohen abruptly left his old life and companions behind; George Sand, for whom the young Puzzi used to play piano and roll cigarettes while she wrote her novels, "turned away in disgust" upon meeting him in the street, saying, "Get lost! You're nothing but a vile monk'."[58] Indeed, Cohen sought to enter a Carmelite monastery, but his outstanding gambling debts made it necessary for him to spend the next two years concertizing and giving piano lessons to "young ladies who

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[56] "Tout me réussit avec un success incroyable: le faubourg Saint-Germain m'adopta . . . toutes les seductions du monde s'emparèrent de mon esprit; je ne regardais plus en arrière ni en avant, et je vivais au jour le jour, sans songer au lendemain . . . cette existence si belle [était] digne d'envie dans l'opinion de tants de gens . . ." (Beaurin, *Flêche de feu*, 56).

[57] Beaurin, *Flêche de feu*, 58.

[58] Cross, "'Puzzi' Revisited," 28.

were not at all happy at his turn from the world"[59] until he had paid off the money he owed; only then would he be accepted into the order.

Cohen's attraction to Carmelite spirituality was partially based in the tradition that ascribes the founding of the Carmelite order to the Jewish prophet Elijah. As Cohen wrote his mother from the Carmelite monastery in Paris, seeking to explain his conversion:

> I find myself in the novitiate of a religious order . . . [that] was born among the Jews, 930 years before Jesus Christ; it was the prophet Elijah of the Old Testament who founded it on Mount Carmel, in Palestine. It is an order of true Jews, of children of the Prophets who waited for the Messiah . . . who continue to our time, living always in the same manner, with the same bodily deprivations and the same spiritual joys, as they lived on Mount Carmel in Judea, about 2,800 years ago. . . . This is the life I have chosen.[60]

As a virtuoso musician, moreover, Cohen was likely drawn to the Carmelite ethos of profound listening.[61] Perhaps the best-known incident in the Biblical account of the life of Elijah is the passage in 1 Kings 19:11 in which God instructs the prophet to "[g]o outside and stand on the mountain before the Lord; the Lord will be passing by." Elijah does as he is told, and witnesses, in succession, a heavy wind "rending

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[59] Cross, "'Puzzi' Revisited," 28.

[60] Quoted in Schoeman, *Honey from the Rock*, 48.

[61] In Eliot's *Daniel Deronda*, Klesmer's rival in love for Catherine Arrowpoint, Mr. Bult, calls the musician a "Panslavist." Klesmer, seated at the piano,"suddenly [makes] a mysterious wind-like rush backwards and forwards" on the keys, and replies: "No; my name is Elijah. I am the Wandering Jew" (*Daniel Deronda* [Harmondsworth, Middlesex, UK, 1967], 284).

the mountains and crushing rocks,"[62] an earthquake, and a fire. He discerns, however, that in spite of their terrifying power, these events are not vehicles for the message of God, and he continues to wait until he hears "a still small voice,"[63] which he recognizes as the voice of the Lord. The Carmelite vocation is, therefore, "a call to listening";[64] as Thomas Merton put it, when the contemplative waits for the word of God in silence, "[i]t is by silence itself [that he is answered], suddenly, inexplicably revealing itself to him as a word of great power, full of the voice of God."[65]

For Cohen, abandoning music (like the legendary Mary Magdalene and the fictional Evelyn Innes) appears to have been one of the conditions for a complete break with his old life, and as a Carmelite postulant now seeking a career of close listening, his superiors did in fact require that he give up playing and composing. Prior to entering the Carmelite order, as a new convert who had undergone an experience of seemingly total *metanoia*, Cohen had abruptly abandoned his public life as an adulated musician and the compromising circumstances to which such adulation gave rise; his only performance following his conversion was his "farewell" concert in Paris in 1848 – fittingly, given in Saint Cecilia Hall – which allowed him to pay off the last of his debts.[66]

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[62] *New American Bible* (Iowa Falls, IA: World Bible Publishers, 1987), 315-16.

[63] 1 Kings 20:12, *King James Bible* (Raleigh, NC: Hayes Barton Press, 2007), 607.

[64] Michael D. O'Brien, *Father Elijah: An Apocalypse* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1996), 17.

[65] Thomas Merton, *The Climate of Monastic Prayer* (Shannon, Ireland: Irish University Press, 1969), 123.

[66] Cross, "'Puzzi' Revisited," 28.

Like Saint Augustine, however, whom he regarded as a patron and whose name he took upon ordination, Cohen struggled to find a new, transformed way not only to perceive music, but also to perform it post-conversion. Indeed, he was delighted when he was allowed to compose and play the piano again after his novitiate. For, as Karl F. Morrison has noted,

> Conversion is often portrayed as a positive event, a turning toward. It also has a negative aspect, a turning away. The event of formal adhesion [to the new faith] may consist of this flight toward the future and from the past. But . . . . the old life overshadows the understanding of the new. The event may produce a transformation; but something resistant to change informs understanding it, and retention of the old may indeed have been a condition without which there could have been no change.[67]

Before his conversion, Cohen had been known for composing piano fantasies on opera themes in the manner of Liszt and charming, brilliant piano pieces of the kind then popular in well-appointed salons; one of the most famous of these was the waltz *Les Bords de l'Elbe* (Ex. 3, Appendix 2), dating from the mid-1840s,[68] which conveys the impression of the tranquil water and rushing waves of the River Elbe. Cohen was also known for his virtuosic playing; as Céleste Mogador described her first meeting with him,

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[67] Karl F. Morrison, *Conversion and Text: The Cases of Augustine of Hippo, Herman-Judah, and Constantine Tsatsos* (Charlottesville and London: University Press of Virginia, 1992), 45.

[68] The piece is preserved in manuscript at the Bibliothèque Nationale de France; its authenticity has been verified by Jean-Bernard Desagulier ("Hermann Cohen," 316).

> Hearing his first notes, I detected a maestro . . . His hands were flying over the keyboard with incredible delicacy and nimbleness . . . . [I asked] who this young man was.
>
> "He is H—the composer, H – the young prodigy!"[69]

Although Cohen, because of his own scruples and those of his superiors, abandoned music in all the forms in which he had excelled at it, it appears that he was able to reach some accommodation between his former life as a musician and his new life as a "fiery, fanatical priest," as August Reissman's late nineteenth-century *Handlexikon der Tonkunst* described him.[70] Once he was allowed to practice his art again following the completion of his studies for the priesthood, he wrote and published several collections of sacred motets and canticles between 1849 and 1870, the year before his untimely death from smallpox contracted while ministering the last rites to French prisoners of war at Spandau Prison. He also wrote a Mass dedicated "All'egregio Signor Abbate Liszt";[71] by this time, he and Liszt had been reconciled, and Liszt, having had a significant conversion himself – or, more accurately, a reversion to his childhood faith – had, as noted above, become a Franciscan tertiary; he received the minor orders of the Catholic priesthood in 1865. The style of Cohen's religious music (see Ex. 4, Appendix 2) is extremely simple, even stark, which, while fitting for the hymns he was now composing, also likely indicated his desire for a music that would present the opposite ethos and attributes of

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[69] Mogador, *Memoirs of a Courtesan*, 118.

[70] "[E]in feuriger, fanatischer Priester geworden war" (August Reissman, ed. *Handlexikon der Tonkunst* [Berlin: Robert Oppenheim, 1882], 201).

[71] Cross, "'Puzzi' Revisited," 31.

the virtuosic pieces written in his dissipated youth. Indeed, the cultivation of a "pure" musical aesthetic seems to have been associated in the mid-nineteenth century with a concomitant spirituality, as exemplified in the anti-virtuosic performing styles of musicians like the violinist Joseph Joachim (as noted above, a convert to Christianity) and the mezzo-soprano Pauline Viardot (another close friend of George Sand).[72] The Cecilian Movement, a contemporary Italian-German movement for the reform of Catholic liturgical music which took inspiration from chant and early vocal polyphony,[73] and the popular revival of interest in Gregorian chant, also suggest a connection between musical and moral purity; and George Moore drew upon this connection in associating Evelyn's virginity with early music and her fall with the "music of the future." A contemporary organist, describing a Mass that Cohen had written (possibly the one dedicated to Liszt), described the composer's new style thus:

> [It has] the appearance of extreme simplicity, no less remarkable for its melody, which is at once pure and easy to

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[72] While Viardot was not known for her adherence to orthodox religion, and in fact poked fun at her Spanish mother's combination of Catholicism with folk superstition, she was regarded in her lifetime as a priestess of the cult of music, and was even associated with Saint Cecilia (see Mark Everist, "Enshrining Mozart: *Don Giovanni* and the Viardot Circle," *19th-Century Music* 25/2-3 [2001-2]: 165-189). George Sand based the title character of her 1842 novel *Consuelo* on Viardot. In it, the Spanish singer Consuelo cultivates an anti-virtuosic singing style and is advised by her teacher (the real eighteenth-century castrato Niccolò Porpora) to maintain the purity of her art by practicing celibacy, so that "[w]hatever you do, or wherever you are, in the theater or in the cloister, you may be a saint, the bride of heaven" (George Sand, *Consuelo*: *A Romance of Venice.* New York: Da Capo, 1979, 112). "For Sand, modest and uncomplicated music is the only adequate medium of divine . . . communication" (David A. Powell, *While the Music Lasts: The Representation of Music in the Works of George Sand* [Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 2001], 41).

[73] Cecilianism, like Pre-Raphaelitism, "was nurtured by the early stages of industrialization, which engendered a longing for simplicity, unworldliness and the past" (Siegfried Gmeinwieser, "Cecilian movement," *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online,* http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/05245 [accessed January 14, 2009]).

> remember . . . . the Sanctus and the Agnus Dei . . . have the effect, one can say without exaggeration, of having been borrowed from the harmonies of heavenly choirs . . . . [74]

And a more recent assessment of the convert's new compositional style by prominent French architect Jean Castex holds that

> Hermann's Romantic impetus never evokes . . . the extreme complexity of his piano technique . . . [rather] we are surprised by harmonies more in keeping with those of modern composers post-1930 . . . and [finally] . . . by a profound sense of German music.

If, Castex adds, Fr. Hermann did not leave his name in the great annals of music history, as one endowed with his gifts might have been expected to do, it is because

> . . . [he] utilized music as another form of preaching. Out of the musical poverty of nineteenth-century sacred canticles, which usurped profane melodies and dressed them up with dull words, Hermann's motets create an original music, in conformity with the tastes of the time that gave him birth – a time which he had nonetheless renounced for a higher service than that of artistic innovation.[75]

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[74] "Cette oeuvre musicale . . . sous l'apparence d'une extrême simplicité, n'en est pas moins remarquable par sa mélodie pure et facile à retenir . . . . le Sanctus et l'Agnus Dei . . . ont des effets tells, qu'on les dirait, sans exaggeration, empruntés aux des choeurs célestes" (Beaurin, *Flêche de feu*, 163-4).

[75] "L'impulsion romantique d'Hermann ne tourna jamais à l'emphase car on sent toujours l'habitude d'une haute complexité de la technique du piano, voire la surprise d'accords que les modernes d'après les recherches de 1930 sentent leurs . . . et puis, il y a . . . le sens profound de la musique allemande . . . . [il] se servit de la musique comme d'un autre moyen de prédication. Dans l'indigence musicale des cantiques du XIXe siècle, usurpant des airs profanes et les habillant de paroles plates, les motets d'Hermann créaient une musique originale, conforme au goût d'un temps dont il était fils et dont il avait renoncé pour plus haut service à être un initiateur artistique" (Jean Castex, "Pages Pyrénéennes: Hermann, disciple et

The Mystical Voice and the Transformed City

In the preface to his first collection of sacred works, *Amour à Jésus-Christ* (1850-51), Cohen described an accommodation of sorts between his old life as "the chouchou of Paris"[76] and his new identity as a member of a semi-cloistered, contemplative order in the heart of the very city in which his heart had changed so dramatically. In an ecstatic passage addressing Christ, the dedicatee of the compositions, and ascribing mystical properties to both the sense of hearing and the imagined "voice" of the Carmelite community, he wrote:

> . . . the bells of [Paris] ring to announce you . . . . [they[call your children to come to sing hymns and canticles to you . . . . [and,] while my knees bend to adore you – the sole blessing of silent Carmel – may not the voice of this place [i.e. the Carmelite monastery], passing through space, mingle with the hymns of this great city?
>
> You have given me, God of love, the language of harmony – should I then remain mute in the midst of the songs your faithful sing to you? . . . . Have not I also a Hosanna to sing to your glory? . . . . O beloved Jesus, I must mix my own songs with the hymns of Paris![77]

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exemple de Liszt," *Bulletin de la Société archéologique, historique, littéraire & scientifique du Gers* [1975]: 269).

[76] Cross, "'Puzzi' Revisited," 30.

[77] "Et les cloches de la capitale s'ébranlent pour vous annoncer . . . . [ils apellent] vos enfants à venir vous chanter des hymnes et des cantiques . . . . Mais, tandis que mes genoux creusent à vous adorer, le sol béni du silencieux Carmel, sa voix ne pourrait-elle, franchissant l'espace, se mêler aux hymnes de la grande ville? Vous m'avez donné, Dieu d'amour, un langage d'harmonie. – Resterai-je muet à ce culte qu'on vous rend? . . . n'ai-je pas aussi un Hosanna à chanter à votre gloire . . . . O Jésus adoré, je dois mêler mes chants aux hymnes de Paris!" (Beaurin, *Flêche de feu*, 160-1).

In this passage, Cohen both evokes and inverts the exile of the Jewish musicians in Babylon, who fall mute when their captors demand that they play one of the songs of Zion.[78] Cohen had become, in a sense, an exile from his former life, in the very city in which he had earlier become famous for both his music and his dissipation. But it is God who demands that he break silence, pick up his harp, so to speak, from where he has lain it down, and sing a new song. Now, moreover, through his new compositions, the evidence of Cohen's conversion is free to go forth from the walls of his cloister and transform the very city of Paris from a capital of vice to one of grace, from a center of decadent music to one of sacred hosannas, through the injection of the imagined voice of his Carmelite monastery into the stream of voices of the city itself. In fact, Cohen's canticles gradually spread from the capital throughout France, where they continued to be sung until the turn of the twentieth century.[79]

It is time to consider Hermann Cohen's activity in England, for while he was not English himself, his life as both musician and priest was woven into the musical and social fabric of nineteenth-century British life. In the late 1830s, he had concertized to great success in London,[80] and had been the recital accompanist in Britain of the superstar tenor Mario.[81] More than twenty years later, now a priest, he

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[78] Psalm 137; see Chapter 1, p. 7.

[79] Beaurin, *Flêche de feu*, 165.

[80] The Carmelites in Kensington have preserved the piano on which he played (Beaurin, *Flêche de feu*, 299).

[81] Mario (whose scruples about his noble birth inspired his single-barreled stage name) was born Giovanni Matteo, Count of Candia (1810-83). He was enormously popular in London for a stretch of three decades in the mid-nineteenth century, and was married to the equally beloved Giulia Grisi, known to be Queen Victoria's favorite soprano (for more on Mario, see Elizabeth Forbes, "Mario, Giovanni Matteo, Cavaliere de Candia," *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*,

was charged by Pope Pius IX, at the behest of Nicholas Cardinal Wiseman, Archbishop of Westminster, with reviving the Carmelite order in England, which he did with the establishment of a convent in Kensington in 1862. This Carmelite convent, the first in England since the Reformation, could hardly have escaped widespread attention in the upheaval following the restoration of the Catholic hierarchy; indeed, it was soon thronged by anti-Catholic crowds who stood outside, shouting slurs and throwing stones at the windows.[82] The *Times* published an article quoting from a Belgian newspaper that described Cohen in his former life as a mediocre musician "always playing the same fugue," and now, as a priest, always reeling off "the same sermon."[83] In 1864, however, the *Times* reported on a remarkable event in which Cohen was a participant. Five foreign Catholic sailors were condemned to be hanged at Newgate Prison for piracy and murder, and Cohen was one of three priests summoned to administer last rites on the scaffold. The *Times* noted the peace and tranquility that seemed to descend upon the condemned, who were hanged after professing their faith.[84]

It was to London, then – a city that in later years he remembered as a "Babylon" [85] – that Cohen returned after more than twenty years, performing this time the signs of his conversion. His influence there was such that many Protestants came

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http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/17816 [accessed January 14, 2009].

[82] The church now operated at this location by the Carmelites has a Hermann Cohen Chapel.

[83] "[Un] musicien médiocre, jouant toujours le même fugue, comme il débitait toujours le même sermon" (Beaurin, *Flêche de feu*, 308-9).

[84] Beaurin, *Flêche de feu*, 311-12.

[85] Beaurin, *Flêche de feu*, 307.

into the Catholic Church as a result of his preaching, and he received the first English Carmelite novice into the Kensington convent in 1863.[86] Indeed, London was the "theater" for Fr. Hermann's performance of evangelization, which he enacted as a convert making other converts, and with Cohen himself as the "marvelous craftsman" of the Catholic revival in England.[87] Indeed, he might very well have been called forth by Cardinal Newman himself, who, as noted above, preached the renewal of Catholicism in England in his "Second Spring" sermon: Fr. Augustin-Marie du Très Saint Sacrement had, like a second Augustine of Canterbury, come to reevangelize the Britons.[88]

And, like that of his other namesake, Saint Augustine of Hippo, Cohen's conversion had been accomplished aurally. From his first stirrings of belief upon hearing Liszt play the great organ at Freiburg, to the Benediction service for which he conducted the choir at the church of Saint-Valère, and at which he was moved, without knowing why, to bow at the moment when the priest raised the monstrance to bless all those present, Fr. Cohen's conversion was a process of translation of the phenomena of Christianity into a form that could be apprehended through hearing, and which he went on to perform and transmit in England and Europe, not only through his transformed style of musical composition, but also through his eloquent preaching, in which he had vowed always to mention the Blessed Sacrament. For

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[86] Beaurin, *Flêche de feu*, 300-2.

[87] "Le Père Augustin-Marie fut le grand artisan en Angleterre de [cette] résurrection . . . . le merveilleux artisan" (Beaurin, *Flêche de feu*, 312-13).

[88] See Chapter 3, note 42.

Cohen, "the heavenly words that the Word made flesh had pronounced"[89] brought him to "the music of the Logos."[90]

Close Listening, Conversion, and Saint Cecilia

My models, in this study, for a conversion accomplished through the ear have been Saint Augustine of Hippo and the fictional fallen woman in William Holman Hunt's *The Awakening Conscience*. These conversions, however, are in fact the result of a *heightened* sense of hearing, in which the mundane sounds invested with the power to change hearts (in Augustine's case, the seemingly inconsequential cries of children at play; in the fallen woman's case, the trite ballad "Oft in the Stilly Night") contain spiritual truths over and above their temporal meaning. This phenomenon of what I call musical conversion, whether fictional or historical, seems quaint and almost fantastical in the postmodern era, and its location in an age as near to our own as the mid-nineteenth century may be baffling. We may wonder at the efficacy of sound and hearing as vehicles for such an ineffable, transformative experience as a religious epiphany. When we regard the new prominence that the sense of hearing enjoyed in the nineteenth century, however, such a conversion, even one that requires a virtuoso musician to abandon his art, might well seem possible. By mid-century, hearing was considered a powerful and mysterious force; although

[89] "[Les] Paroles . . . célestes que le Verbe fait homme ait . . . prononcées (Beaurin, *Flêche de feu*, 54).

[90] Jerome Bump, "Seeing and Hearing in *Marius the Epicurean*," *Nineteenth Century Fiction* 37/2 (1982): 204.

"the gaze acquired a new degree of importance in this period . . . the era also experienced a rise in close listening."[91]

As already noted, the nineteenth century was the era in which the locus of human activity had moved definitively from the quiet of the pastoral landscape to the clamorous city, whose urban din was now augmented by the sounds of industrial manufacturing. It was also the era in which the telegraph, telephone, and phonograph were invented, all of which imparted to the sense of hearing and the human voice an almost supernatural power. Indeed, the mid-century rise in such Victorian spiritualist practices as séances and spirit-rappings can be seen as a direct response to the idea that human life was greatly influenced by sound – an idea which arose in part from the publicity surrounding these remarkable new inventions in voice transcription, transmission, amplification, and recording. According to Steven Connor, for the Victorians,

> Spiritualism moved . . . towards more indeterminate experiences [in which] invocation predominated over materialization, and the ear over the eye . . . . The séance [therefore] occupies a central position in the Victorian exploration of the possibilities of a world governed by the principles of sound, and a form of human embodiment governed by hearing.[92]

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[91] John M. Picker, *Victorian Soundscapes* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 6.

[92] Steven Connor, "Voice, Technology, and the Victorian Ear," in *Transactions and Encounters: Science and Technology in the Nineteenth Century*, ed. Roger Luckhurst and Josephine McDonagh (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), 24-26.

In addition to its presence in new and occult spiritual practices, the theory of the primacy of the relatively fragile and fallible sense of hearing, traditionally "the medium of experience, intuition, intensity, and immediacy,"[93] was also reflected in mainstream religion. I have already mentioned Charles Spurgeon's notion of heaven as a musical soundscape, as well as Cardinal Newman's "Second Spring" sermon, in which he imagined England's reconversion resulting from the sound of the Virgin Mary's voice (as noted above, the Victorians also ascribed a powerful transformative ethos to Newman's own voice).[94] Another Catholic convert, Jesuit priest and poet Gerard Manley Hopkins (who entered the Catholic Church in 1866 after reading Newman's conversion memoir *Apologia pro Vita Sua*), also emphasized the triumph of "trusty hearing" over the other, generally more reliable senses in his translation of Saint Thomas Aquinas's Eucharistic hymn "Adoro te devote":

Adoro te devote, latens Deitas,	Godhead, I adore thee fast in hiding; thou
Quæ sub his figuris vere latitas;	God in these bare shapes, poor shadows, darkling now:
Tibi se cor meum totum subjicit,	See, Lord, at Thy service low lies here a heart
Quia te contemplans totum deficit.	Lost, all lost in wonder at the God thou art.
Visus, tactus, gustus in te fallitur,	Seeing, touching, tasting are in thee deceived:
Sed auditu solo tuto creditur.	How says trusty hearing? that shall be believed;
Credo quidquid dixit Dei Filius;	What God's Son has told me, take for truth I do;
Nil hoc verbo veritátis verius.	Truth Himself speaks truly or there's nothing true.[95]

[93] Connor, "Voice, Technology, and the Victorian Ear," 18.

[94] See Chapter 3, note 43.

[95] Gerard Manley Hopkins, *Selected Poetry*, ed. Catherine Phillips (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 93. My thanks to James Blount Griffin for drawing my attention to Hopkins's translation.

Thus, according to Hopkins and Aquinas, the generally slippery sense of hearing must be trusted above all others when contemplating the mystery of transubstantiation, because it is the only one of the senses that perceives the Christian proclamation.

The conversions experienced by Hermann Cohen and the fictional Evelyn Innes, however, cannot be strictly considered conversions through the ear. While it is true, as we have seen, that Cohen experienced the first awakening of religious belief when he heard Liszt improvise on the "Dies irae" in Freiburg, and that it was while conducting the music for a Benediction service that he all at once knew the presence of God, there were other factors that spurred him towards his goal, including the degradation of his personal life. This holds true as well for Evelyn Innes; in George Moore's two novels, God does not reveal Himself to her through the music of Wagner, nor even through the Palestrina masses her father conducts at Saint Joseph's Church in Dulwich, but rather presents himself as an escape from her own painfully disorderly condition. Nonetheless, in an era in which the auditory sense ascended in importance, it is not surprising that virtuoso musicians, both fictional and real, would be the subjects of dramatic conversion narratives. For musicians in the Victorian era, the sense of hearing outstripped and even replaced the sense of sight, or so it was believed: the art historian Mrs. Anna Jameson noted the "peculiar expression" in Saint Cecilia's eyes in an Italian canvas, explaining that it was the same expression that a friend of hers "had often remarked as characteristic of musicians by profession, or those devoted to music, – an expression of *listening* rather than *seeing*."[96]

[96] Bump, "Seeing and Hearing in *Marius the Epicurean*," 206.

Interestingly, the iconic musician of the nineteenth century, Franz Liszt himself, wrote an extensive analysis of Raphael's *Ecstasy of Saint Cecilia*, which he saw in Bologna in 1838. In a letter to the music journalist Joseph-Louis d'Ortigue, Liszt described the painting as an allegory of the effects of true music on the heart of the artist, and its iconography as a lexicon of the ability of the artist to perceive and propagate the divine truths revealed through the heightened sense of hearing that I have posited. In his description of the painting,[97] he references not only Cecilia's typological forerunner, David, but also her association with the *topoi* of transformed sight and hearing:

> . . . . Raphael has chosen to depict the moment when Saint Cecilia is preparing to sing a hymn to the Omnipotent God. As she is about to rejoice in the glory of the Most High, the Comfort of the Just, the Hope of Sinners, her soul trembles with that same mysterious trembling that seized David when he played his blessed harp. All at once her eyes are flooded with light, her ears filled with harmony . . . . Isn't that virgin, ecstatically transported above reality, like the inspiration that sometimes fills an artist's heart – pure, true, full of insight[?][98]

Liszt suggests that Raphael's Mary Magdalene was somewhat imperfectly purified from her elemental sinfulness, because she was still attracted, like Augustine before his conversion, by the sensual pleasures of sound and sight, having not yet

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[97] Liszt, *An Artist's Journey*, 163-5, from which the four quotations that follow are drawn.

[98] As Barbara Russano Hanning notes, Cecilia is "able to perceive the inaudible, divine music of the universe as well as the message of God . . . . by virtue of her virginity and special powers, as well as her musical attribute, Cecilia assumes her remarkable status as intermediary between *musica mundana* – that celestial harmony which cannot be heard by human ears – and audible, terrestrial music, which is only a pale reflection of the musical structure of the cosmos" (in Hanning, review of *Le metamorfosi di santa Cecilia: L'immagine e la musica* by Nico Staiti, *Imago Musicae* 21/22 [2005]: 290).

wholly given herself over to a transformed hearing and seeing; the Magdalene has, according to Liszt,

> something haughty and profane about her bearing, and her whole figure has a voluptuousness that smacks more of Greece than Judea . . . . [she] represents love, but a love born of the senses and attracted by visible beauty. She is, therefore, farther [away in the pictorial space] from Saint Cecilia . . . as if the painter had wanted to make it clear that she does not share as fully . . . in the divine essence of music, and that her ear is captivated by the sensual appeal of sound instead of her heart being stirred by supernatural emotions.

Saint Paul, Liszt surmises, had to suffer persecution and martyrdom not just for his propagation of the Christian faith, but also in order to acquire these transformed senses, which he has as yet done imperfectly:

> For him, music is still a form of eloquence [rather than a cause for spiritual rapture] . . . . One sees that he is trying to fathom the mystery of a language [i.e. music] that is new to him, that he is trying to understand the effects of this "word," and that he envies the young virgin [Cecilia] because she did not have to labor or suffer persecution and captivity, as did he, in order to acquire the gift of persuasion and the power to move hearts.

And, in a fascinating nod to Saint Augustine's troubled, conflicted feelings about music after his conversion,[99] and perhaps with some self-reference, Liszt writes that

[99] See Chapter 1.

> [Augustine's] face is serious and grieved . . . . Having waged a constant war against his senses, he is still fearful of the fleshly snares hidden in the appearance of a celestial vision . . . as one who had been seduced and transported far from God's way by the lure of paganism, he is asking himself if there might not be some secret poison in this sublime music and whether these harmonies that seem to descend from heaven are not actually deceptive voices – a contrivance of the devil, whose power he knows only too well.

Liszt's gloss on Raphael's painting is *sui generis*, the impassioned exegesis of a standard-bearer of Romantic culture who struggled himself, Augustine-like (and Evelyn Innes-like), with the conflict between the sensual and the spiritual. Yet, for all its oddness, his letter on *Saint Cecilia in Ecstasy* is a remarkable window into the nineteenth-century notion of hearing as a path to the divine. Hermann Cohen and the fictional Evelyn Innes, no less than Augustine of Hippo and Hunt's fallen woman, might, following Liszt's analysis, take their places around Saint Cecilia in her ecstasy, as they, too, stand at the threshold between worldly hearing and celestial music; for Hermann and Evelyn, no less than for Cecilia and her holy cohort, transformed hearing and music are both the conduit for divine inspiration and the means of praising it.

CONCLUSION

The primary aim of this study has been to trace the persistence in Western culture of what I have identified as the music-sin-redemption trope, and to demonstrate that, in spite of its foreignness to our present understanding of both music and conversion, it survived into an era remarkably close to (and similar to) our own. I have been influenced in my work by the research of Thomas H. Connolly into the iconography that associates Saint Cecilia with David-in-Penitence; by that of H. Colin Slim that reveals Mary Magdalene as a penitent musician; and by that of Karl F. Morrison that posits conversion as an experience constrained to mimic the language of aesthetics. I have attempted, moreover, to expand upon the work of these scholars by applying their findings to the representation of conversion in Victorian visual culture. Throughout this study, I have also sought to offer a new understanding of the historical phenomenon of religious conversion in nineteenth-century England by viewing it in the light of the mystical experience – an experience guided by the senses – described by converts from Saint Paul to Gerard Manley Hopkins.

In this interpretation of the conversion experience, the soul makes the passage from a state of spiritual blindness and deafness to one of transformed vision and hearing (as Saint Augustine wrote in *Confessions*, Book 10, "You called and cried out loud and shattered my deafness. You were radiant and resplendent, you put to flight my blindness"),[1] a passage which, as Thomas Connolly has shown, has long been symbolized in art by the figure of Saint Cecilia. I have attempted here to demonstrate that Cecilia's ethos of "musical conversion" held its place in the cultural

[1] Saint Augustine, *Confessions*, transl. Henry Chadwick (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 201.

consciousness of the West as late as the mid-nineteenth century, when the saint's iconography of spiritual change found its way into paintings and works of literature made by artists committed to both social and artistic reform. These artists reinterpreted Cecilia's music iconography, melding it with imagery traditionally associated with Mary Magdalene, in the service of portraying the spiritual conversions of fallen women.

The reappearance of music symbolism as an analogue to narratives of female sin and conversion was, as I have shown above, intimately connected to an emerging belief in the mutability of the personal moral state between sin and grace. The growing presence of this belief in Victorian England gave rise to the social reform movement for the reclamation of prostitutes and fallen women, and also coincided with the mid-century revival of English Catholicism and its concomitant phenomenon of conversions. These corresponding artistic, social, and religious trends contributed to the popular reaction against the economic inequality, despoiling of nature, and exploitation of the human person wrought by the Victorian technological and economic booms. Indeed, Victorian nostalgia for an ancient iconographic and theological trope representing profound change seems a clear sign of the era's unease with its own progress.

In this study, I have argued that nineteenth-century spiritual conversion could be an auditory, even a musical, phenomenon; indeed, conversion "through the ear," in addition to being pictured in painting, was described clearly by George Moore in *Evelyn Innes* and *Sister Teresa*, and by Hermann Cohen in his account of his conversion. One of my primary aims in this research is to increase interdisciplinary

interest in nineteenth-century aural culture. The influence of Victorian technologies such as lithography and photography on our contemporary understanding of the sense of sight cannot be overstated; indeed, a twenty-first-century reevaluation of *what* and *how* the Victorians saw has become, in recent years, a growing discipline (see, for instance, *Victorian Babylon: People, Streets, and Images in Nineteenth-Century London* by Lynda Nead [2000]; *Pictorial Victorians* by Julia Thomas [2004], and *The Nineteenth-Century Visual Culture Reader*, edited by Vanessa R. Schwartz and Jeannene M. Przyblyski [2004]). However, in spite of some fascinating work done some twenty years ago on sound perception by University of Texas Victorianists David J. DeLaura and Jerome Bump,[2] interest in this area has lagged behind that in nineteenth-century visual culture. Jonathan Picker's *Victorian Soundscapes* (2003) and Steven Connor's "Voice, Technology, and the Victorian Ear" (2002)[3] offer hope, however, that this state of things will soon improve.

In addition to an expansion of research in Victorian aural culture, it is my hope, finally, that the Victorian crisis of religious faith may begin to be studied not only within the contexts of science and social history, but also within those of art, music, and the history of the senses. Such work calls for a synaesthetic approach to

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[2] See David J. DeLaura, "'O Unforgotten Voice': The Memory of Newman in the Nineteenth Century," in *Sources for Reinterpretation: The Use of Nineteenth-Century Literary Documents: Essays in Honor of C.L. Cline* (Austin: Department of English and Humanities Studies Center, University of Texas, 1975), 23-55, and Jerome Bump, "Seeing and Hearing in *Marius the Epicurean*," in *Nineteenth-Century Fiction* 37/2 (1982): 188-206.

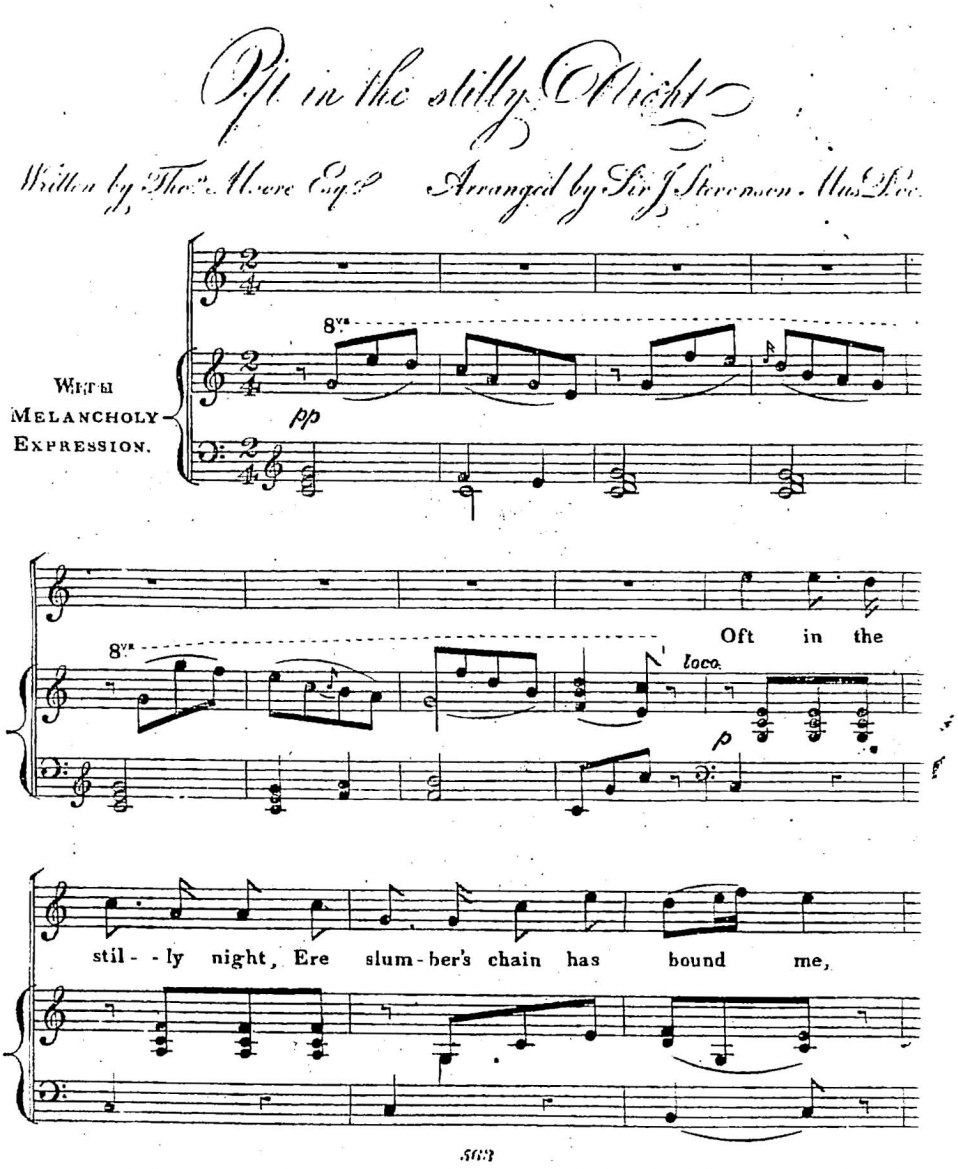
[3] In *Transactions and Encounters: Science and Technology in the Nineteenth Century*, ed. Roger Luckhurst and Josephine McDonagh (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), 16-29.

scholarship, one that, though relatively new, will undoubtedly bring forth a richer understanding of the Victorian consciousness, and of the nearness to it of our own.

APPENDIX I.

Due to copyright restrictions, illustrations are not included in this electronic document. A complete list of illustrations can be found on page x.

APPENDIX II.



Example 1. Thomas Moore/Sir John Stevenson. First page of "Oft in the Stilly Night" (London: J. Strand, 1830s).

POEMS AND SONGS,

BY

ALFRED TENNYSON,

Set to Music, and Inscribed to

Mrs Alfred Tennyson,

By

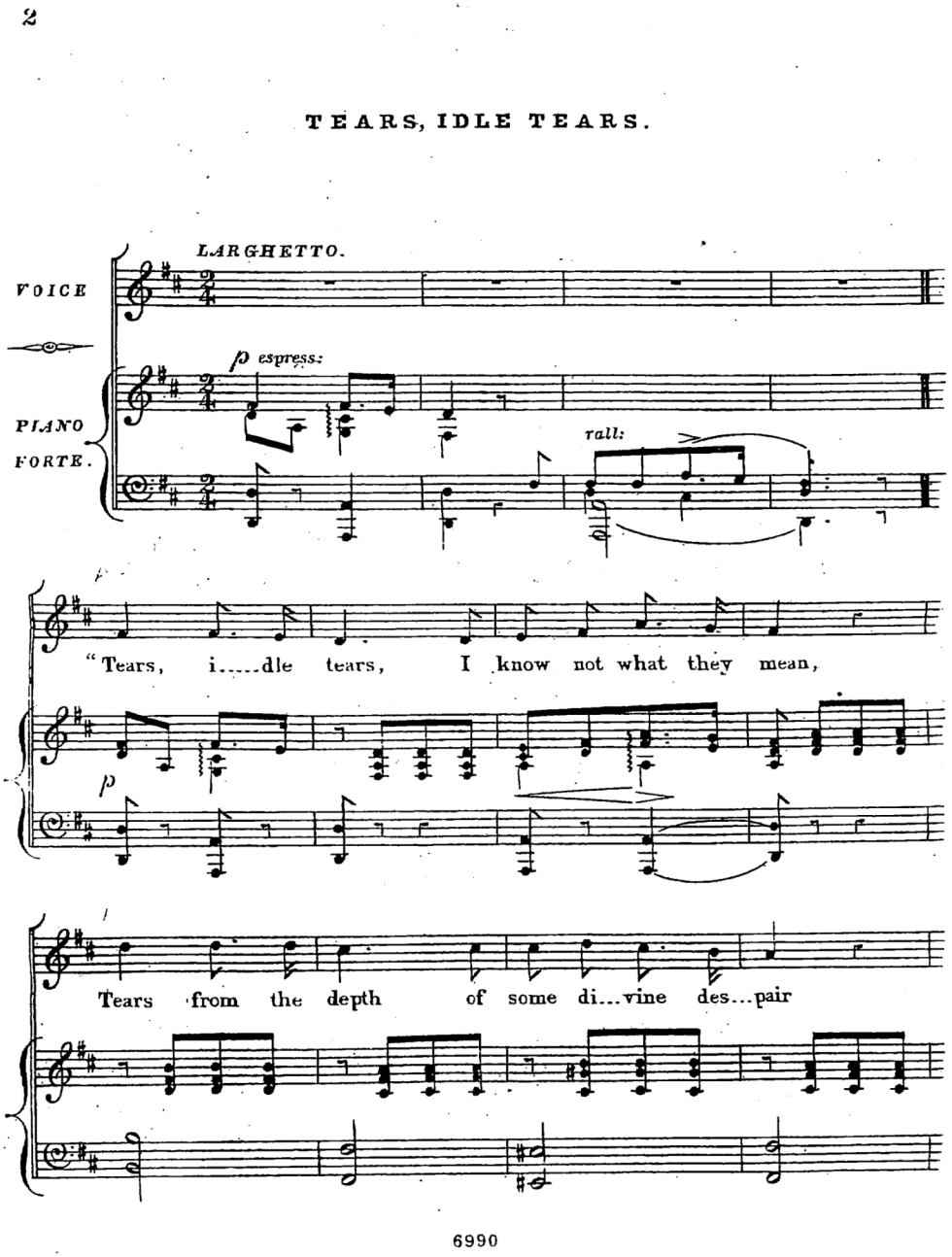
EDWARD LEAR.

No 3,

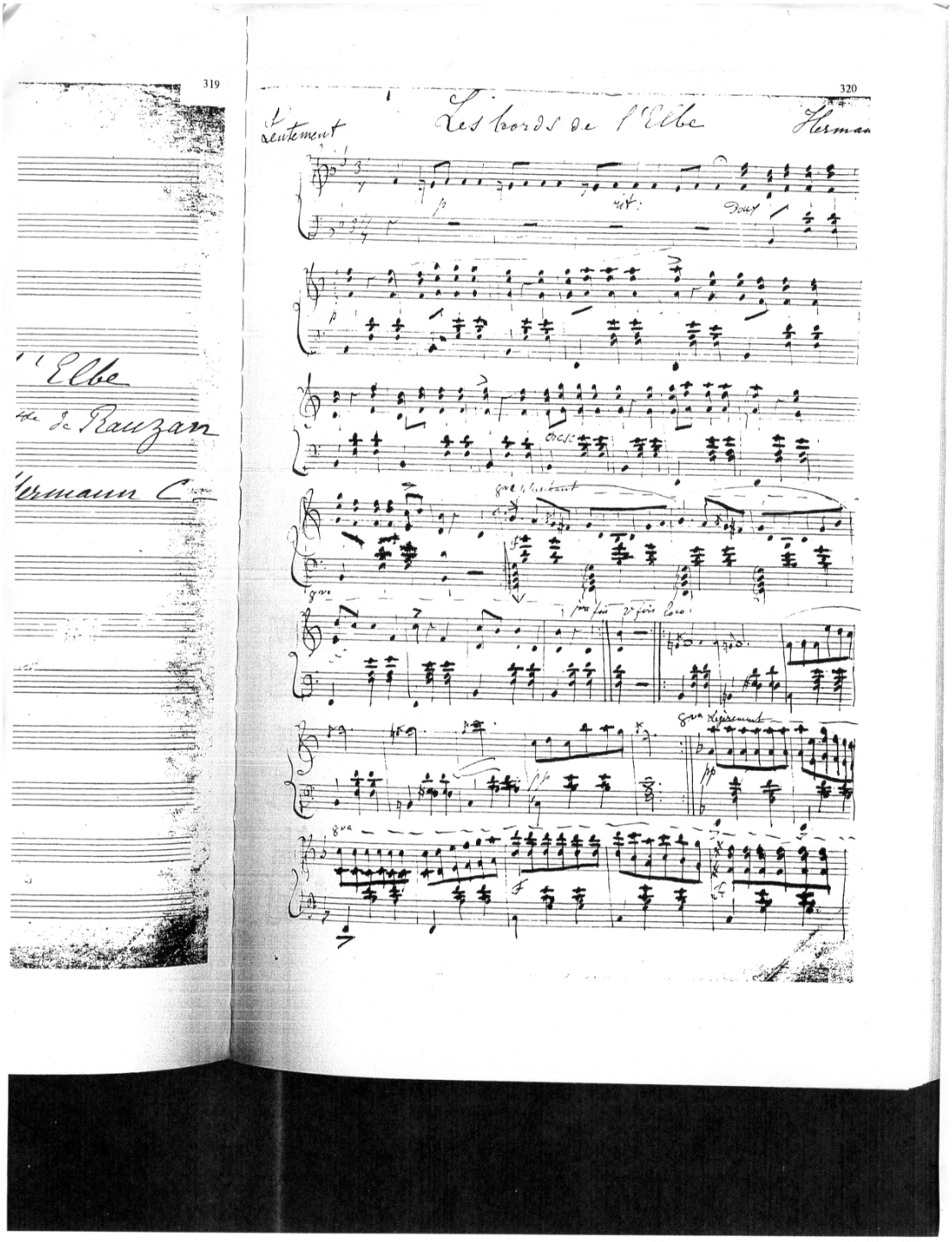
"TEARS, IDLE TEARS."

Ent. Sta. Hall. *Price 2/-*

LONDON,
Published for the Composer by
CRAMER, BEALE & Co
201, Regent Street. & 67, Conduit Street.



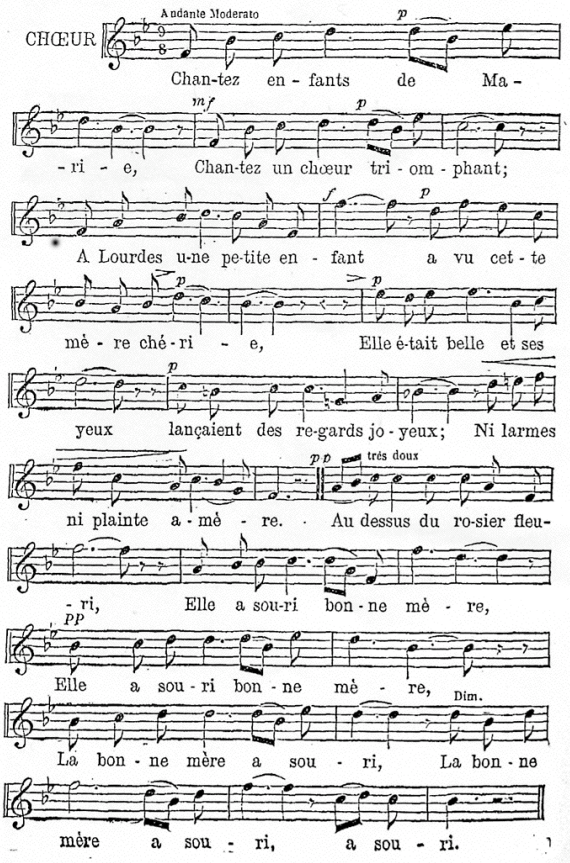
Example 2. Alfred, Lord Tennyson/Edward Lear. "Tears, Idle Tears," title page and first page (from *Poems and Songs by Alfred Tennyson*, London: Cramer, Beale & Co., 1853).



Example 3. Hermann Cohen. *Les Bords de l'Elbe*, c. 1840s (Unpublished manuscript, Bibliothèque Nationale de France). The title page is signed "Hermann C.", the first page simply "Hermann."

Example 4. Hermann Cohen (Père Augustin-Marie du Très Saint Sacrement). *Fleurs du Carmel: Troisième recueil de cantiques français et motets latins à 1, 2, et 3 voix.* Cover and number 1, "Cantique à Notre-Dame de Lourdes" (Paris: Librairie Catholique et Classique de Périsse Frères, 1869).

PAROLES DE *Mgr de La Bouillerie* — **N° 1** — CANTIQUE A NOTRE-DAME DE LOURDES — MUSIQUE DU *R. P. Hermann*



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