HUNTER DUKES

Jug Songs: Acoustic Enclosure from Ovid to Eliot

I pray thee sing not a little space.

—Algernon Charles Swinburne, "Itylus"

NOEL PERRIN'S STORY "The Nightingale Song," published in a 1957 issue of the *New Yorker*, opens with a Cambridge graduate student knee-deep in nettles. He is trying to hear the nightingale's song. His field trip comes after an unsuccessful supervision essay on T. S. Eliot, which claimed that the poet shows rare accuracy in his descriptions of nature. "Bosh!" counters his supervisor: "What about Eliot's *nightingales*? '"Jug Jug" to dirty ears,' he quotes them in 'The Wasteland [*sic*].' 'Jug Jug' to *tin* ears, perhaps. No nightingale ever made the noise 'Jug Jug' in his life, and so much for Mr. Eliot's rare accuracy. He'd better leave English birds to English poets" (26). Desperate to prove his mettle, the narrator heads to the stacks for a slapdash history, finding dozens of precursors to Eliot's *jugging*. There are important questions here about phonetics and transcription: how poets "syllable" the sounds. I want to attend instead to the homonym, seemingly accidental. The primary semantic sense of the word *jug*—a vessel for containing and decanting liquids—echoes within the nightingale's poetics. No mere onomatopoetic coincidence, the nightingale's "jug" prompts us to ask: why has the bird been figured as a kind of sonic container in poems from Ovid to Eliot?

In the history of poetry, nightingales "jug" in a verbal sense: they are used to advance complex metaphors of containment. Time and again, the jug song occurs alongside thematic reflections on the body as a container for the voice, nested within larger enclosing architectures. The spatial-acoustic coupling has been mobilized for various purposes: sexual, political, and spiritual. Taking into account the nightingale's classical associations—both a figure of love and an echo of Philomela's rape—I trace a "potted" history of the bird from Ovid through Marie de France to T. S. Eliot, with truncated readings of George Gascoigne, William

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Shakespeare, John Milton, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, John Keats, and Elizabeth Barrett Browning along the way. Setting Eliot's "A Game of Chess" within this wider context clarifies other kinds of containment in *The Waste Land*, softening some of the poem's enduring difficulties: namely, fragmentary imagery concerning vessels, vacuity, and the disembodied voice.

The Sorts of Things That Lyrics Do

While my essay offers a new way of reading certain aspects of the nightingale, an occluded tradition that informs *The Waste Land*, its methodology intersects studies of lyric poetry. Recent work under the banner of "new lyric studies" has troubled clean definitions of the term. While the many strands of this debate are beyond the present scope, summarized in review articles by Stephanie Burt, Walt Hunter, and Rei Terada, the ongoing conversation is predicated on whether lyric is a genre or a historical mode of reading. I want to argue, following a line through previous criticism, that nightingales facilitate certain kinds of cognition, forms of complex thought that are neither equivalent to symbolic allegory nor generalizable across catch-all divisions of the nonhuman world: material, animal, or inorganic. I suggest, ultimately, that things like nightingales might provide an alternative and productive way to index features of the lyric.

In recent work on the lyric, scholars have been hard on the nightingale. The bird represents the embarrassing early nineteenth-century Romantic tendency of "oh-so-poetic apostrophe," to quote Virginia Jackson, a technique that, in her words, comes to be associated with "John Keats's nightingale or Percy Shelley's skylark" ("Spectres" 178). As the *beau idèal* of Romantic objects, the nightingale is also a metonymy for problems of the Romantic lyric in general: the relationship between "post-romantic fictions of poetic address" and the exclusion of subjects from the lyric *I* according to categories of nation, race, class, gender, and sexuality ("Spectres" 181). Garrett Hongo, a Hawaiian-born American poet of Japanese descent, puts it well in "Under the Oaks at Holmes Hall, Overtaken by Rain": "I don't know why the nightingale sings / to Kubla Khan and not to me" (114).

I want to redeem the nightingale. By sorting verse by object rather than form, this article supplements Jackson's well-known argument that verse genres underwent a process of lyricization in the nineteenth century, which collapsed particular modes and readerships into an abstract "lyric": erasing differences in style and audience between categories of poetry. While nightingales are not replacements for form or mode, they do perhaps reveal an alternative organizing schema. "Insofar as poems about birds are a recognized type," writes Jonathan Culler, "it will matter whether I write about a nightingale, a thrush, a swan, an oven bird, or a crow because of the role accorded to these birds in prior poems" (*Theory of Lyric* 245). This kind of historical attention to theme is important: it rediscovers what Eliot described as the preexisting monuments with which every new poem must contend and, hopefully, rearrange. In an exciting aside, however, Culler goes a step further and claims that sorting verse into categories like "nightingale poetry" may also reveal something more elusive: "the sorts of things that lyrics do" (*Theory of Lyric* 245). When questions concerning objects show up in lyric criticism, they are more often of the first-order variety: the means, media, and methods of inscription, typified by Jackson's

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enduring examination of Emily Dickinson's domestic scraps. The second-order object within the poem, the object as poetic content, has received scanter treatment.[1]

Indeed, the stuff of lyric often provokes discomfort in the critic. Take, for example, when Culler turns his attention to apostrophe in *Theory of Lyric* (2015)—updating his influential argument from the 1980s. To demonstrate the inherent embarrassment of apostrophe for the critic, he quotes Frank O'Hara's "Les étiquettes jaunes": "Leaf! you are so big! / How can you change your / color, then just fall!" (190). Culler's explanation involves a judgment akin to Eliot's objective correlative. A leaf is an improper recipient for the implied emotion of apostrophe. The critic becomes embarrassed because the set of objects, the lyric context, does not (and cannot be imagined to) reproduce the emotion that drives this address. In Culler's words, the voice becomes a vatic agent during apostrophe, performing the kind of speech-act that easily lapses into waxing poetic. This is embarrassing because the speaker turns aside from "supposedly real listeners to someone or something that is not an ordinary, empirical listener, such as a nightingale, an urn, or one's own poem" ("Lyric, History, and Genre" 886). While I will also conflate nightingales and urns, I do so because of the entwined history of songbirds and jugs, not simply to mark the unordinary.

Culler's theory of apostrophe has already received substantive critique from a number of scholars.[2] I am particularly concerned by Culler's tendency to collapse particular entities from the material and animal world into a single, nonhuman category, flattened through poetic address. Contra Culler, there is a difference between addressing a leaf and demanding the universe's responsiveness, because there is a difference in magnitude, agency, cognition, and poetic history between a leaf, a dog, the beloved, and God. A critic may be embarrassed by apostrophe addressed to all these things, but for dissimilar reasons. To deny this is to believe embarrassment arises from overhearing and not from what is overheard. If this were true, apostrophe becomes indistinguishable from ordinary speech. The success or failure of the speaker's apostrophe depends on the lyric properties of its

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[1] The nightingale is too often reduced to citation, allusion, or historical context, negating attempts to derive a kind of object-oriented knowledge exclusive to the domain of lyric itself. Owing perhaps to its enduring focus on consciousness, voice, and insularity, criticism of the lyric has, to a greater degree than other subfields, resisted the ongoing "turn toward things"—a maneuver, now so familiar, that it risks repetitive-use injury. There are exceptions, of course. Mary Jacobus's *Romantic Things* set the highwater mark for this kind of inquiry. Daniel Tiffany has demonstrated how tropes like the mechanical bird, a device that shares a literary history with the nightingale, reveals something like lyric substance, "a consistent and perhaps even systematic doctrine of corporeality proper to the devices of lyric poetry" (15). And, in *Object Observed* (2018), John C. Stout presents a wide-ranging treatment of lyric objects in Franco-American poetry. See Kiene Brillenburg Wurth's introduction to a 2018 special issue of this journal for an overview of "the material turn" in a comparative context.

[2] Gavin Hopps, for example, demonstrates that Culler's arguments rest on a claim that apostrophe is nonrepresentational, that normal people do not speak like this in normal life. This is—in Hopps's words—"sheer misinformation" (230). Hopps also rightly observes that Culler rarely mentions prayer, a practice that relies on apostrophe as its mode of speech. Recently, Peter Robinson has offered a sustained critique of Culler's theory, which attempts to disentangle "the helpful and beneficial aspects of Culler's writings on lyric" from its "disabling tendencies" (77). William Waters examines apostrophe at length, redeeming address from readings that treat it as "incidental to the real matter of a poem" (3). J. Douglas Kneale tries to distinguish apostrophe from address, while disproving Culler's historic claim that critics have shied away from discussing apostrophe.

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addressee. This simple point is often swept into the gutter with the leaf litter. But lyric matter *matters*. In the example above, O'Hara's speaker is a fallen Orpheus, that poet whose lyric incantations could famously, to quote Robert von Hallberg, "charm leaves off trees" (2). In this instance, the leaf has already fallen; abscission trumps apostrophe in America. The speaker playfully acknowledges his world's disenchantment, as he appeals to something no longer vital (contrast this poem to Denise Levertov's "A Tree Telling of Orpheus"). O'Hara's lyric changes if the leaf becomes a chameleon, to reference his poem's end. The embarrassment argument does not.

Sonic Territoriality and the Nightingale's Niche

If we want to know more about lyric, we might worry less about prescribing what it is, and more about describing what it contains. We should study the nightingale, its forms and features. This is not to say that nightingales only appear in poetry classified as "lyric"—many of the examples to follow fall outside its purview—rather, the thematics associated with lyric, what Burt calls "linguistic elements that enable us to imagine a speaking, or singing, voice," extend into the wider literary representation of birdsong (436). In a different take on lyric shame and embarrassment, Gillian White reads "To a Wood Thrush" through Keats's "Ode to a Nightingale," discovering that William Carlos Williams "performed the failure of the desire for the poet to be unashamed by the deforming power of human consciousness on things" (69). Whereas Culler's embarrassment is apostrophic, White's shame lies in the disjunction between perceiving the nightingale's song and judging its "unconscious happiness"—an assessment that requires attending to the bird's specific formal history as a poetic thing.

My approach to the nightingale follows Michel Serres, who has returned to the bird throughout his career to constellate ideas about territory, appropriation, and sound and space. The nightingale recurs across his books as a demonstration of appropriation through pollution (*Statues* 120). Comparing a dog urinating on a fire hydrant to a nightingale singing in a tree, Serres links these outpourings to forms of appropriation (excremental, acoustic). The nightingale's song facilitates territorial conquest. This formulation reappears almost verbatim in *Geometry*, where the bird's body expands beyond its skin's boundaries. Whereas other Western philosophers default on a haptic border for the body, Serres accepts sonic and olfactory delimitations: "I talk; my voice spreads through the surrounding air by impudently occupying a volume that's larger than that of my organism, which is little; thus the nightingale defends with music a niche [une niche] that a dog holds by means of its urine" (12; *Les origines* 8). Here the acoustic reach of a nightingale's song redraws the de facto borders of its agential territory, what Serres calls its niche—drawing on an avian sense of "nesting," present in the French but less accessible in English: "The nightingale covers its exclusive niche [niche privative] with its musical voice" (*Parasite* 143; *Le Parasite* 254).

The philosopher is up to his usual tricks: winking at a learned audience. Thinking about the nightingale's niche, Serres cryptically alludes to Jean-Jacques Rousseau's *Confessions*, a text particularly important for *The Parasite*. While on an extended walking adventure detailed in book 4, Rousseau passes the night on a

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path that skirts the Rhône or the Saone (he cannot remember which). Describing his outdoor abode, he recalls how

> the trees of the terraces were filled with nightingales who were responding to each other. I strolled in a sort of ecstasy, abandoning my senses and my heart to the enjoyment of all this, and sighing only a little out of regret at enjoying it alone. Absorbed in my sweet reverie I prolonged my stroll far into the night without noticing that I was tired. Finally I noticed it. I lay down voluptuously on the shelf of a sort of niche [d'une espèce de niche] or blind door set deep into a wall of the terrace: the canopy of my bed was formed by the tops of trees, a nightingale was precisely above me; I fell asleep to its song: my sleep was sweet, my awakening was even more so. (*Confessions* 141–42; *Les confessions* 260)

There are a few things to note about this remarkable passage—one of several places where nightingales play a prominent role in the text. The nightingale's niche, to which Serres cryptically refers, becomes entangled with a kind of impromptu architecture. When the narrator notices he is tired, an ersatz bed suddenly appears, as if sung into existence by the nightingale's song. A shelf becomes the bed; trees form a canopy, a temporary enclosure. In an essay on Serres and "chorality," which discusses collective birdsong at length, Steven Connor underscores this architectonic feature of the philosopher's acoustic theory, the shared terrain of space and sound. "Volume is voluminous," he writes, "the architecture gives the vocality back to itself, in the process imparting to that vocality a kind of architectural density." Connor proceeds to link this formation to Didier Anzieu's "sonorous envelope," modeled on the maternal voice as heard in the uterine space, a place of complete acoustic and spatial enclosure, where the subject may "be both suspended and supported, aqueously dissolved and contained." As dramatized by Rousseau, Serres, and the poets to follow, immersing a body in sound has an architectural dimension, equivalent to containing a body in space.

We find the nightingale paired once again with spatialized acoustics in *The Parasite*, but also linked to the architectonics revealed in Rousseau. Drawing attention to the sexed nature of the nightingale's song, Serres writes that nightingales "are afraid of nightingales that sing and who thereby define the extent of their power" (126). Despite a rich cultural tradition of reading the songbird as female, it is in fact the male bird that jugs—a fact that will vex Aldous Huxley in his reading of Eliot. Coupled with the Philomela myth, discussed below, Serres's nightingale is not in mourning; rather, its cry redoubles the conquests of Tereus. "We must assume," he writes, "that the melody that enchants us is an inaudible whining for them" (126). This idea links the nightingale to the philosopher's well-known tripartite theory of communication: that every transmission between two parties necessarily excludes a noisy third party or parasite (bruit). Noisy nightingales, who possess territory through sonic pollution, also have an architectural function, as sound becomes a way of extending the body's spatial enclosures: "Noise separates us, individualizes us, just as fury disperses us. The thick wall that exists between us is built of noises and cacophony. The monad has neither door nor window; we are deaf, and for others, we are dumb because most of the time what arrives at our sensory apparatus that is always open, our hearing, is unbearable" (126). The nightingale's song allows the bird to occupy its niche without opening itself to physical vulnerability. It enlarges its agential scope through sound. These acoustic borders are equated to architectural walls: an important image for poets like Marie de France and Eliot, who contrast the nightingale's song to physical containment. The use of *dumb* recalls Philomela, who had her tongue violently removed. Referencing Leibniz's

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famous claim that monads are windowless, resistant to external influence, Serres glosses the nightingale and its jugging as a kind of container, at once acoustic and spatial.

Serres's frequent reference to the nightingale should be read in the context of twentieth-century developments in ethology and the field's influence on the philosophy of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, especially their chapter "Of the Refrain" in *A Thousand Plateaus*. The "refrain" or "*ritournelle*" threads the text—used to describe many classes of rhythm, from collective birdsong to Vinteuil's "little phrase" in Proust. The section opens with a description that could easily apply to Rousseau's disorientation under the stars: "He walks and halts to his song. Lost, he takes shelter, or orients himself with his little song as best he can. The song is like a rough sketch of a calming and stabilizing, calm and stable, center in the heart of chaos" (311). The refrain, here a hummed melody, has the capacity to create shelter, acoustic rather than architectonic, and order too. Exactly one nightingale appears in *A Thousand Plateaus*, in a footnote on Konrad Lorenz's *On Aggression* (1963), from which much of the philosophers' ornithological science derives: "The song of the nightingale signals from a distance to all members of its species that a territory has found an owner" (Deleuze and Guattari 547). But as we shall see in Marie de France, territorializing sonics—typified by the nightingale's song—do not just claim territory, they also become techniques for extraction, exiting territories where one is no longer at home.

A clearer sense of the territorializing potential of song can be found in Claire Parnet's seven-hour interview with Deleuze, *L'abécédaire* (1988), in which the philosopher discusses the concept at length, as well as Guattari's *Machinic Unconscious* (1979). In the former work, Deleuze returns to the idea of humming:

> When do I do "Tra la la"? When do I hum? I hum in three various occasions. I hum when I go around my territory . . . and when I clean up my furniture with a radiophonic background . . . meaning, when I am at home. I also hum when I am not at home and I am trying to reach my home . . . when the night is falling, anxiety time. . . . In other words, the *ritournelle*, for me, is absolutely linked to the problem of territory, and of processes of entrance or exit of the territory, meaning to the problem of deterritorialization. I enter in my territory, I try, or I deterritorialize myself, meaning I leave my territory. (qtd. In Lambert 20–21)

Here we might again remember Rousseau and his niche. After falling asleep to the nightingale's song, the young philosopher awakens and returns to the city. "I went all the way singing," he writes, "I even remember I sang a cantata of Batistin's called the Baths of Thomery, which I knew by heart" (*Confessions* 142). During dusk, what Deleuze calls "anxiety time," Rousseau finds spatial shelter in the nightingale's sonorous refrain. The next morning, as he proceeds toward the city, a place that (if not home) at least returns him to the sphere of human relations, he must leave this liminal territory and reenter civilization. "The Baths of Thomery" becomes something like a transitional refrain, facilitating the movement between two territories. How curious too that even though Rousseau cannot remember whether he slept alongside the Rhône or the Saône, he remembers which cantata ferried him home. Perhaps this is because the latter river is a tributary of the former, blurring the kind of territorial and spatial distinctions that sonics afford.

In *The Machinic Unconscious*, Guattari makes an important revision to previous ideas about territorialization by hinting that sonic dominance sometimes hinges on spatial vulnerability. "And what should we make of the exhibitionism of the nightingale," he asks, "which leads it to be dangerously exposed to predators

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while elevating itself five or six meters off the ground in order to give its extraordinary vocal performance its maximum range?" (140). A similar idea will become especially important in the following readings of Marie de France and Eliot, in which the passerine's song both proclaims territory and preserves the memory of bodily violation.

A "Potted" History of the Nightingale: Ovid and Marie de France

How is the nightingale like a lyric? Literary nightingales sing from thick cover: they are heard and not seen. They are famously described by Plutarch as *vox et praeterea nihil*—a voice and nothing else. Lyric poetry disembodies voice and "tries to construct a new, acoustic or verbal, body" (Burt 439). Giorgio Agamben reminds us (via Dante) that the stanza has long been figured as a "capacious dwelling," the "receptive womb" of poetry (xvi). The nightingale and its "jug" are concerned with a parallel form of enclosure. Like lyric voice, the nightingale's song can be decanted from one container to another. Writing on aesthetics, Immanuel Kant tells the story of a boy, hidden in a bush one summer evening, deceiving a party of delighted merrymakers by blowing on a reed and reproducing the nightingale's song (132). Pliny offers a similar account in his *Natural History*—claiming an indistinguishable resemblance between the nightingale's song and the reed music (3: 345). The nightingale and the reed dramatize the relationship between nature and artifice, spontaneous outcry and practiced imitation, between speech and lyric. The nightingale is animate, while the reed's vacuity requires breath. People speak, but the lyric needs a reader, a voice to inhabit. It begins to make sense, then, why the nightingale has been historically associated with questions concerning voice and space, resonance and enclosure: questions enclosed by the jug form.

The nightingale theme has spawned its own critical subfield, owing to the claim, summarized by Albert Chandler, that it "plays a more important role in European literature than any other bird" (78). As with all metaphors stemming from the sensuous world, the nightingale has been taken up at different points in history to represent diverging kinds of thought. In *The Nightingale's Burden*, Cheryl Walker demonstrates how American poets in the eighteenth century such as Mercy Warren and Elizabeth Rowe adopted the name Philomela, arguing that "from the very beginning this women's tradition in American poetry has been a nightingale tradition, bound up with themes of aspiration and frustrated longing" (15). Following from this, Jackson writes, for example, that in contrast to the "lyric antipersonification" of the early nineteenth-century nightingale, by the time of Eliot's birth, birdsong and poetry were often conflated in American literature (*Dickinson's Misery* 27). The nightingale does not sing in America, and its absence provokes ideas about those excluded from a Hellenistic tradition by gender, nationality, or race in twentieth-century poems like Susan Howe's "A Nightingale Sings In," John Crowe Ransom's "An American Addresses Philomela," and Sujata Bhatt's "History Is a Broken Narrative."

This is notably different than how the bird is figured in British poetry of the long eighteenth century, in which the nightingale marks the "particularly vexed" intersection of literature and an emerging ornithological science, according to Bethan Roberts. When they appear in poems, nightingales can flit between traditions. Laura Kilbride has demonstrated how Algernon Charles Swinburne's "Itylus," an

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important poem for Eliot, seems to follow Catullus by confusing Itys and Itylus, and thus blurring "wrong-doing and wrong mothers, Procne, Philomena and Aëdon" (6). These inconsistencies should not shock us: metaphors are diachronic, their meanings subject to cultural flux and changing perceptions about the material world. What is more surprising than the nightingale's plasticity is its fidelity. Since at least the time of Ovid, the bird has been used to think about architectural, bodily, and acoustic enclosure in remarkably similar ways.

There are at least four distinct poetic traditions that make use of the nightingale, which reach beyond even the most inclusive definitions of lyric. The first employs the bird as a symbol of spring, sweetness, and renewal, associated with love, both requited and unrequited. This tradition arises in the *Harley Lyrics*, Provençal Troubadour poetry, and German Minnesang. Here the nightingale's "song is pitiful because it is pouring out its heart, singing itself to death in ecstasy" (Shippey 49). Another "watch" of nightingales migrates from the twelfth-century poem *The Owl and the Nightingale*, in which the bird becomes a didactic figure of debate. A third connotation comes later, elaborated in Romantic poetry, equating the poet's sensitivity to the nightingale's song by spinning out the double-meaning of the Greek *aedon*. In this fantasy, the poet is like a nightingale because the nightingale sings songs and refrains. It is perhaps remembered (via Yopie Prins) by Mary Robinson's line: "Oh! my nightingale, nightingale, trill out thy anapaest!" (178). And if the Romantic nightingale sings only at night, it is because—like poets who go unrecognized in their lifetime—both nightingales and poets make music out of darkness, according to Shelley's well-known formulation. This present essay concerns itself with the fourth and most prolific tradition, which stems from the nightingale's classical reception. I do not mean to imply that these four literary nightingales never cross flight paths: it is impossible to cleanly disentangle the bird's various meanings in the history of verse.

When later poets imagine the nightingale in conjunction with ideas about containment, enclosure, and voice, however, many are engaging with book 6 of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, implicitly or explicitly. (A warning: brief descriptions of sexual violence follow.) Procne marries Tereus, the king of Thrace. Five years pass and she misses her sister, Philomela, who lives at home with their father, the king of Athens. She begs her husband to arrange a visit. Tereus agrees. He sets sail to Athens and convinces Pandion to part with his daughter. He promises to bring Philomela back. Once he lays eyes on his wife's sister, however, he is overcome with lust. When they return to Thrace, he locks Philomela in a hut in the woods. He rapes her. When she complains, he cuts out her tongue. A year passes. Unable to communicate with words, she weaves a narrative tapestry and convinces an attendant to smuggle it to her sister. Procne receives the message and enacts revenge. She murders her own child, Itys, Tereus's heir, cooks the corpse into a stew, and feeds the body to her husband, who unknowingly eats it. When Tereus tries to retaliate against the daughters of Pandion, they change into birds and fly away. (Procne becomes a swallow; Philomela, a nightingale; and Tereus pursues as the hoopoe.)[3]

While a rich critical literature has arisen in the wake of Ovid's reception in Euro-American poetry, we will only focus, for the sake of this argument, on the images of

[3] These associations were initially reversed in the Greek myth: Procne was the nightingale, Philomela the swallow. The inversion only arose in later Latin revisions (Bernad 397).

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containment, vacuity, and disembodied voice, which structure Philomela's myth and recur in several poems, including *The Waste Land*—what Victoria Rimell has categorized as a Roman poetics concerned "as much with the torment of 'inhabiting' the body as leaky, fragile vessel as with the crafting of hard psychophysical enclosures inspired by imperial border control" (5). In Ovid's Philomela story, the violence occurs in a hut (stabula), a contained space that hovers between a built environment and the natural world—as the word denotes an enclosure both for animals and humans, something between a hovel and a stable (1: 324). Philomela is locked in the hut, hidden in the woods inside a rival kingdom or territory. Philomela's empty mouth introduces an additional layer of nested containment. In one of the most disturbing scenes in the *Metamorphoses*, Tereus cuts out his sister-in-law's tongue. Once removed, it continues to writhe and attempts to speak outside her body: "The severed tongue lies palpitating on the dark earth, faintly murmuring [inmurmurat]" (1: 326–27). This image of disembodied speech fuels later poetic treatments of the nightingale, a bird often depicted as a voice capable of being separated from its body, as with the example from Kant above.

When Procne kills and cooks her son, the revenge structurally redoubles the hut scene. "Procne drags Itys off to a remote part of the house," writes David H. J. Larmour, "just as Tereus took Philomela into a secluded spot" (134). She bubbles her son's body parts in "brazen kettles [cavis exsultat aenis]," and the whole room becomes polluted with gore (Ovid 1: 333). When, during the feast, Tereus calls for Itys, Procne frames the violence spatially, as a form of enclosure: "You have, within, him whom you want [intus habes, quem poscis]" (1: 335). Tereus invokes the Stygian pit, before figuring his own body as a kind of crypt, which he desires to unseal: "his son's most wretched tomb [bustum]" (1: 335). Tricking Tereus into eating his child mirrors the king's violation of Philomela, as well as similar myths regarding Atreus and Lycaon. The rape and its revenge plot involve a violation of the body's borders and enclosures. The logic of *talio*, or an eye for an eye, arranges the scene. Both Philomela and Tereus are forced to incorporate part of another's body against their will, drawing attention to one of our oldest metaphors—the body as a kind of vessel. The nightingale poems that follow all implicitly reimagine this pollutive myth, its architectural and bodily associations, and Philomela's disembodied voice.

Building on Ovid, Marie de France's twelfth-century "Laüstic" prefigures many of the scenes of containment and enclosure associated with the bird in later literature. From a generic standpoint, *lais* are similar to lyrics: both are traditionally associated with musical performance (although, some think, *lais* were always meant to be read). The memory of song makes this form especially apt for mulling over the relationship between space and sound. "Laüstic" is an old poem about an older story. Two knights live side by side in St. Malo, a town on the coast of Brittany. The first has a beautiful wife, "Sage, curteise e acemee [wise, courtly, and elegant]," the quintessence of soignée (136; trans., 94). The second is a bachelor, in love with the woman next door. She returns his feelings. There is but one problem: their houses are divided by "un haut mur de piere bise [a high wall of dark-hued stone]" (137; trans., 94). Here we have the first image of architectural containment, as their enclosures are configured as communicating vessels, which (like Serres's "thick wall") will mediate sound, space, and territory. "In the abutment of the lovers' houses," writes R. Howard Bloch, "we find the fantasy of presence" (330).

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Without a border wall, there would be no distinction between households, between approved and transgressive feeling. This is thematically consistent with the *lais* in general, where women are imprisoned, placed under surveillance.[4] "The women in these architectural strongholds are seen as both contained and containing," writes Jean-Marie Kauth, "as fragile vessels easily broken, as both closed off from the world and inviting it in" (34). Emotional constraint maps onto spatial confinement and domestic enclosure. One thing is able to cross the wall and move freely between territories, keeping the wife awake at night: the nightingale's song.

One morning the husband demands an explanation for her nightly absences, these visits to the window. She blames the songbird. In a scene that will recur in H. C. Andersen's fairy tale, her husband orders his squires to set traps, nets, and snares—to contain the noisy animal that violates architectural enclosure and appropriates the domestic sphere. "The debate between open and closed spaces, masculine and feminine/classical and medieval literatures," writes Jeni Williams, "is focussed in the figure of the nightingale" (185). The cuckold (a word derived, we might note, from the cuckoo) catches the bird, wrings its neck, and throws the corpse at his wife, bloodying her breast. The wall has been breached and her body polluted, covered in gore. She sends the bird to her *ami*, a message in a corpse, enveloped in a golden letter.

> En une piece de samit,
> A or brusdé e tut escrit,
> Ad l'oiselet envolupé. . . .
> Un vasselet ad fet forgeer;
> Unques n'i ot fer në acer,
> Tut fu de or fin od bones pieres
> Mut precïuses e mut cheres;
> Covercle i ot tresbien asis.
> Le laüstic ad dedenz mis
> Puis fist la chasse enseeler.
> Tuz jurs l'ad fet od lui porter.
> Cele aventure fu cuntee,
> Ne pot estre lunges celee
> Un lai en firent li Bretun:
> Le Laüstic l'apelë hum.

(She found a piece of samite, wrought with gold, and writing worked throughout; in it she wrapped the little bird. . . . He had a small vessel prepared, not of iron or steel, but of pure gold with fine stones, very precious and valuable. On it he carefully placed a lid and put the nightingale in it. Then he had the casket sealed and carried it with him at all times. This adventure was related and could not be concealed. The Bretons composed a lay about it which is called *Laüstic*.) (139–40; trans., 96)

Nested vessels make this story surprisingly complex. The nightingale's body arrives wrapped in lettered samite. We are not told what words are written on the fabric. Receiving the package, the suitor fashions a tomb suitable for the nightingale. He places the corpus—a body of text wrapped around a now silent body—in this lidded reliquary, and then seals the vessel. If the nightingale's body is contained, the knight's body becomes a kind of container. The "vasselet" (small vessel) smuggles in the homonymic sense of vassal, which appears in "Guigemar." The vassal

[4] And, indeed, containment might be said to be the leitmotif that defined the emergence of literary writing in English. Seth Lehrer argues that "scenes of enclosure and demarcation, of architectural display and human craft become the loci for imposing a new literary order on a fragmented and newly alien world" (10).

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fashions a vessel, a kind of crypt, both psychic and material, in which to preserve the memory of his lost love. "Laüstic" ends with a strange pivot outward, characteristic of the *lais*, as the poem awakens to its own artifice. The lay becomes a final container or territory in which to lay the bird, enveloped and enshrined in the poem's language. This story cannot be kept secret (celee): a word that denotes both physical and metaphorical kinds of hiding. The sealed cache, carried everywhere by the chevalier, preserves but also exposes its contents. By encoding a kind of memory and enshrining it in language, the poem offers up a secret, whose power is not diminished when made visible.

In some sense, "Laüstic" typifies a fundamental question and fantasy behind all poetry, felt most strongly in the development of lyric. How can words and rhythm be used to entomb something no longer present, create space for an absent voice in a resonant container? The nightingale's corpse becomes a material trace of a vanished song, just as a poem is an attempt to encrypt something no longer vital—a dead passerine, a lost love. "Those empty forms we find in the text were once animated by real life, by the inflections of the human voice," writes Paul Zumthor (78–79). In the nightingale, we encounter an expanded version of this recognition, thematic rather than stylistic, making room for the nonhuman in its echo chamber. This is consistent with how voice is figured in poems associated with lyric, what Paul de Man describes as "the recurrent image of the subject's presence to itself as a spatial enclosure, room, tomb, or crypt in which the voice echoes as in a cave" (303). When the Bretons make a lay out of this story, they are performing the same action as the chevalier, the same action as Marie de France, who positions her poem as a kind of preservative translation—enclosing voice in a prosthetic body, hoping to prevent further decay.

Jugged Gales and Sibyls Jarred: *The Waste Land*

"In this second half of the twentieth century what should a literary artist, writing in the English language, do about nightingales?" asks Aldous Huxley in his 1963 *Literature and Science* (94). "From a reading of 'The Waste Land' one would never suspect that Mr Eliot is a contemporary of Eliot Howard and Konrad Lorenz," continues Huxley, discussing two ethologists well known for their work on birdsong, the latter whose work on territoriality influenced Deleuze and Guattari, as discussed above. "Philomel, it turns out, is not Philomel, but her mate. And when the cock nightingale sings, it is not in pain, not in passion, not in ecstasy, but simply in order to proclaim to other cock nightingales that he has staked out a territory and is prepared to defend it against all comers" (97), he writes. Huxley takes specific aim at Eliot's use of the jug song, charging poetry from Ovid to the present with misunderstanding the nightingale's nocturnal feeding patterns.

> And, what makes him [the nightingale] sing at night? A passion for the moon, a Baudelairean love of darkness? Not at all. If he sings at intervals during the night, it is because, like all the other members of his species, he has the kind of digestive system that makes him want to feed every four or five hours throughout the twenty-four. Between caterpillars during these feeding times, he warns his rivals (Jug, Jug, Jug) to keep off his private property. (97–98)

Huxley parrots a gripe found in Lorenz's *King Solomon's Ring* (1949), in which the scientist expresses his frustration with poets who mistake the sex of passerines: "To anybody really familiar with birds, the masculinity of the singing nightingale is so

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blatantly apparent that to attribute loud song to a female bird is as comically incongruous as it would be to the student of literature had Tennyson invested Guinevere with a beard" (49). For all his literary merits, Huxley misreads Eliot, blinkering himself to questions of territoriality and vocality that preoccupy the poet throughout *The Waste Land*, questions typified by the "jug jug jug" utterance.

If asked to wager on which critical term appears most frequently in commentaries on *The Waste Land*, a safe bet would be *voice*. As many have noted, Eliot took the original title for his poem—"He Do the Police in Different Voices"—from Charles Dickens's *Our Mutual Friend*. In the novel, Betty remarks that she is not "much of a hand at reading writing-hand," but "Sloppy is a beautiful reader of a newspaper. He do the Police in different voices" (186). Eliot positioned Sloppy's performance as a precursor to his poem's cacophonic technique. Refracted through *The Waste Land*, this scene from Dickens defamiliarizes the relationship between voice and writing. Sloppy retrieves something vital from letters that Betty cannot. The confusingly doubled "hand"—used to indicate both handiness and handwriting—further estranges writing and speech.

The Waste Land borrows tropes and techniques from the lyric tradition, as Eliot returns frequently to the relationship between voice and its territorial containers: "voices singing out of empty cisterns and exhausted wells" (*Poems* 1:70). He is specifically concerned with the female voice and its capacity to migrate across enclosures and seek out prosthetic dwellings.

> Nam Sibyllam quidem Cumis ego ipse oculis meis vidi
> in ampulla pendere, et cum illi pueri dicerent: Σίβνλλα τί Θέλεις;
> respondebat illa: ἀπο Θανεῖν Θέλω.
> I saw with my own eyes the Sibyl at Cumae
> hanging in a cage [jar], and when the boys said to her:
> "Sibyl, what do you want?"
> she answered: "I want to die." (1:53)

As with many of the classical allusions in the poem, critics have tended to find the epigraph from the *Satyricon* perplexing. The quotation occurs during the banquet of Trimalchio, a feast full of boasts and tall tales. Harriet Davidson has claimed, summarizing the prevailing attitude toward the epigraph, "The story of the Sibyl remains another disjointed piece of this puzzling poem" (122). Some find that the epigraph's form contains its key to decipherment. By quoting, in an English poem, a Latin text that contains a conversation in Greek, Eliot is establishing precedent for his tapestry of fragmented allusion, a comfort with code switching.

And yet, what about the Sibyl, shrinking away in her jar or ampulla? Few have considered it formally. This is surprising, given that Hugh Kenner noticed the mistranslation of *ampulla* as "cage" instead of "jar/bottle" in 1972 (38n3). When read next to Eliot's deployment of the nightingale and its "jug," another Ovidian story that divorces a female voice from its body, a theme emerges that is less puzzling, more structuring. While Eliot quotes Arbiter, the story of the Cumaean Sibyl receives an extended treatment in book 14 of the *Metamorphoses*—in which the oracle recounts her story to Aeneas. Approached by Phoebus as a young woman, the Sibyl was granted eternal life in exchange for her virginity. She spurned the god's offer, who gave her immortality but not everlasting youth. She predicts a day in which her body will shrink past visibility, at which point she will only be a voice in a jar: "The time will come when length of days will shrivel me from my full form to

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but a tiny thing, and my limbs, consumed by age, will shrink to a feather's weight. . . . Though shrunk past recognition of the eye, still by my voice shall I be known, for the fates will leave me my voice" (2:310–11). The story of the Sibyl is the mirror image of Ovid's Philomela. The latter woman is placed in a hut, violated, and made mute—a body without a voice. The Sibyl refuses sex and ends up in a jar, where she decays into a voice without a body. Indeed, Philomela and her associates form a choir of disembodied voices in *The Waste Land*.

Ovid aside, Eliot was familiar with several later treatments of the nightingale that associate Philomela's voice with vessels, bodily containment, and architectural enclosure in ways similar to Marie de France. While nightingales and the myth of Philomela do not appear until "A Game of Chess," the second section of *The Waste Land*, their presence can be felt in the poem's very first line. Eliot's famous opening recalls the beginning of Gascoigne's "Fable of Philomela": "In sweet April . . . / Late in an even, I walked out alone, / To heare the descant of the Nightingale" (146). If April is the cruelest month, it is because the nightingale returns from its winter's migration and begins singing, conjuring the cruel abuse of Philomela. There are further points of convergence between Eliot's poem and Gascoigne's antecedent. In "A Game of Chess," the nightingale is said to have filled "all the desert with inviolable voice" (1:58), bringing to fruition a threat made by Philomela in the fable: "If I in deserts dwel, . . . / I wil so fil the ayre / With noyse of this thine acte" (160). We will return to Eliot's formulation about voice and inviolability, but first we must note how Gascoigne etymologically compares the nightingale's jug song to a container or vessel.

> Some thinke that *Jugum* is
> The *Jug*, she jugleth so,
> But *Jugulator* is the word
> That doubleth al hir woe.
> (179)

In this poem, the nightingale's song pronounces violence. It conjures jugulation, the cutting of throats, which connects to Philomela (she offers her throat to the sword of Tereus to avoid dishonor). Gascoigne also mentions the obscure *jugum*, a word for yoke—now used to denote a ridge connecting the wings of flying insects. *Jug*, however, is presented and then passed over, an omission that will be taken up by later poets, notably Eliot.

"A Game of Chess" was originally titled "In the Cage," and critics gesture to Henry James's short story of the same name when trying to source Eliot's draft title. While the story's telegraphy is certainly a paratextual presence, it seems more fitting to look closer, to the Sibyl in her "cage," a common translation of *ampulla*—although, as Kenner notes, such an allusion would be indecipherable without a quotation from Petronius (38). Doing so makes sense, given the content of "A Game of Chess." Opening with an allusion to *Antony and Cleopatra*, the section pays particularly close attention to interior decoration, with a fastidious detail that alludes to Iachimo's observation of Innogen's bedchamber in *Cymbeline*, a restaging of the Philomela myth in terms of containment.[5] Later poets like Coleridge and

[5] For a discussion of these similarities, see Christopher Ricks and Jim McCue's commentary (Eliot, *Poems* 1: 625). Iachimo's seduction of Innogen is predicated on a series of nested vessels, metaphorical and material. His desire is a "tub / Both filled and running," recalling Ovid's story of the daughters of Danaus, condemned to continually fill leaking vessels in Hades (Shakespeare, *Cymbeline* 1.6.47–48). Not long after this description, Iachimo concocts a scheme to get in her bedchamber, hiding himself inside a

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Browning draw on this theme, framing the jug song alongside images of acoustic and spatial enclosure in "The Nightingale: A Conversation Poem" and "Bianca among the Nightingales," respectively. In the former poem, the "jug" song is contrasted with images of spatial enclosure, "king cups," and an empty castle (Coleridge 265), while the latter lyric lends its title to Eliot's Sweeney poem and details how the nightingales' song fills a "garden-chamber"; surrounds a Eucharistic image of container pollution ("spat into my love's pure pyx"); and—in the poem's closing image—penetrates the speaker's final enclosure: "They'll sing and stun me in the tomb" (Browning 559–60).[6]

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trunk, which Innogen has agreed to safeguard. Here we find the dynamics of domestic enclosure that structure Marie de France's *lais* and other courtly love poetry, in which penetrating an architectural stronghold is symbolically equivalent to intercourse. Even before the Philomela allusion, the myth hangs heavy on the two characters. When Iachimo tells her that "but 'tis your graces / That from my mutest conscience to my tongue / Charms this report out," a reader of Ovid cannot help but cringe—tongueless mouths are on the mind (1.6.115). With Innogen asleep, Iachimo exits the trunk and begins taking detailed notes of what he sees, as proof of his conquest. Architectural and decorative knowledge replaces sexual experience. Finding her with a book in hand, Iachimo investigates: "She hath been reading late / The tale of Tereus: here the leaf's turned down / Where Philomel gave up. I have enough; / To th'trunk again, and shut the spring of it" (2.2.51). If desire is a leaky tub, then locking oneself in a trunk is an act of chastity. Spooked by the similarities between Tereus's rape and his own actions, Iachimo puts his desire back in the box, as it were. And yet these images and metaphors of enclosure seem to communicate with Ovid's own nested containers (hut, cauldron, stomach, and empty mouth). Innogen has fallen asleep at the very moment when, in a *stabula*, Philomela will be violated and then struck dumb.

[6] While I cannot read this poem with the depth it deserves, nor give attention to Browning's other nightingale poems ("The Poet and the Bird," for example), we might note that, as in Shelley's "Woodman and the Nightingale" (1824), the environment of the nightingale becomes equated with a place of worship through its architectural similarities: "a green space among the silent bowers, / Like a vast fane in a metropolis" (Shelley 559).

> The cypress stood up like a church
> That night we felt our love would hold, . . .
> The olives crystallized the vales'
> Broad slopes until the hills grew strong:
> The fireflies and the nightingales
> Throbbed each to either, flame and song.
> The nightingales, the nightingales.
> (Browning 559–60)

The "strength" of the vale and its hills is both an agricultural and acoustic quality, as it is "crystallized" by olives, but also consecrated, through a strategic colon, by the choric throbs of nightingales and fireflies. Jeni Williams offers context for reading this poem in the context of Ovid and Marie de France, arguing that the poem sits between two paradigms: "the medieval literary tradition seen as originating with Chaucer and the paradigm of the individual voice that is caught within the Philomela myth" (174). Coleridge's "Nightingale: A Conversation Poem" offers an alternative to Keats's bird by explicating the "jug song" and its thematic of acoustic enclosure. Coleridge layers images of architectural containment before revealing that his poem's center is filled with nightingales, coupling spatial and sonic enclosure.

> And I know a grove
> Of large extent, hard by a castle huge,
> Which the great lord inhabits not; and so
> This grove is wild with tangling underwood,
> And the trim walks are broken up, and grass,
> Thin grass and king-cups grow within the paths.
> But never elsewhere in one place I knew
> So many nightingales; and far and near,
> In wood and thicket, over the wide grove,
> They answer and provoke each other's song,
> With skirmish and capricious passagings,
> And murmurs musical and swift jug jug[.] (1: 265)

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The second section of *The Waste Land* draws on this tradition by demonstrating an alchemical interest in metaphors of evaporation, sublimation, and decantation, framed by a series of containers and the Philomela myth. These material metamorphoses bridge divisions between sense and medium, allowing light to pour like liquid and interact with perfumes in a collage of synesthetic imagery.

> Reflecting light upon the table as
> The glitter of her jewels rose to meet it,
> From satin cases poured in rich profusion.
> In vials of ivory and coloured glass
> Unstoppered, lurked her strange synthetic perfumes,
> Unguent, powdered, or liquid—troubled, confused
> And drowned the sense in odours; stirred by the air. (*Poems* 1:58)

A lack of containment leads to disorder: light, smoke, odor, liquid, and powder all seemingly mix and remix, "troubled, confused." This sensory and material chaos parallels the anachronistic gaudiness of the scenery: classical reception reduced to garish decoration. It is not surprising, then, that Philomela would appear, as her story is perhaps one of the oldest allegories of ekphrasis, an antidote to sensory disorder. Deprived of voice, she translates sound into sight and creates a narrative tapestry (see Wells; Olson). Descriptions of sight, smell, and texture dominate the scene, with no mention of sound, when suddenly:

> The change of Philomel, by the barbarous king
> So rudely forced; yet there the nightingale
> Filled all the desert with inviolable voice
> And still she cried, and still the world pursues,
> "Jug Jug" to dirty ears.
> And other withered stumps of time
> Were told upon the walls; staring forms
> Leaned out, leaning, hushing the room enclosed. (1:58)

Extending the earlier dynamic play between sight, sound, and enclosure, Eliot nestles Philomela's voice in a sylvan scene, painted with pigment. (Note too how Eliot summons Lavinia's blood-filled basin from *Titus Andronicus* with the phrase "withered stumps of time," another Shakespearean treatment of Ovid's myth.[7]) There

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The halting rhyme ("know a grove") draws attention to the sound of "o," a letter whose hollow, enclosed shape will structure the lines that follow. The grove is large, intensified by the abutting "huge" castle, which is uninhabited by a "great" lord. Architectural emptiness and descriptors of size coincide, as the poem carves out a space to be filled. We are suddenly in the grove itself, a transition accomplished by the logical connective "and so"—*and so* what? Because the lord does not inhabit his castle, the grove is uncared for and wild, yes. But there is a spatial symmetry too—what Betsy Tontiplaphol describes as "enclosure in a sort of womb-like garden" (37). Mimicking the nightingale in Ovid and Marie de France, there is interplay between the domestic political enclosure and the natural world. If, for Martin Heidegger, "the temple's firm towering makes visible the invisible space of air," the castle's vaulting emptiness makes visible the grove's vacuity (41). And into this void "king-cups" grow: flowers of the Ranunculus family, like buttercups, whose name plays into the spatial dynamics we have been observing. The empty castle and absent lord create the space for a grove for king-cups to bloom. And it is within this emptiness that nightingales appear with their swift "jug" music. This "jug" cannot be read merely as a phonetic approximation of birdsong, for it reverberates with all the other containers in this poem.

[7] There is nothing subtle about Shakespeare's use of Ovid in *Titus Andronicus*. It is a play that was better known to Eliot for its violence, however, than its intricate classical reception. I am less interested in the blatant allusions to Ovid's story—as when Lucius declares, holding up a volume: "Grandsire, 'tis Ovid's Metamorphoses; / My mother gave it me"—for these have been treated at length by other scholars (4.1.42–43). I am troubled instead by the way that Shakespeare imagines the intersection of sound and

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are a number of details to keep in mind. First, how the nightingale's voice fills the desert, formally paralleling the satin cases and "unstoppered" vials that brim with scent. By filling the desert with voice, Eliot's Philomela joins Serres's nightingale, who appropriates territory with sound, spatializing her inviolability. Second, remember that in Eliot's draft, "jug jug" is connected to enclosure, as Philomela's cries go into "the dirty ear of death," the converse of *Titus Andronicus*'s deathly pit, out of which pours sonic pollution. Third, note how the "sylvan scene" hushes the "room enclosed," creating an acoustics of enclosure, performing the kind of architectural containment found in the poems above.

Milton's *Paradise Lost* acts like bedrock here. Eliot lifts the phrase "sylvan scene" from book 4, but there are greater thematic parallels between the poem and Eliot's vision of the nightingale's enclosure. A few lines before the "sylvan scene," we find Eden described with the language of spatial containment: "So on he fares, and to the border comes / Of Eden, where delicious Paradise, / Now nearer, crowns with her enclosure green" (Milton 222). Later in the book, the nightingale's song facilitates the physical enclosure of Adam and Eve: "These lulled by nightingales embracing slept, / And on their naked limbs the flowery roof / Showered roses" (267). As with Rousseau's niche and its nightingale guard, the birdsong lulls the lovers into an impromptu chamber of roses—protected by an envelope of sound. Milton's nightingales are architects of enclosure, doubling the lovers' contained embrace. While *roof* is used in its secondary sense to indicate a canopy of heaven, it also conjures the built environment depicted alongside Marie de France's and Ovid's nightingales.

Eliot was especially sensitive to the nuances of birdsong, both in life and poetry (Benthall; Irmscher). The poet treasured his childhood copy of Frank Chapman's *Handbook of Birds of Eastern North America* (1896), a gift from his mother on his fourteenth birthday. Eliot was still reading the volume twenty-eight years later, quoting from it in a 1930 letter to the *New Statesman*. Discussing mockingbirds, he describes himself as an "amateur ornithologist" before claiming: "I have less knowledge of nightingales, except for their literary associations, which are useful; but I am ready to affirm that a fine mocking-bird in his own pure song is at least the nightingale's equal" (*Letters* 5: 390). Eliot comments on these "useful" associations elsewhere too. Most famously, in "Tradition and the Individual Talent," he describes the nightingale as a kind of melting pot through which Keats could collect various themes:

space in the myth of Philomela. Before Lavinia is raped, muted, and dismembered, she is standing by the pit in the woods, where the corpse of Bassianus is concealed. Mentioning the "nightly owl," the nightingale's traditional, poetic enemy, Lavinia describes a cacophony of auditory pollution: "A thousand fiends, a thousand hissing snakes, / Ten thousand swelling toads, as many urchins, / Would make such fearful and confused cries" (2.3.100–104). The fiends perform a form of sonic pollution that anticipates the impending sexual violence, recalling the enveloping chorality described by Serres and Connor. *Titus Andronicus* inverts certain gendered associations in Ovid's myth. The pit in the woods is not the masculine domain of Tereus but, in what is arguably the play's glaring insensitivity, becomes couched instead in yonic imagery. This inverted symbolism coheres in the play's penultimate scene, when Lavinia holds a basin for collecting blood from Chiron and Demetrius, which Titus will cook and feed to Tamora (a feminine role given to Procne in Ovid). Lavinia clutches the basin between her stumps, associating the vessel with sexual violence. As in the Ovid, Lavinia is twice paired with images of auditory and bodily pollution and enclosure. Like the sounds issuing from that "detested, dark, blood-drinking pit," which can make any listener "fall mad, or else die suddenly," Lavinia's basin is polluted with the blood of her abusers—a sinister inversion of the Grail, which, by some accounts, collected Christ's blood after he was pierced by the lance of Longinus (2.3.104).

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"The ode of Keats contains a number of feelings which have nothing particular to do with the nightingale, but which the nightingale, partly perhaps because of its attractive name, and partly because of its reputation, served to bring together" (*Prose* 2: 110). Eliot's statement illuminates his own use of the nightingale, as a figure around which to gather ideas relating to voice, vacuity, and enclosure. Keats's ode opens with a series of decanting containers not unlike those that surround Eliot's Philomela: "a draught of vintage" is cooled in "deep-delved earth," "some dull opiate" is emptied into drains, and Keats's speaker longs for "a beaker full of the warm south" (230–31).

Bearing in mind the poetic history of the nightingale's acoustic enclosures, by the time we encounter the following lines in Eliot's "Fire Sermon," it is impossible to detach them from the semantic sense of the word *jug*:

> Twit twit twit
> Jug jug jug jug jug jug
> So rudely forc'd.
> Tereu[.] (*Poems* 1:63)

Eliot's lines distill the tension at the heart of Ovid's nightingale between sound and sight. Heard phonetically, the lines approximate birdsong—however "tin" or scientifically inaccurate the Cambridge professor and Huxley proclaim them to be. Seen semantically, however, the words take on thematically consistent meanings. *Twit* is an old noun for censure and reproach. *Tereu* is a feigned note of Philomela, derived from the name of Tereus. And *jug* is an object whose form, as I have demonstrated, has a long-running historical association with the nightingale. I want to argue against the prevailing reading, which reduces these "jugs" to a dirty Elizabethan joke (Rainey 95). While some innuendo is surely present, given Philomela's fate, Christoph Irmscher demonstrates how reading "jug jug" as a crude reference to sexual intercourse has little historical precedent before Eliot (235n8). If there is crudeness in this passage, it is closer to what Drew Milne describes as "distaste with the unspoken violence in tasteful representations of classical myth" (363). In a cut refrain from the draft of *The Waste Land*, Eliot also includes "O swallow swallow" in this passage, an allusion to Swinburne's "Itylus," which further demonstrates the necessity of reading semantically, as the word connotes both the bird and deglutition, an action difficult for Philomela's empty mouth (*Poems* 1:335).

Conclusion

Besides unifying images of vacuity and the disembodied voice that would otherwise remain irreversibly fragmentary, this reading of the nightingale's "jug" also throws light on one of the enduring perplexities of *The Waste Land*. For a poem deeply concerned with the grail legend, we find almost no imagery linked to the grail itself. Richard Barber argues that *The Waste Land* is "about the absence of the Grail," and that "the post-war world [of Eliot's poem] should have at its heart an empty space where the expected and ultimate religious symbol should be" (327–28). This "empty space" recalls the mythological cycle of the Fisher King and Waste Land, which Eliot learned about from Jessie Weston's *From Ritual to Romance* (1920). And yet, what if the grail was hidden in plain sight, contained in the seemingly empty "jug" of the nightingale?

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Grail mythology and the nightingale theme have a shared history. According to Joan Tasker Grimbert, one of the early source texts for the "Tristan and Isolde" myth comes from the anonymous *Donnei des Amants*, which contains a lay known as "Tristan Rossignol" ("Tristan the Nightingale"), a story that structurally resembles Marie de France's lay in many ways—and shows up in *The Waste Land*, modulated, through Eliot's quotation of Richard Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde* (xxix). Eliot studied medieval Arthurian romance with William Schofield, returning to his professor's *English Literature from the Norman Conquest to Chaucer* (1906) while composing *The Waste Land*, the former a book that calls Marie de France the "most pleasing and significant" preserver of British narrative poetry (173). Robert Crawford notes that Schofield was interested in the way that pagan "material underlay stories such as that of the Holy Grail" (44), transmitted alongside other Arthurian romances like "Tristan and Isolt," which Schofield believed to be "the apotheosis of illicit love" (173). In Joseph Bédier's edition of *Le roman de Tristan et Iseut*, nightingales serve their (now familiar) function as architects of acoustic enclosure. Hidden "in the hollow of a rock," Tristan and Iseult build "a hut [hutte] of green branches under the great trees"—a structure that recalls Philomela's stabula (*Romance* 95; *Le roman* 94). Like Pliny's reed blower, Tristan knows the "art by which a man may sing the song of birds in the woods," and, at his Adamic command, "the thrush, the black bird and the nightingale" alight "on to the branches of his hut and sing their song full-throated [le cou gonflé, chantaient leurs lais]" (*Romance* 95; *Le roman* 94).

By rereading the nightingale through the thematic of acoustic enclosure, I have tried to demonstrate what is to be gained by taking the nightingale seriously in a comparative context. My argument avoided historicizing particular poems by period in order to draw the nightingale's poetics of containment to the surface. Of course, the nightingale's enclosures find important historical resonances. Marie de France can be contrasted with the medieval anchorite tradition and its literary depictions of enclosed women (similar readings have been offered by Christopher Cannon, Shari Horner, and Cary Howie). Milton's, Coleridge's, Keats's, and Browning's poems could be interpreted alongside enclosure laws regarding the containment of public land and open spaces that radically transformed the English landscape between the late sixteenth and early nineteenth centuries, which Rachel Crawford studied extensively, and paralleled, in America, by what Lesley Wheeler calls the "poetics of enclosure." Doing so would only further elucidate the nightingale's jugging, how it serves as a figure of meditation between sound and space in poetry since Ovid. In her essay "After the Critique of Lyric," Rei Terada predicts that, once the domain of lyric dissolves into literary studies as a whole, "unknown forms and modes will catch the eye, worth the attention that twentieth-century lyrics studies has prepared readers to give to their objects" (199). Perhaps the nightingale—as a formal, organizing object in the history of verse, which collides with the theory and themes of lyric poetry—has been awaiting our attention for quite some time.

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