

Notes

Introduction

1. Rob Young and Irmin Schmidt, *All Gates Open: The Story of Can* (London: Faber and Faber, 2018), p. 458.
2. Geoffrey Hill, 'Poetry, Policing and Public Order (1)', www.english.ox.ac.uk/professor-sir-geoffrey-hill-lectures (accessed 12 July 2020). Hill refers to T. S. Eliot's phrase 'the exasperated spirit' in part two of 'Little Gidding' from *Four Quartets* (London: Faber and Faber, 1959 (1943)), p. 54.
3. Geoffrey Hill, 'How ill white hairs become a fool and jester', www.english.ox.ac.uk/professor-sir-geoffrey-hill-lectures (accessed 12 July 2020).
4. Lemn Sissay, 'Carol Ann Duffy and Geoffrey Hill: truly poetic heavyweights', www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2012/jan/31/carol-ann-duffy-geoffrey-hill-punch-up (accessed 12 July 2020).
5. Hill, 'Poetry, Policing and Public Order (1)', www.english.ox.ac.uk/professor-sir-geoffrey-hill-lectures (accessed 12 July 2020). This book focuses on contemporary British poetry primarily because a monograph twice its size would have been required to engage with the multitude of enigmatical poetry across the globe. Future critical responses could investigate the term in relation to postcolonial, non-Anglophone and American poetry. Even within a British context, the author could have discussed, in addition, the work of numerous other poets, including Kelvin Corcoran, Michael Hofmann, Luke Kennard, Chris McCabe, Carrie Etter, Tom Jenks, Drew Milne, Peter Riley, Sam Riviere, Robert Sheppard, Zoë Skoulding, Scott Thurston, Matthew Welton and John Wilkinson. Moreover, as Andrew Thacker notes in relation to Jessica Berman's work on modernisms, the danger with transnational accounts of literature is that they are at risk of 'evacuating the geographical (and, I would add, historical and cultural) specificity of the writers and texts involved' (*Modernism, Space and the City* [Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2019], p. 15).
6. Young and Schmidt, *All Gates Open*, p. 458.

7. Hill, 'Poetry, Policing and Public Order (1)', www.english.ox.ac.uk/professor-sir-geoffrey-hill-lectures (accessed 12 July 2020).
8. Andre Furlani, *Guy Davenport: Postmodern and After* (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 2007), p. 150. Furlani is one of the first critics to discuss the concept of metamodernist poetry. However, his outline of metamodernism in the last chapter (pp. 150–6) then appears only sporadically in the subsequent analysis, as when he argues that Davenport's *The Jules Verne Steam Balloon* (1993) 'adheres to a metamodernism that proceeds beyond modernism as much as it repudiates postmodernism' (p. 159).
9. Timotheus Vermeulen and Robin van den Akker, 'Notes on Metamodernism', *Journal of Aesthetics and Culture*, 2 (2010), 2–14. These critics draw on Alexandra Dumitrescu's declaration in 2007 that metamodernism is 'a period term and a cultural phenomenon, partly concurring with (post)modernism, partly emerging from it and as a reaction to it' ('Interconnections in Blakean and modern space', www.doubledialogues.com/article/interconnections-in-blakean-and-modern-space (accessed 16 July 2020)).
10. Luke Turner, 'Metamodernist Manifesto', www.metamodernism.org (accessed 29 April 2020).
11. David James and Urmila Seshagiri, 'Metamodernism: Narratives of Continuity and Revolution', *PMLA*, 129(1) (2014), 87–98.
12. James – alongside Peter Boxall – has been one of the most active critics in drawing attention to the contemporary novel's self-conscious engagement with modernist writing in books such as *The Legacies of Modernism* (2011) and *Modernist Futures* (2012). Boxall's extensive work on modernist legacies in contemporary literature includes *Since Beckett: Contemporary Writing in the Wake of Modernism* (London: Continuum, 2009) and *Twenty-First-Century Fiction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).
13. Robin van den Akker, Alison Gibbons and Timotheus Vermeulen, eds., *Metamodernism: Historicity, Affect and Depth After Postmodernism* (London/New York: Rowman and Littlefield International, 2017); Nick Bentley, 'Trailing Postmodernism: David Mitchell's *Cloud Atlas*, Zadie Smith's *NW*, and the Metamodern', *English Studies*, 99(7–8) (November 2018), 723–43; Martin Eve, 'Thomas Pynchon, David Foster Wallace and the Problems of "Metamodernism"', *C21st Literature*, 1(1) (2012), 7–13, p. 8; Dennis Kersten and Usha Wilbers, eds., 'Metamodernism: A Special Issue', *English*, 99(7–8) (November 2018). Eve argues that metamodernism is not even a single strand of a new 'structure of feeling' and is 'insufficiently delineated from its antecedent'. He correctly points out their misreading of Kantian idealism and an overinvestment in neo-Romanticism (p. 11), but concedes that 'despite

- its theoretical failings this new paradigm offers an interesting twist on postmodern discourse for literature' (p. 12). However, van den Akker, Vermeulen, James and Seshagiri all argue in different ways that the term does go beyond 'postmodern discourse', and that metamodernism points to the exhaustion of this discourse in a supposedly 'post-truth' age. In contrast, Eve contends that such a critical perspective is 'overly rooted in positivist historical thinking, seeking a parallel progression in its object of study' (p. 7). Nevertheless, to insist on postmodernism's undialectical continuation in the present in order to understand contemporary culture is a totalising discourse in the same way as stating that metamodernism performs the same function.
14. Peter Boxall used the phrase 'resurgent modes of realism' in relation to Ian McEwan's novel *The Children's Act* (2014) during his paper entitled 'Imagining the Future' at the AHRC research network symposium on metamodernism at Manchester Metropolitan University (31 January 2018).
 15. Peter Barry, *Poetry Wars* (Cambridge: Salt, 2006), p.140.
 16. Many members of the Cambridge School would argue that postmodernism never had any critical efficacy in relation to its poetics. I am aware that the term 'innovative' has been applied to the work of the London School and Language poets more often than the Cambridge School, which might prefer 'late modernist' or 'modernist-influenced'. However, there is no better alternative term that can be deployed in relation to these Schools, as opposed to mainstream writing.
 17. Theodor W. Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, eds. Gretel Adorno and Rolf Tiedemann, trans. Robert Hullot-Kentor (London: The Athlone Press, 1997 [1970]), p. 335.
 18. Joanna Moorhead, 'Carol Ann Duffy: "Poems are a form of texting"' (interview with Carol Ann Duffy), *The Guardian*, 5 September 2011 (www.theguardian.com/education/2011/sep/05/carol-ann-duffy-poetry-texting-competition (accessed 12 May 2020)).
 19. R. P. Blackmur, *The Double Agent: Essays in Craft and Elucidation* (New York: Arrow Editions, 1935), p. 4.
 20. James and Seshagiri, 'Metamodernism', pp. 90–1.
 21. Fredric Jameson, *A Singular Modernity* (London/New York: Verso, 2012 [2002]), pp. 199, 150, 209. Rather than addressing the concerns of contemporary literature, Jameson's 'late' modernism ends abruptly with the work of Vladimir Nabokov and Samuel Beckett in the 1950s. In *Late Modernism: Art, Culture, and Politics in Cold War America* (Oxford/Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010), Robert Genter expands on Jameson's conception of late modernism in the specific context of North American culture in the 1950s and 1960s. In contrast, Tyrus Miller locates late modernism in the 1920s and 1930s in *Late Modernism: Politics*,

- Fiction, and the Arts Between Two World Wars* (Berkeley/LA: University of California Press, 1999). Genter distinguishes between ‘high’ modernism, and the ‘invigorated’ late modernism of writers such as Kenneth Burke, Ralph Ellison and James Baldwin, and the ‘romantic modernism’ of, for example, the Beats (pp. 6, 8). Both Jameson and Genter concur in regarding late modernism as a teleological route to postmodernism. According to Jameson in *A Singular Modernity*, it is ‘with this late modernism that postmodernism attempts radically to break’ (p. 210). For Genter, the former provides the ‘movement toward postmodernism’ (*Late Modernism*, p. 10). In contrast, in *Late Modernist Poetics: from Pound to Prynne* (Manchester/New York: Manchester University Press, 2005), Anthony Mellors argues that ‘postmodernism remains a nebulous category, constantly falling back onto the modernist tenets against which it is defined’ (p. 3). Unlike Genter, Mellors extends late modernist poetics to 1975 in his study of ‘the impact of the modernist occult on the “late modernism” of mid-century American poetry and the British poetry of the 1960s and 1970s’ (p. 2).
22. Madelyn Detloff, *The Persistence of Modernism: Loss and Mourning in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p. 4. Raymond Williams’s argument about the perpetuation of modernism in *The Politics of Modernism* (London/New York: Verso, 1989) is different to Detloff’s ‘patching’ thesis. Williams focuses on the reified “‘modern absolute’” of a ‘high modernist aesthetic style that outlived its conditions of cultivation’ in the ‘imperial metropolis’ (p. 38).
 23. Detloff, *The Persistence of Modernism*, p. 4. Akin to van den Akker and Vermeulen, Detloff deploys Williams’s ‘structure of feeling’ to describe the persistence of modernism. The modernist past ‘is thus not an inert object to be studied in its alterity, but rather a “structure of feeling” [. . .] functioning in a “patched” present’ (p. 10).
 24. Geoffrey Hill, Michaelmas term lecture 2012 (untitled), <http://media.podcasts.ox.ac.uk/engfac/poetry/2012-11-27-engfac-hill.mp3> (accessed 28 July 2020).
 25. Fredric Jameson critiques the ‘reminting’ of the modern in *A Singular Modernity* (p. 7).
 26. In *A Shrinking Island: Modernism and National Culture in England* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2004), Jed Esty examines the ‘recurrent tendency of commentators on the English scene to metaphorize literary change as national decline’ in relation to conceptions of late modernism (p. 1). Esty’s version of the latter is located in the mid-twentieth century, and ‘the cultural transition between empire and the welfare state’ (p. 3).

27. David James, *The Legacies of Modernism: Historicising Postwar and Contemporary Fiction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), p. 1.
28. Hill, 'Poetry, Policing and Public Order (1)', www.english.ox.ac.uk/professor-sir-geoffrey-hill-lectures (accessed 12 July 2020).
29. Williams, *The Politics of Modernism*, p. 23; James, *The Legacies of Modernism*, p. 1. This focus on modernist legacies in both kinds of poetry distinguishes my work from Marjorie Perloff's focus on early twentieth-century antecedents in 'innovative' writing in *21st-Century Modernism: The "New" Poetics* (Malden/Oxford: Blackwells, 2002). Perloff calls for the continuation of these categories when she surmises that 'what if, despite the predominance of a tepid and unambitious Establishment poetry, there were a powerful avant-garde that takes up, once again, the experimentation of the early twentieth-century?' (pp. 4–5). In Chapter 5, I analyse how Harrison's work – usually caricatured as anti-modernist – actually draws on the legacies of mythic 'double consciousness' in the work of Eliot and James Joyce. In that chapter, my analysis of Parmar's intricate reworkings of classical myth in relation to H. D.'s *Helen in Egypt* (1961) and Virginia Woolf's comments on the impersonality of the classics indicate that I have no wish in this book to totalise an overarching 'modernism'. Later in this Introduction, for example, I analyse the particular influence of Eliot's work on Hill's collection *Scenes from Comus*: as Williams notes, 'Although Modernism can be clearly identified as a distinctive movement [...] it is also strongly characterised by its internal diversity of methods and emphases [...] from the Futurist affirmation of the city to Eliot's pessimistic recoil' (p. 43).
30. Theodor W. Adorno, *Minima Moralia: Reflections from Damaged Life*, trans. E. F. N. Jephcott (London: Verso, 1978 [1951]), p. 52.
31. As I illustrate in Chapter 3, Hill uses these terms in his notebook drafts for *The Orchards of Syon* that are held in the Brotherton Library (Orchards of Syon workbooks, BC MS 20c Hill/2/1/52, p. 35).
32. Douglas Mao and Rebecca L. Walkowitz, eds., *Bad Modernisms* (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2006), p. 3.
33. 'Enigmaticalness' is a necessarily awkward term in Robert Hullot-Kentor's translation of Adorno's *Ästhetische Theorie* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 2014 [1970]). There is no direct equivalent in English for the German phrase 'der Rätselcharakter' (literally, 'puzzle-character' or 'puzzle-essence') (p. 183). I am grateful to Dr Angelica Michelis for our discussions about the translation of *Ästhetische Theorie*.
34. Adorno, *Ästhetische Theorie*, p. 184.
35. Charles Simic and Don Paterson, eds., *New British Poetry* (St Paul, Minnesota: Graywolf Press, 2004), p. xxx.

36. Hill, 'Poetry, Policing and Public Order (1)', www.english.ox.ac.uk/professor-sir-geoffrey-hill-lectures (accessed 12 July 2020).
37. Eleanor Cook, 'The Figure of Enigma: Rhetoric, History and Poetry', *Rhetorica: A Journal of the History of Rhetoric*, 19(4) (2001), 349–78, p. 352.
38. Earlier in *Aesthetic Theory*, Adorno ruminates on the 'enigmatic character of nature's language' (p. 73): natural beauty is indefinable, just as in music 'what is beautiful flashes up in nature only to disappear in the instant one tries to grasp it' (p. 72).
39. I refer here to the Great Sphinx at Giza, as opposed to the riddles of the sphinx in Greek mythology, or the *purushamriga* in South India.
40. Derek Attridge, *The Singularity of Literature* (London/New York: Routledge, 2004), p. 142. He writes that 'there can be no doubt that [Adorno's] *Aesthetic Theory* is among the most significant twentieth-century contributions to debates about artistic practice and response [...] Also influential has been Adorno's championing of modern art as resistant to, while at the same time arising out of it, the administrative and instrumental rationality that surrounds it.'
41. Attridge, *The Singularity of Literature*, p. 59.
42. Rare exceptions include Eleanor Cook's article and *Enigmas and Riddles in Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), and Ian Balfour's 'Extreme Philology: Benjamin, Adorno, McCall and the Enigmas of Hölderlin', in *Tragedy, Translation and Theory: In Honor of the Work of Thomas J. McCall* (Baltimore: The University of Maryland Press, 2014) (no pp. no.). More often – but still rarely – Adorno's conception of the enigma is discussed in relation to art more widely, as in David S. Ferris's 'Politics and the Enigma of Art: The Meaning of Modernism for Adorno', *Modernist Cultures*, 1(2) (winter 2005), 192–208, and João Pedro's 'Truth and Enigma: Adorno and the Politics of Art', *New German Critique*, 45(3, 135) (November 2018), 73–95.
43. *OED*, 2nd edn; Curtis Gruenler, *Piers Plowman and the Poetics of Enigma: Riddles, Rhetoric and Theology* (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2017); Shawn Normandin, "'Non Intellegent": the Enigmas of *The Clerk's Tale*', *Texas Studies in Literature and Language*, 58(2) (2016), 189–223.
44. *OED*, 2nd edn. In William Shakespeare's *Love's Labour's Lost* (1598), for example, the character Armado discourses on 'Some enigma, some riddle' with Moth and Costard (*Love's Labour's Lost* (Leipzig: Bernhard Tauchnitz, 1868), p. 24).
45. Cook, 'The Figure of Enigma', pp. 350, 356.
46. *OED*, 2nd edn.
47. Cook, 'The Figure of Enigma', p. 362.

48. In contrast with these examples of modernist literature, Adorno's discussion of Edmund Mörike's rhyme about a mousetrap in this passage from *Aesthetic Theory* is initially surprising. Adorno's thesis is that interpretations cannot be tied to discursive content, thereby meaning that art cannot have a 'message' (p. 123). Mörike's 'Mousetrap Rhyme' describes a child circling a mousetrap whilst reciting a ditty about the animal's demise when it 'boldly [pays] us a visit tonight' (p. 123). If understood in terms of the 'discursive content' alone, the poem 'would amount to no more than sadistic identification with what civilized custom has done to an animal disdained as a parasite'. However, the implication of the rhyme's details suggests the opposite: even without an explicit, 'committed' message, 'abstaining from judgement', the poem operates as an indictment of a 'miserable, socially conditioned ritual' (p. 124). Adorno does not deploy 'Mousetrap Rhyme' as an example of enigmatic art, therefore, but as a means to continue his critique of supposedly *engagé* literature (p. 123).
49. Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 118. My focus on enigmatical poetry differs from Marjorie Perloff's account of 'undetermined' poems in *The Poetics of Indeterminacy: Rimbaud to Cage* (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1983 [1981]). Perloff splits modernist poetry into two strands, 'the Symbolist mode' and the "anti-Symbolist" mode of indeterminacy or "undecidability," of literalness and free play, whose first real exemplar is the Rimbaud of the *Illuminations*' (p. vii). Eliot's *The Waste Land* (1922) thus connotes a 'very real fogbound London' (p. 11) within a 'perfectly coherent symbolic structure' (p. 13), whereas Rimbaud's work blocks 'all attempts to rationalize its imagery, to make it conform to a coherent pattern' (p. 10). In contrast, I would argue that the 'remainder' of enigmatical poetry exists in both 'interwoven strands' (p. vii), and arises from the visions of *Illuminations* (1886) as well as Eliot's transformation of central London. My version of the 'notion of the enigma' appertains to 'Symbolist'-influenced writers such as Eliot and Hill as well as 'innovative' poets, rather than explicitly to 'language construction' among 'avant-garde writers' (p. 66).
50. Tony Pinkney, 'Editor's Introduction: Modernism and Cultural Theory', in Williams, *The Politics of Modernism*, pp. 1–29, p. 5. As Pinkney notes, Williams's responses to modernist writing change over time: 'in his sixties, after his own realist "detour" in mid-career, he once again became 'as fascinated by the whole extraordinary Modernist project as a boy of eighteen at Cambridge' (p. 27); 'there is still much to learn', Williams claims in his article on 'The Politics of the Avant-Garde', 'from the complexities of its vigorous and dazzling development' (p. 62). Pinkney emphasises that there are two 'almost incompatible views of Modernism and the avant-garde' in Williams's essays: on the one hand, they are the

most advanced outposts of ‘bourgeois dissidence’ – which are then, according to Williams, nevertheless easily assimilated back into bourgeois and consumerist culture – but also ‘on occasion the potential “warm current” in (Ernst Bloch’s phrase) of an excessively scientific socialism’ (p. 27). As with Williams’s work, I maintain in this book a distinction between modernist writing and the avant-garde: in Prynne, Hill, Byrne and Parmar’s work there may be a resistance to accommodation, but there is no attempt, as with Dada and Surrealism, to subvert the institutionalisation of literature and culture.

51. Moorhead, “Poems are a form of texting” www.theguardian.com/education/2011/sep/05/carol-ann-duffy-poetry-texting-competition (accessed 1 May 2020).
52. Hill, ‘Poetry, Policing and Public Order (1)’, www.english.ox.ac.uk/professor-sir-geoffrey-hill-lectures (accessed 12 July 2020).
53. James Byrne, *Blood/Sugar* (Todmorden: Arc, 2009), p. 71. As I note in Chapter 4, the inference here – that the diction cannot negate – is *not* that such poets produce writing of major importance.
54. Furlani, *Guy Davenport*, p. 150.
55. Hill, *Orchards of Syon* workbooks, BC MS 20c Hill/2/1/52, p. 35.
56. Geoffrey Hill, *Scenes from Comus* (London: Penguin, 2005), p. 66.
57. Geoffrey Hill, *The Orchards of Syon* (London/New York: Penguin, 2002), p. 14; Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 121.
58. Ahren Warner, *Pretty* (Newcastle: Bloodaxe, 2013), p. 72.
59. Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, pp. 121, 125.
60. Geraldine Monk, *Ghost & Other Sonnets* (Cambridge: Salt, 2008), p. 33; Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 121.
61. Marjorie Perloff discusses a different form of ‘deaestheticized’ writing in *Unoriginal Genius: Poetry by Other Means in the New Century* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2012 [2010]), noting ‘the claim, now being made by conceptual poets from Kenneth Goldsmith to Leevi Lehto, Craig Dworkin to Caroline Bergvall, that it is possible to write “poetry” that is entirely “unoriginal” and nevertheless qualifies as poetry’ (p. 12). Goldsmith, ‘in a set of short manifesto statements for the blog of the venerable Poetry Foundation of America, announced his advocacy of conceptual or “uncreative” writing – a form of copying, recycling, or appropriation that “obstinately makes no claim on originality”.’
62. Derek Attridge, ‘Conjurers turn tricks on wizards’ coat-tails’, www.timeshighereducation.com/features/conjurers-turn-tricks-on-wizards-coat-tails/203931.article. Attridge developed this article from his inaugural lecture at the University of York (June 2006) (accessed 21 September 2020).
63. J. H. Prynne, ‘A Letter to Steve McCaffery’ (2 January 1989), *The Gig*, 7 (November 2000), 40–6.

64. J. H. Prynne, 'Acrylic Tips', in *Poems* (Tarsset: Bloodaxe, 2005), pp. 533–48, p. 542.
65. Robert Sheppard, *The Poetry of Saying: British Poetry and its Discontents, 1950–2000* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2005), p. 2.
66. Charles Bernstein and Bruce Andrews, 'Repossessing the Word', in Charles Bernstein and Bruce Andrews, eds., *The Language Book* (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1984), pp. ix–xi, p. ix. The critical debates around metamodernism have often drawn on the novels of Tom McCarthy. McKenzie Wark is convincing when he asserts in the preface to *Remainder* (New York: Vintage, 2005) that McCarthy's novel is not postmodernist, but only in terms of its form rather than the book's concerns. It is by now a rather hackneyed comment that form cannot be divorced from content, yet this dialectical relationship in *Remainder* evidences a tension between the neo-realist prose – familiar to readers of contemporary British fiction, and exemplified by Ian McEwan's more recent novels – and McCarthy's concerns with the relationship between truth and fiction, iterative and linguistic play and the referent of trauma. The main character's obsession with the play of reconstruction formulates at the expense of the other characters' lives; at several points in the novel, he dismisses the workers who are integral to the reconstructions as just not mattering. In the early part of the novel, the protagonist sits in a café drinking too much corporate coffee, and presents the reader with a supposedly 'real' scene in which he engages in a conversation with a homeless man and invites him for a drink in a local café ostensibly to discuss his concerns. In a metafictional moment familiar to readers of postmodernist fictions such as Fowles's *The French Lieutenant's Woman* (1969) this passage is then revealed as fantasy: 'The truth is, I've been making all this up' (p. 54). Any engagement with the economics of homelessness (and the rights of workers) is suspended as the narrator begins to embark on his exploitative 'working through' via reconstructions. The author's satire on the Starbucks-like café and its loyalty scheme – at one point in the novel the protagonist buys nine small cappuccinos just in order to get a new loyalty card – establishes the book in a tradition of postmodernist satire familiar to readers of Ballard's novels or Will Self's fiction. It is hard not to make an equivalence between the cooking liver in the first reconstruction and Bloom's sizzling kidney in *Ulysses* (1922), but in this postmodernist novel verisimilitude is suspect in the sense that the 'spit and sizzle' (p. 58) is part of a performance; so much so that the air vents become clogged with fat after the multiple attempts to get rid of the smell of cordite. In many ways, the protagonist is the archetypal postmodernist subject lost in his amnesia: without friends or

romantic interest (such characters disappear from the text in the early part of the novel), parents, a job, children or economic dependants – he firmly rejects the possibility of donating some of his windfall to charities – he is left to piece himself together out of fragments, ‘memories, imaginings, films’ (p. 72). Hence the traumatic repetition leads to repetitions in the narrative: he forgets that he has already narrated an incident in Victoria Station when he parodies the homeless by wandering around asking for spare change even though ‘I didn’t need or want their change: I’d just received eight and half million pounds’ (p. 216). The reader’s distrust of this first-person narrator extends to his postmodernist interpretation of the bank robbery as an event of ‘becoming’ rather than a ‘real’ event in which an actor dies: ‘it had never happened – and, this being not a real event but a staged one, albeit one staged in a real venue, it never would. It would always be to come, held in a future hovering just beyond our reach’ (p. 251).

67. Hill, *Scenes from Comus*, p. 66.

68. David James, *Modernist Futures: Innovation and Inheritance in the Contemporary Novel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), p. 5. In *True Friendship: Geoffrey Hill, Anthony Hecht, and Robert Lowell: Under the Sign of Eliot and Pound* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2010), Christopher Ricks discusses the influence of the *Four Quartets* on different stanzas from *Scenes from Comus*. In relation to the opening and closing stanzas of ‘The Argument of the Masque’, Ricks argues perceptively that the ‘beauty of this poem, most manifest in the sonorous exactitude of its weighting, owes something to the closing words of Eliot’s closing poem’ in the *Four Quartets*. Ricks pauses on the repeated phrase ‘But the weight of the word, weight of the world, is’ (twice in no. 20 and no. 1 of the ‘Courtly Masquing Dances’), and points out that ‘This particular exactitude would not have come to be, were it not for Eliot’, and the line from ‘Ash Wednesday’, ‘Still is the unspoken word, the Word unheard’ (p. 4). Ricks leaves the syntactical echo standing, and does not ruminate further on the line’s semantics. A poststructuralist reading of the line – that the world is synonymous with, and produced by, the word – does not sit easily with Hill’s *oeuvre*. Instead, Hill conceives them as separate, but inextricable, and also not interchangeable. ‘Word’ and ‘world’ are engaged specifically in terms of ‘weight’, which links back to the ‘weight’ of consumerism in the previous section (no. 19), and the ‘pondus’ that Hill returns to throughout the collection (p. 12). ‘[P]ondus’ in section 14 is defined as ‘the pull of power’ (p. 9); in no. 6 it means ‘Moral corruption [...] inertia of malevolence’ (p. 5). In section 14, Hill quotes Milton on the separation of poetry and the ‘world’ in *The Reason of Church Government Urged Against Prelatry* (1642). Milton leaves ‘a calm and pleasing solitariness, fed

- with cheerful and confident thoughts, to embark in a troubled sea of noises and hoarse disputes’, separating the private sphere from the politics to come. In contrast, for Hill in *Scenes from Comus*, history, politics and the private sphere intertwine. Whereas section 14 dwells on the sinking of the Hood, the hanging ‘is’ at the end of ‘weight of the word, weight of the world, is’ recalls the emphasised ‘is’ in the most famous lines of post-Holocaust poetry: ‘I have made | an elegy for myself it | is true’ (*Collected Poems* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015 [2013] p. 44). We are also ‘weighted’ with such history, tradition and erudition as readers from the outset of *Scenes from Comus*, rather than invited to create the poem entirely *through* our reading of the collection, or entertain a poststructuralist conception of language creating the world.
69. ‘Scapes’ can also mean ‘escapes’ (OED, 2nd edn).
 70. Eliot, *Four Quartets*, p. 54.
 71. Furlani, *Guy Davenport*, p. 150.
 72. Ricks, *True Friendship*, p. 29.
 73. Geoffrey Hill, *Collected Critical Writings* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), pp. 544, 540.
 74. Hill’s other, most prominent, modernist ‘anxiety of influence’ appertains, of course, to Pound. Reading Hill’s *Collected Critical Writings*, it is striking how critical he is throughout the volume of Ezra Pound’s politics. In the early essay ‘Our Word is Our Bond’, Pound ‘is vulnerable to accusations that he naively and wilfully regarded his wartime broadcasts as being in some way traditionally privileged and protected by his status as a poet, “boasting of the sanctity of what [he] carried”; an attitude at best archaic and at worst arrogantly idiosyncratic’ and ‘complicitously egocentric’ (pp. 146–7, p. 165). Whereas Hill quotes Pound approvingly at the beginning of ‘The Enemy’s Country’ – in relation to the poet’s need for reticence and restraint – in ‘Language, Suffering, and Silence’ the latter’s claim to have confessed ‘wrong without losing rightness’ is ‘grammatically self-serving [...] It sounds superficially right, but it is not right’ (p. 400).
 75. Furlani, *Guy Davenport*, p. 150.
 76. Geoffrey Hill, ‘Poetry Notebooks and Early Poems and Drafts (c. 1948–2005)’, Notebook 58, BC MS 20c Hill/2, p. 36.
 77. Franz Kafka, *The Blue Octavo Notebooks* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Exact Change Books, 2016 [1948]), p. 26.
 78. Hill, *Collected Critical Writings*, p. 171.
 79. Miller, *Late Modernism*, p. 88.
 80. Hill’s response to *Comus* utilises Milton’s poem as an intertextual touchstone for his own collection, rather than an extensive presence or remoulding of the Masque. As Peter McDonald argues, *Scenes from Comus* ‘is neither

a commentary nor a rewriting, but rather a distanced and circumstantially ironic reflection on some of Milton's lines and motifs'; for example, 'the lady's praise of chastity, in the Masque, is set off against the vivid presence of a sensuality (in the figure of Comus) which she does not experience' ('Truly Apart' in *Times Literary Supplement*, 1 April 2005, p. 13). In section fourteen of 'The Argument of the Masque', for example, Hill notes that 'Milton's script | was briefly censored, bits of sex expunged | for the girl's sake' (p. 21): images of sensuality (Sabrina's 'trailing labiles' and 'lianas' in section three of 'Courtly Masquing Dances' [p. 16]) contrast with references to chastity (and impotence) throughout the sequence. In *Scenes from Comus*, Hill is much more concerned with Milton's work and biography as a whole, rather than *Comus* in particular: for example, section twenty-one of the middle sequence mentions Mary Powell, who married Milton in 1642; she left him soon afterwards, possibly due to the Royalist sympathies of her family.

81. John Milton, *The Reason of Church Government Urged Against Prelatry*, Book 2 (www.dartmouth.edu/~milton/reading_room/reason/book_2/text.shtml) (accessed 6 July 2020).
82. Hill, 'Poetry Notebooks and Early Poems and Drafts (c.1948–2005)', p. 23. The full version of the stanza is as follows:

That the lovely Eurasian woman
on the Euston to Wolverhampton express
knows her own mind as well as Lady Alice
and would fend for herself no less strictly
accosted on the Wye forest
picnic area by some club of bikes.

This unrestrainedly dull diction and grating enjambment can be found in a selection of poems taken at random from a *Poetry Book Society Bulletin*. A selection of poems at the end of the magazine include Maura Dooley's 'Habit' ('She used to say | *better to be at the pub* | *thinking of church* | *than at church* | *thinking of the pub*'), J. O. Morgan's 'Phonograph' ('I saw yellow smoke above a wood. | It lifted, stretched into long pale plumes') and the awkward enjambment in Judy Brown's 'The Corner Shop' ('Neighbours thought it was | gunfire, but inside the boys | were throwing bottles around') (*PBS Bulletin*, issue 248 [spring 1916], 27–8).

83. As McDonald notes in his review, 'Ever since *Canaan* (1996), it has been easy to deplore Hill's "difficulty", without seeing any difficulty in the term itself; but the poetry has been substantial, rather than "difficult", with the directness and candour of profound originality' (p. 13).
84. Hill's extract in Clare Brown and Don Paterson, eds., *Don't Ask Me What I Mean: Poets in Their Own Words* (Basingstoke/Oxford: Picador, 2003), p. 118.

85. Milton, *The Reason of Church Government Urged Against Prelatry*, Book 2, www.dartmouth.edu/~milton/reading_room/reason/book_2/text.shtml (accessed 6 July 2020).
86. Sean O'Brien, 'Scenes from Comus by Geoffrey Hill', *The Independent*, 2 March 2005, www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/books/reviews/scenes-from-comus-by-geoffrey-hill-6151493.html (accessed 30 September 2014).
87. Eric Ormsby, 'A Grand & Crabby Music', *The New York Sun*, 3 March 2005, www.nysun.com/arts/grand-crabby-music/10039/ (accessed 21 September 2016).
88. *Scenes from Comus* is dedicated to the composer Hugh Wood, and named after his work: the BBC premiered *Scenes from Comus* at the Proms in 1965. As Hill wryly remarks in section three, Wood's music 'would arouse Milton for me, if he required | such service of us. He doesn't, does he?' (p. 4).
89. A more recent version of the 'poetry wars' occurred in the form of Rebecca Watt's dismissal of Holly McNish's spoken-word poetry as amateurish and simplistic; Paterson came to the defence of the latter (performance) poet as her editor at Picador (www.theguardian.com/books/2018/jan/23/poetry-world-split-over-polemic-attacking-amateur-work-by-young-female-poets) (accessed 21 September 2020). Paterson responded to the attack on McNish at: www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2018/jan/26/verses-spoken-word-row-poetry-young-female-poets (accessed 21 September 2020).
90. Hill, 'Poetry, Policing and Public Order (1)', media.podcasts.ox.ac.uk/kebl/general/2010-11-30-hill-poetry-keble.mp3 (accessed 12 July 2020).
91. Sheppard, *The Poetry of Saying*, p. 132.
92. Barry, *Poetry Wars*, pp. 179, xvi. Barry argues that the successful legacies of the poetry wars in the 1970s 'lies around us today—in the comparatively well-tempered acceptance that we live in a culture of poetries, not in one world dominated by an Establishment' (p. xii). Tolerated acknowledgement is not equivalent, of course, to creative and critical engagement. I would argue that Barry's contention that 'we are now in a "post-dualist" poetry world' remains idealist.
93. J. T. Welsh, *The Selling and Self-Regulation of Contemporary Poetry* (London: Anthem Press, 2020), pp. 21, 37, 32.
94. Roddy Lumsden, ed., *Identity Parade: New British and Irish Poets* (Newcastle: Bloodaxe, 2010), p. 103.
95. Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 121.
96. David Kennedy, *New Relations: The Refashioning of British Poetry 1980–94* (Bridgend: Seren, 1996), p. 241; Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 129.
97. John Redmond, *Poetry and Privacy: Questioning Public Interpretations of Contemporary British and Irish Poetry* (Bridgend: Seren, 2013), p. 10; 'Editorial', *PN Review*, 247 (May–June 2019), 2–3, p. 3; Hill, 'Poetry, Policing and Public Order (1)', www.english.ox.ac.uk/professor-sir-geoffrey-hill-lectures (accessed 12 July 2020); Alison Flood, 'Simon Armitage plans national "headquarters" for poetry in Leeds', *The Guardian*, 27 February 2020 (www.theguardian.com/books/2020/feb/27/simon-armitage-plans-national-headquarters-for-poetry-in-leeds-poet-laureate) (accessed 8 July 2020).

98. Hill, 'Poetry, Policing and Public Order (i)', www.english.ox.ac.uk/professor-sir-geoffrey-hill-lectures (accessed 12 July 2020).
99. Redmond, *Poetry and Privacy*, pp. 9–10.
100. Young and Schmidt, *All Gates Open*, p. 458. Of course, this 'secret' is potentially illusory, and the artwork would be 'solved' if it were uncovered. Instead, Schmidt's favoured artworks are so intriguing that he keeps returning to them, even if the fruitful task of searching for an isolated 'secret' may ultimately be fruitless. Nevertheless, there is an inherent danger too that hermeticism becomes confused with the sacred. As Genter argues, Marcel Duchamp's 'high' modernist imperative 'was to shield the artwork from any interpretive or cognitive distortion, guaranteeing in some sense its sacredness' (*Late Modernism*, p. 2).
101. Luke Turner, 'Metamodernism Manifesto' and 'Metamodernism: A Brief Introduction', www.metamodernism.org (accessed 29 April 2020). In contrast with Jeff Koons's 'vacuously overinflated ironic baubles', Turner praises the 'reengagement with materiality, affect and the sublime' in the work of, for example, Olafur Eliasson, Peter Doig and Guido van der Werve. Turner displays an awareness, however, that the clock cannot be turned back to a supposedly halcyon moment before the work of theorists such as Fredric Jameson and Jean-François Lyotard, so that contemporary writers and artists can ignore their critiques of 'grand narrative and universal truths'. Turner emphasises, quite simply, that we should not be 'forfeiting all that we've learnt from postmodernism'. Hence Vermeulen and van den Akker propose that metamodernist thinking must necessarily 'shuttle' between modernism and postmodernism, rather than asserting – as Hutcheon does in the second edition of *The Politics of Postmodernism* (2002) – that postmodernism is simply over. Vermeulen and van den Akker note that postmodernism is not, of course, a singular concept, and that Lyotard's description of the decline of metanarratives, for example, does not equate with Fredric Jameson's critiques of late capitalism. 'However', they continue, 'what these distinct phenomena share' is an opposition to the 'modern', any sense of utopia, to linear progress, grand narratives, Reason, functionalism and formal 'purism' ('Notes on Metamodernism', p. 3).
102. In *Style and Faith* (New York: Counterpoint, 2003), Hill berates Philip Larkin's dismissal of the modernist triumvirate of Pound, Picasso and Parker as 'postprandial' (p. 203). The Hull poet's reflex anti-modernism is a sign of 'narrow English possessiveness, with regard to "good sense" and "generous common humanity"' (p. 204). In turn, Basil Bunting attacked what he regarded as Hill's overly cautious and conservative poetics: 'He's got all the technique. He knows just how to do nothing wrong. Except

- that there's nothing right. Just nothing there' (Richard Burton, *A Strong Song Tows Us: The Life of Basil Bunting* [Oxford: Infinite Ideas Ltd, 2013], p. 494).
103. Hill, *Orchards of Syon* workbooks, p. 35. It is not necessary to re-rehearse the post-war Marxist debates about modernist literature as an indulgent manifestation of bourgeois subjectivity, as in the infamous 1948 Soviet decree denouncing the formal decadence of modern music; or, as in György Lukács' *The Meaning of Contemporary Realism* (London: Merlin Press, 1979 [1963]), a crude Marxist conception of modernism as fascistic in its response to modern angst (pp. 36, 81).
104. Hill's extract in Clare Brown and Don Paterson, eds., *Don't Ask Me What I Mean: Poets in Their Own Words*, p. 118. Hill is quoting Theodor Hacker, and goes on to argue that 'legitimate difficulty (difficulty can of course be faked) is essentially democratic'.
105. Hill quotes this sentence from *The Double Agent: Essays in Craft and Elucidation* approvingly in 'Poetry, Policing and Public Order (1)', www.english.ox.ac.uk/professor-sir-geoffrey-hill-lectures (accessed 12 July 2020).

1 Contemporary British Poetry and Enigmaticalness

1. Theodor W. Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, eds. Gretel Adorno and Rolf Tiedemann, trans. Robert Hullot-Kentor (London: The Athlone Press, 1997 [1970]), p. 121; Theodor Adorno, *Ästhetische Theorie* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 2014 [1970]), p. 184.
2. Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 118.
3. Roland Barthes, 'Death of the Author', in Dennis Walder, *Literature in the Modern World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), pp. 228–32.
4. Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 120.
5. Geoffrey Hill, 'Poetry, Policing and Public Order (1)' www.english.ox.ac.uk/professor-sir-geoffrey-hill-lectures (accessed 12 July 2020).
6. T. S. Eliot, *The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism* (London: Faber and Faber, 1987 [1933]), pp. 17–18.
7. Hill, 'Poetry, Policing and Public Order (1)'.
8. It is rare to come across a critic as honest as David Wheatley who, in relation to Prynne's work, admits his frequent bafflement, since the poetry is 'lacking any pointers for the bewildered' (*Contemporary British Poetry* [London/New York: Palgrave, 2015], pp. 112–13). Subsequently, Wheatley quotes Peter Howarth's assertion that Prynne's readers 'could never really tell whether their own interpretations were precious finds or complete rubbish' (p. 115).

9. Derek Attridge, *The Singularity of Literature* (London/New York: Routledge, 2004), p. 142.
10. Peter Howarth, *The Cambridge Introduction to Modernist Poetry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), p. 181.
11. Geoffrey Hill, *The Triumph of Love* (London/New York: Penguin, 1999 [1998]), p. 21; Howarth, *The Cambridge Introduction to Modernist Poetry*, p. 181.
12. Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 16.
13. Adorno, *Ästhetische Theorie*, p. 185; *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 122.
14. Hill's untitled extract in Clare Brown and Don Paterson, eds., *Don't Ask Me What I Mean: Poets in Their Own Words* (Basingstoke/Oxford: Picador, 2003), p. 118. Hill is quoting Theodor Hacker, and goes on to argue that 'legitimate difficulty (difficulty can of course be faked) is essentially democratic' (p. 118). Despite this statement, Paterson still equates difficulty in this anthology solely with the 'postmoderns', who 'will gripe at the omission of their stars, but the PBS was always aimed at a general (i.e. non-academic and non-practising) readership, one which *ampersandeurs* neither possess nor actively seek' (p. xiv). This selection policy 'leaves that broad swathe in the middle, so often dismissed as the "mainstream", a word which nonetheless accurately designates those poets engaged with the English lyric tradition' (p. xiv). The problem with the latter comment is that writers from the London and Cambridge Schools, and Language poets, are equally engaged with this lyric tradition, but with divergent poetic results.
15. The 'literature of the absurd' usually refers to pan-European playwrights of the 1950s, including Beckett, Eugène Ionesco and Jean Genet. Martin Esslin coined the term in *The Theatre of the Absurd* (1961). Adorno returns to his earlier 'Commitment' essay in *Aesthetic Theory*, and argues that Brecht's politics are the least interesting aspect of his plays: what is most compelling is his reinvention of the formal aspects of drama. Given the ambiguities of the enigma, Adorno goes further and questions 'whether artworks can possibly be *engagé*' (p. 122). 'Today', he ruminates, '*engagement* inescapably becomes aesthetic concession' (p. 103).
16. *Ästhetische Theorie*, p. 183; *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 120.
17. Hill, 'Poetry, Policing and Public Order (1)'.
18. David James and Urmila Seshagiri, 'Metamodernism: Narratives of Continuity and Revolution', *PMLA*, 129: 1 (2014), 87–98.
19. My translation.
20. Of course, Adorno is writing about a different kind of 'deaestheticized' art in the later 1960s to the contemporary mainstream. 'Deaestheticization' refers forward here in *Aesthetic Theory* to the poetics of Bertolt Brecht that Adorno discusses three pages later: Brecht's poetry 'sabotages the poetic' (p. 123). This

subversion does not, however, converge with the ‘reality principle’: as soon as Brecht ‘approximates an empirical report, the actual result [in poetry] is by no means such a report’ (p. 123). In Brecht’s ‘polemical rejection of the exalted lyrical tone’, ‘the empirical sentences translated into the aesthetic monad acquire an altogether different quality. The antilyrical tone and the estrangement of the appropriated facts [as in Charles Reznikoff’s *Holocaust* (1975)] are two sides of the same coin’ (p. 123). Adorno then extrapolates on this process of defamiliarisation in relation to the concept of *engagé* literature that he first explores in his 1962 essay ‘Commitment’. He questions whether any artwork (Brecht’s work is still implicit four sentences later) can be *engagé* ‘even when they emphasize their *engagement*’, because artworks are not mere political statements, and are not restricted to their ‘discursive content’ (p. 123). Rather than return to the examples of Jean-Paul Sartre’s plays and novels in ‘Commitment’, or Brecht’s artworks, Adorno then deploys the curious example of Eduard Mörike’s ‘Mousetrap Rhyme’, whose ‘discursive content’ might indicate that it amounts ‘to no more than sadistic identification with what civilized custom has done to an animal distained as a parasite’ (p. 123). In contrast, as I illustrated in the Introduction, Adorno argues that, by ‘abstaining from judgment’, Mörike’s poem can be interpreted instead as ‘the nonjudgmental reflex of language on a miserable, socially conditioned ritual’ (p. 124).

21. If enigmatic works of art completely resisted interpretation, they would ‘erase the demarcation between art and nonart’ (p. 128). If this were so, then ‘carpets, ornaments, all nonfigural things’ might also ‘longingly await interpretation’ (p. 128).
22. In *Moving Words: Forms of English Poetry* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), Derek Attridge refers to the ‘fitfulness with which sense gleams through the resistance to sense’ in an untitled poem from Prynne’s 1993 collection *Not-You* (p. 95).
23. Jacques Rancière, *The Politics of Literature*, trans. Julie Rose (Cambridge/Malden: Polity Press, 2011), p. 6.
24. J. H. Prynne, ‘A Letter to Steve McCaffery’ (2 January 1989), *The Gig*, 7 (November 2000), 40–6.
25. J. H. Prynne, ‘Acrylic Tips’, in *Poems* (Tarsset: Bloodaxe, 2005), pp. 533–48, p. 542. In ‘Terra Nullius: Colonial Violence in Prynne’s *Acrylic Tips*’, Matthew Hall reads these lines as appertaining to substance abuse and halitosis (*Journal of British and Irish Innovative Poetry*, 8(1): 5 (2016), 1–30, p. 12).
26. *OED*, 2nd edn.
27. Prynne, p. 538; Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 125. In *Moving Words*, Attridge takes issue with Prynne and Paterson’s readings of sound in poetry. Attridge notes that ‘there is no sign of a consensus on this issue among those who write

about poetry' (p. 77), and is unconvinced by Paterson and Prynne's complex and provocative theses. Paterson begins with a 'thoroughly Cratylist view of language' – in which some words are appropriate to the things they describe – 'dismissing the notion of the arbitrariness of the sign' (p. 79). Whereas Paterson detects 'strong' associations between sound and representation, however, Attridge, although not complying with Saussure's 'arbitrariness', can only see 'rather weak correspondence' (p. 80). Nevertheless, Attridge and Paterson agree that sound takes 'on meaning in poetry as a result of echoes and contrasts along the linear chain of language' (p. 80). Paterson insists further, though, that 'the task of the lyric poet is to create a verbal artefact in which [...] meaning – and with it emotion – is made to emerge from the sounds of words as much as from their sense' (p. 81). Hence Attridge and Paterson differ in the detailing of these 'echoes and contrasts': Paterson contends that effective lyricism will pair different vowel sounds with repetitive consonants, or 'repetitions from within one of the consonant groups'; Attridge retorts that rhyme is clearly 'based on *vowel* repetition combined with prior *consonant* variation: just the reverse of Paterson's fundamental principle' (p. 83). In Paterson's own poem 'Correctives', Attridge finds 'just what Paterson says we *shouldn't* find: striking patterns of [vowel] repetition and echo' (p. 92). In contrast, Prynne, in his 'characteristic dense and mannered style', asserts that the appropriate methodology to tackle sound in poetry is 'phonology not phonetics' (p. 87). Attridge concurs that an awareness of 'earlier meanings of words can, of course, play an important part in poetic understanding', but is unconvinced by Prynne's phonological reading of Wordsworth's 'Tintern Abbey', and concludes that 'awareness of earlier *pronunciation* is perhaps another matter' (p. 88).

28. Colin Winborn, "Derangement from deep inside": J. H. Prynne's "Refuse Collection", *PN Review* 175, 33: 5 (2007), 55–8, p. 55.
29. Aldous Huxley, *The Doors of Perception and Heaven and Hell* (London: Flamingo, 1994 [1977]), p. 40. In 'Terra Nullius: Colonial Violence in Prynne's *Acrylic Tips*', Hall reads the 'murderous head' as a spearhead, noting that the epigraph is taken from Donald Stuart's novel *Yandy* (1959) that describes the process of constructing spears (p. 7).
30. In contrast, Hall argues that these lines describe a broken relationship: 'digits here may indicate a phone call, or may link the line to 'his right arm | tied to creation', and the expression of care associated with a missing offspring' ('Terra Nullius: Colonial Violence in Prynne's *Acrylic Tips*', p. 15).
31. *OED*, 2nd edn. Amorous discourse cannot salvage the human here since the lover's hands are unfortunately 'like monkfish' (p. 544).
32. Jacques Derrida, 'No Apocalypse, Not Now (full speed ahead, seven missiles, seven missives)', *Diacritics*, 14: 2 (Summer 1984), 20–31, p. 20. In

- Contemporary British Poetry*, Wheatley notes that Michael Donaghy scoffs at ‘innovative’ poets’ ‘commitment’ when he wonders ‘how an experimental poem “composed from punctuation marks will help bring down the arms trade”’ (p. 113). Wheatley rightly retorts that ‘Donaghy’s parody of the experimental poet drunk on self-delusion’ depends on simplistic ideas of how poems *are* expected to interact with the arms trade: do the poems of Michael Donaghy or Sean O’Brien, he points out, “‘help bring down the arms trade”, but in a supposedly sensible and mainstream way?” (p. 113).
33. An example of ‘english’ from Tokyo posted on 2 March 2018 comprises the following: ‘please give me a telephone call in an entrance hole. Moreover, I co-operation-wish-do-so that manners mode may set up beforehand at the time of an ON store’ (www.english.com; accessed 22 September 2020).
 34. As N. H. Reeve and Richard Kerridge argue in *Nearly Too Much: The Poetry of J.H. Prynne* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1995), lyricism in these poems does not establish ‘self-sufficient or privileged moments, around which the world could be concentrically organized’ but is ‘already implicated in and mediated by a range of natural, social and economic processes’ (p. 37).
 35. Charles Simic and Don Paterson, eds., *New British Poetry* (St Paul, Minnesota: Graywolf Press, 2004), p. xxx.
 36. David Caplan, *Questions of Possibility: Contemporary Poetry and Poetic Form* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 9.
 37. Theodor Adorno, *Minima Moralia: Reflections from Damaged Life*, trans. E. F. N. Jephcott (London: Verso, 1978 [1951]), p. 52.
 38. Ezra Pound, *Make It New: Essays* (London: Faber and Faber, 1934).
 39. The text of Gretel Adorno and Rolf Tiedemann’s version of *Aesthetic Theory* is ‘as it was in August 1969’ when Adorno died, but, as they note, the structure inevitably differs from the version that Adorno would have published (p. 361).
 40. Natalie Pollard responds more positively to the demotic when she interprets it in her edited collection as part of the ‘unpredictable tonal features’ of Paterson’s work (*Don Paterson: Contemporary Critical Essays* [Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014], p. 3). See, for example, the switch to ‘*I can’t keep this bullshit up*’ in the last part of ‘Phantom’ in *Rain* (London: Faber and Faber, 2009, p. 58).
 41. Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 120.
 42. Don Paterson, *Landing Light* (London: Faber and Faber, 2003), p. 70.
 43. In Bede’s *Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, eds. Judith McClure and Roger Collins (Oxford/London: James Parker and Co., 1870), a noble opines that ‘The present life of man on earth appears to me, O king, in comparison of that time which is unknown to us, such as if—when you are sitting at supper with your leaders and ministers, in the winter-time, a fire indeed having been lighted and

made to glow in the middle of the supper-room, but storms of wintry rain and snow raging everywhere without—a sparrow should come and fly very quickly through the house, entering by one door and going out afterwards by another’ (book 2, chapter 13, p. 150).

44. Philip Larkin, *Collected Poems* (London: Faber and Faber, 1988), p. 196. At the closure of ‘High Windows’, ‘the deep blue air, that shows | Nothing, and is nowhere, and is endless’ (p. 165) is akin to the ‘blanket absolution of the light’ in Paterson’s poem (*Landing Light*, p. 70). Critics such as Peter Robinson have commented on the similarities between Paterson’s work and Larkin’s verse, such as the switch between demotic and lyrical registers. Robinson notes that the ‘elective affinity between vulgarly phrased directness and popular appeal goes back at least’ to ‘High Windows’ (*Don Paterson: Contemporary Critical Essays*, pp. 131–44, p. 134).
45. Hill, ‘Poetry, Policing and Public Order (1)’, www.english.ox.ac.uk/professor-sir-geoffrey-hill-lectures (accessed 12 July 2020). Paterson may be deploying pastiche here, which would explain this hint of the ‘poetry kit’.
46. Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 120.
47. Peter Robinson, ‘Punching Yourself in the Face: Don Paterson and His Readers’, *Don Paterson: Contemporary Critical Essays*, pp. 131–44, p. 134.
48. I am referring here to Tim Kendall’s essay that I discuss further in Chapter 2, ‘Against “Contemporary Poetry”’, *PN Review*, 179 (January–February 2008), 24–7, p. 26.
49. Carol Ann Duffy, *The Christmas Truce* (London: Picador, 2011), p. 11; *OED* 2nd edn. I discuss Hill’s account of Duffy’s poem further in Chapter 3.
50. Peter Howarth, *The Cambridge Introduction to Modernist Poetry*, p. 181; Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 115.
51. Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 16; Paterson, *Rain*, p. 58.
52. Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, pp. 126, 115. The lines scan as follows:

*back home from the country of no songs,
between the blue swell and the stony silence
right down where the one thing meets the millions
at the line of speech, the white assuaging tongues.* (p. 70)

These are not straightforward pentameters. Lines one, three and four deploy conventional metrical leeway at the beginning of the poetic line in different ways: lines one and three use a spondee, whereas line four begins with an anapaest. Metrical breaks also occur in line two, with ‘swell’, and in line three, with the three subsequent stresses in ‘one thing meets’. The first line is also arguably catalectic, with a missing syllable at the end, unless ‘songs’ is read as having two syllables. Paterson’s attentiveness to metre and punctuation can be adduced from his comments on the pentameter in Shakespeare’s sonnets. In

- contrast with Helen Vendler, who detects trochaic and amphibrachic metre in the sonnets, Paterson argues that some critics overcomplicate the metrical analysis; sometimes, in order to avoid hypercatalectic metre. In relation to Vendler's comments, Paterson contends in *Reading Shakespeare's Sonnets* (London: Faber and Faber, 2012) that this 'is the sort of nonsense that can arise when you proceed with a great ear but only a partial understanding of how metre actually functions. There are no feet in English verse, only metrical patterns [. . . the poem] is in duple metre, like every other poem in the entire sequence [. . .] Can everyone please stop marking in the feet, and imagining caesurae where there's no punctuation to indicate a pause' (p. 377). Attridge quotes these sentences approvingly in *Don Paterson: Contemporary Critical Essays* (p. 33).
53. Paterson's depiction of England as a country with no songs in this stanza is unlikely to please experts in the history of English folk songs, such as Ben Harker and Peggy Seeger (see Harker's *Class Act: The Cultural and Political Life of Ewan MacColl* [London: Pluto Press, 2007]).
 54. This redemptive ending might not appear to sit easily with Adorno's analysis of Beckett and Celan in *Aesthetic Theory*, yet Adorno argues that 'All artworks, even the affirmative, are *a priori* polemical. The idea of a conservative artwork is inherently absurd. By emphatically separating themselves from the empirical world, their other, they bear witness that that world should be other than it is; they are the unconscious schemata of that world's transformation' (p. 177). Paterson's affirmation of writing and communication at the end of the poem thus nevertheless indicates *a priori* that the depicted world of transience and forgetting 'should be other than it is'.
 55. Similarly, but in relation to Paterson's *oeuvre* rather than an individual poem, Peter Howarth shrewdly points out that the battle between postmodernists, mainstream writers and performance poetry in the introduction to *New British Poetry* was actually about the contestation of these elements in Paterson's own work (*London Review of Books*, 35: 6 (21 March 2013), 31–3, p. 31).
 56. In 'Terra Nullius: Colonial Violence in Prynne's *Acrylic Tips*', Hall reads this 'marked obduracy' differently, as a 'systematic incorporation of different discourses', resulting in not a resistance to, but an excess of, signification' (pp. 1–2). In contrast, in *Late Modernist Poetics: from Pound to Prynne* (Manchester/New York: Manchester University Press, 2005), Anthony Mellors argues that, in Prynne's work, 'The prospect of meaningfulness is always shadowed by the spectre of meaninglessness' (p. 167).
 57. Geraldine Monk, *Ghost & Other Sonnets* (Cambridge: Salt, 2008), p. 3.

58. This collection shares more characteristics with mainstream writing than many other of Monk's books. Robert Sheppard argues that the 'haunting' sonnet form 'necessitates Monk subduing her characteristic textual and performative exuberance in deference to the frame; the internal pressure this causes results in 66 poems of concentrated power' (<http://robertsheppard.blogspot.co.uk/2011/07/innovative-sonnet-sequence-eleven-of-14.html>) (accessed 8 March 2018).
59. 'Lupine' here may mean (or also mean) 'lupine' in the sense of 'lupin', the tall flower and genus of the legume family, *Fabaceae*. Sheppard extrapolates on the 'ghostly' form in 'The Innovative Sonnet Sequence: Eleven of 14: Sonnets and Other Ghosts' (24 July 2011): 'Of course, the sonnet frame is a kind of ghost form and its subject matter haunts it as a kind of other of form, "Ghost of her ghosts" as one poem puts it.' (<http://robertsheppard.blogspot.co.uk/2011/07/innovative-sonnet-sequence-eleven-of-14.html>) (accessed 8 March 2018). I would take issue, however, with Sheppard's assertion that Monk eschews traditional metre entirely. Whether intentional or not, the two lines he deploys to indicate this eschewal actually comprise iambic tetrameter, with the usual metrical leeway at the beginning of the line (as in Paterson's poem quoted earlier): '**Strange ones** this **token is** for **you.**/ If you've **danced** with **me** you **must** be **true**'.
60. Hill, 'Poetry, Policing and Public Order (1)', www.english.ox.ac.uk/professor-sir-geoffrey-hill-lectures (accessed 12 July 2020).
61. *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 121. To deploy the 'reality principle' (p. 120), the overpowering scent may be the same 'Brut' aftershave that ends the second poem after the disturbing image of the 'Shady plankton mouth' (*Ghost & Other Sonnets*, p. 4). In this reading, the sonnet sequence unfurls its meanings as it proceeds, rather than necessarily in the individual poems. However, the critic of such enigmatic poetry has to concede that there may simply be no connection.
62. Hill, 'Poetry, Policing and Public Order (1)', www.english.ox.ac.uk/professor-sir-geoffrey-hill-lectures (accessed 12 July 2020).
63. Robert Sheppard, 'The Innovative Sonnet Sequence: Eleven of 14: Sonnets and Other Ghosts', <http://robertsheppard.blogspot.co.uk/2011/07/innovative-sonnet-sequence-eleven-of-14.html> (accessed 22 September 2020).
64. Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, pp. 121, 120; Howarth, *The Cambridge Introduction to Modernist Poetry*, p. 181.
65. Sheppard, 'The Innovative Sonnet Sequence: Eleven of 14: Sonnets and Other Ghosts', <http://robertsheppard.blogspot.co.uk/2011/07/innovative-sonnet-sequence-eleven-of-14.html> (accessed 22 September 2020); Christine and David Kennedy, 'Poetry, Difficulty and Geraldine Monk's *Interregnum*' in Scott Thurston, ed., *The Salt Companion to Geraldine Monk* (Cambridge: Salt, 2007), pp. 11–27, p. 23.

66. Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 120. As at the end of sonnet 25 ('One morning in Morecambe. Breakfast chairs | Shrouded. Room empty. Rolling news. No eggs' [p. 29]), the closure of sonnet 29 returns to the 'reality principle' with the 'Ruffle-down riot' of the 'Blinds I drew', the 'Burnt toast' and 'Spectaculars undreamt at | Breakfast' (p. 33).
67. Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 120.
68. Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 120.
69. *OED*, 2nd edn. *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 128.
70. Robert Sheppard, *The Poetry of Saying: British Poetry and its Discontents, 1950–2000* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2005), p. 2.
71. Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 128; www.poetryfoundation.org/poetrymagazine/poems/17168/ars-poetica (accessed 13 March 2018).
72. *OED*, 2nd edn.
73. *OED*, 2nd edn.
74. Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 116.
75. Hill, 'Poetry, Policing and Public Order (1)', www.english.ox.ac.uk/professor-sir-geoffrey-hill-lectures (accessed 22 September 2020).
76. Adorno ruminates on how artistic 'clownishness' 'recollects prehistory in the primordial world of animals' in *Aesthetic Theory* (p. 119). Apes perform 'what resembles clown routines', and humans 'have not succeeded in so thoroughly repressing their likeness to animals that they are unable in an instant to recapture it and be flooded with joy [...] In the similarity of clowns to animals the likeness of humans to apes flashes up'. The 'classicist' repression of the ridiculous thus simultaneously attempts to evade the echo of the 'primordial', and the enigmaticalness that is inextricable from the remainder.
77. Ken Edwards, 'The Two Poetries', *Angelaki*, 3(1) (April 2000), 25–36, p. 32.
78. I discuss Libeskind's 'Building with no Exit' in Rick Crownshaw, Jane Kilby and Antony Rowland, eds., *The Future of Memory* (London/New York: Berghahn, 2010), p. 57.
79. Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 272.
80. Howarth, *The Cambridge Introduction to Modernist Poetry*, p. 215.
81. Ian Gregson, *Contemporary Poetry and Postmodernism: Dialogue and Estrangement* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1996), p. 11.
82. Lumsden uses this term in *Identity Parade: New British and Irish Poets* (Newcastle: Bloodaxe, 2010), p. 103.
83. This comment was posted as a response on Amazon to Paterson's *New British Poetry* (21 June 2004) (www.amazon.co.uk/New-British-Poetry-Don-Paterson/dp/1555973949) (accessed 22 September 2020). The reviewer notes that the 'UK poetry scene is smaller than its US counterpart, so the "poetry wars" there must be like a knife fight in a phone booth'; they also refer to Paterson's 'infuriating introduction'.

2 Continuing ‘Poetry Wars’ in Twenty-First-Century British Poetry

1. David James, *Modernist Futures: Innovation and Inheritance in the Contemporary Novel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), p. 38.
2. David Caplan, *Questions of Possibility: Contemporary Poetry and Poetic Form* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 9. As Barry writes in *Poetry Wars* (Cambridge: Salt, 2006), these skirmishes were ‘a key moment in the history of contemporary British poetry, polarizing the rift between the “neo-modernists”, who sought to continue the 1960s revival of the early twentieth-century’s “modernist revolution”, and the neo-conservatives, who sought to further the “anti-modernist counter-revolution” of the 1950s’ (p. 1). In a Poetry Society meeting on 11 September 1975, the Chairman proposed a new manifesto: ‘General and animated discussion followed’, which included Barry MacSweeney’s comment that ‘We want no Kingsley - f . . . ing - Amis here’ (p. 82).
3. Derek Attridge, *Moving Words: Forms of English Poetry* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), p. 78. The efficacy of Caplan’s terms can be sensed most keenly when critics discuss the matters of production and literary institutionalisation. Attridge’s comments on evaluating different kinds of poetry is eminently sensible, yet the distinct cultural histories of ‘mainstream’ and the London and Cambridge Schools indicate that ‘good’ poetry does not necessarily rise to critical recognition like cream in the whey vat of literary value.
4. www.amazon.co.uk/New-British-Poetry-Don-Paterson/dp/1555973949 (accessed 24 September 2020). The reviewer notes that the ‘UK poetry scene is smaller than its US counterpart, so the “poetry wars” there must be like a knife fight in a phone booth’; as I recounted in Chapter 1, they also refer to Paterson’s ‘infuriating introduction’ to *New British Poetry* (2004). The supposedly ‘violent’ exchanges between contemporary poets is a common theme: in a review of William Logan’s *Guilty Knowledge, Guilty Pleasure: The Dirty Art of Poetry* (2014), for example, Duncan Wu comments that reviewers of poetry are ‘prone [. . .] to revenge shootings in dark alleys’ (*Times Higher Education*, no. 2, 156 (12–18 June 2014), 48–9, p. 48).
5. Charles Simic and Don Paterson, eds., *New British Poetry* (St Paul, Minnesota: Graywolf Press, 2004), pp. xxiv–xxv.
6. Geoffrey Hill, ‘Poetry, Policing and Public Order (1)’, www.english.ox.ac.uk/professor-sir-geoffrey-hill-lectures (accessed 12 July 2020).
7. Theodor Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, eds. Gretel Adorno and Rolf Tiedemann and trans. Robert Hullot-Kentor (London: The Athlone Press, 1997 [1970]), p. 121.
8. Caplan, *Questions of Possibility*, p. 9.
9. As I noted in the introduction, Hill quotes this sentence approvingly from *The Double Agent: Essays in Craft and Elucidation* (1935) in his first lecture as Oxford

- Professor of Poetry (Geoffrey Hill, ‘How ill white hairs become a fool and jester’, www.english.ox.ac.uk/professor-sir-geoffrey-hill-lectures [accessed 12 July 2020]).
10. Natalie Pollard, ed., *Don Paterson: Contemporary Critical Essays* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014), p. 7.
 11. Charles Simic and Don Paterson, eds., *New British Poetry*, p. xxiii.
 12. Don Paterson, *Landing Light* (London: Faber and Faber, 2003), p. 26. A lack of critical accuracy is evident elsewhere in *New British Poetry* when the commentary on John Burnside’s work refers to ‘that Burnside thing’ which has ‘almost added a new colour to the palette’ (p. 26). Astonishingly, James Fenton’s poems are ‘like something built for man-powered flight’ (p. 66).
 13. As Peter Howarth argues in ‘The Battle for the Centre Ground’ (*PN Review*, 166 [December–March 2005]), Eliot was one of the originators of the poetry wars in his attacks on *Georgian Poetry* (1912), which was, according to Eliot, ‘commercially successful and artistically bankrupt’ because it ‘pandered to “the General Reading Public”, which knows no tradition, and loves staleness’ (p. 43).
 14. Don Paterson, ‘The Dark Art of Poetry’, www.poetrylibrary.org.uk/news/poetryscene/?id=20 (accessed 21 October 2015).
 15. J. H. Prynne, ‘A Letter to Steve McCaffery’, 2 January 1989, *The Gig*, 7 (November 2000), 40–6. Prynne dismisses Language poets’ attempts to create a readership for their work as ‘every bit as restrictive in their ideological conformity as the most bourgeois texts written to satisfy the expectations of a predefined market’ (p. 40). This interdependency is a ‘radically-flawed’ attempt to create the context in which the poetry is to be understood. Prynne also derides the persistent ‘fetish’ of “humour” in such poetry as ‘uncontrolled, self-replicating triviality’ (p. 46).
 16. Paterson and Simic, eds., *New British Poetry*, p. xxxii.
 17. Paterson and Simic, eds., *New British Poetry*, p. xxxii.
 18. Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 272.
 19. Tristan Tzara, ‘Dada Manifesto, 1918’, in Rudolf Kuenzli, ed., *Dada* (London: Phaidon, 2006), p. 200.
 20. T. S. Eliot, *Selected Essays* (London: Faber and Faber, 1951), p. 289.
 21. Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 165. Paterson’s retort would be that it is naïve to think that poets can now circumvent the market economy. In an interview with Matthew Sperling, he argues that he would ‘like to publish more experimental work, but there are huge sales issues, and we have no state subsidy. I’ve got accountants instead’. He adds that ‘any editor should be proud of those difficult or unpopular poets they manage to keep in print’ (*Don Paterson: Contemporary Critical Essays*, pp. 145–52, p. 147).
 22. Geoffrey Hill, *Style and Faith* (New York: Counterpoint, 2003), p. 203. Howarth notes the similarities between Paterson’s ‘attacks on the

- unreadability of postmodern poetry’ and Larkin’s scathing account of the ‘academic institutionalisation’ of modernism in *All What Jazz?* (1970) (‘The Battle for the Centre Ground’, p. 44).
23. Alan Golding, ‘Language-Bashing Again’, *Mid-American Review*, 8(2) (1988), 93–100, p. 93.
 24. Pollard, ed., *Don Paterson: Contemporary Critical Essays*, pp. 32n, 2, 7. Paterson himself admits in *New British Poetry* that his introduction is unashamedly ‘bad-tempered’ (p. xxxiii). In contrast, the serenity of Attridge’s criticism searches for the critical ‘gems’ amongst Paterson’s angry polemics. An unlikely defence of Paterson’s binary thinking can be found in Prynne’s letter to Steve McCaffery: Prynne contends that in order ‘to set out a possible zone of disagreement it is convenient to dramatise’ (p. 44).
 25. Paterson says that new poets are introduced to him by ‘word of mouth. It’s also by far the most reliable way; there’s very little talent going round at any one time, and the jungle telephone’s ringing off the hook when it shows up, meaning you’ll often hear about folk from several sources at once [...] Ploughing through slush piles or reading hundreds of magazines has always been the most inefficient way of doing it’ (*Don Paterson: Contemporary Critical Essays*, p. 145).
 26. John Redmond, *Poetry and Privacy: Questioning Public Interpretations of Contemporary British and Irish Poetry* (Bridgend: Seren, 2013), p. 10. Robert Hampson and Peter Barry quote the critic Hugh Kenner approvingly (an expert on modernist literature) on the first page of *New British Poetries: the Scope of the Possible* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993): Kenner writes that the current state of poetry (in 1988) is that of ‘mediocrity, philistinism, and media-manipulation’ (p. 1). In the context of American poetry, Christopher Beach notes in *Poetic Culture: Contemporary American Poetry Between Community and Institution* (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1999) that even those poets such as ‘Charles Olson, Robert Duncan, and Jack Spicer, who achieved the greatest importance within the alternative canon proposed by Donald Allen’s 1960 anthology, have failed to make major inroads into the poetic mainstream either for themselves or for their successors, who have been largely excluded from consideration for public awards and prizes such as the Pulitzer, the National Book Award, the Guggenheim, and the NEA’ (p. 8).
 27. Pollard writes further that the poetry ‘of those who employ long-standing historical forms, small variations in a largely regular field of language, recognisable modes of literary-historical allusion, and a familiar address to the readership tends to be judged more accessible, and marketable’ (*Don Paterson: Contemporary Critical Essays*, p. 10). This is not to say that some ‘innovative’ writers did not also respond with aggressive behaviour: Paterson

- contends that, during the 1990s and early twenty-first century, Sean O'Brien, Peter Porter, Billy Collins, Seamus Heaney and Michael Donaghy were the victims of internet 'trolls', but with his introduction to *New British Poetry* he had 'lowered [himself] to the level of the worst of their own trolls' (p. 149). '[T]heir' indicates that his response is only a partial redaction: before the reference to internet abuse he begins a sentence with 'As accurate as I think many of the statements in that essay were [. . .]' (p. 149).
28. Pollard, ed., *Don Paterson: Contemporary Critical Essays*, p. 149.
 29. Quoted in *Don Paterson: Contemporary Critical Essays*, p. 139. The quotation comes from Ahren Warner's interview with Paterson in *Poetry London* (spring 2013), http://poems.com/special_features/prose/essay_warner_paterson.php (accessed 3 June 2020).
 30. Pollard, ed., *Don Paterson: Contemporary Critical Essays*, p. 8.
 31. Ken Edwards, 'The Two Poetries', *Angelaki*, 3(1) (April 2000), 25–36, p. 32.
 32. Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 121.
 33. Hill, 'Poetry, Policing and Public Order (1)', www.english.ox.ac.uk/professor-sir-geoffrey-hill-lectures (accessed 12 July 2020).
 34. Roddy Lumsden, ed., *Identity Parade: New British and Irish Poets* (Newcastle: Bloodaxe, 2010), p. 103.
 35. Hill, *Scenes from Comus*, p. 54; Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 165.
 36. The first version of this stanza in the manuscripts for *Scenes from Comus* (held in the Brotherton Library) makes it clear that the first few lines describe a view from a plane:

As the high-flying sun fades, the clouds become
as black-barren as lava, wholly motionless,
not an ashen wisp out of place. Are
of the strangest landscapes – no, you fool, see
the plane's above the clouds. I'm looking down
on what [illeg.] basalt in its weight
and how the fields are aglow with dark poppies
and some authority's grand power briefly spread out
old-gold imperial colours. Look back a shade,
over your left shoulder | or mine absolute night
comes | high-rearing after us

- ('Poetry Notebooks and Early Poems and Drafts (c. 1948–2005)', Notebook 58, BC MS 20c Hill/2, p. 29).
37. Örnólfur Thorsson, ed., *The Sagas of Icelanders* (London/New York: Penguin, 2000 [1997]), p. xxxiii.
 38. Orchards of Syon workbooks, BC MS 20c Hill/2/1/52, p. 35. Gudrid first appears towards the end of the manuscript version of *Scenes from Comus*,

- below a list of pills (notebook 58, n.p.n.). Gudrid ‘was the wife of Thorfinn Karlsefni and the mother of Snorri, the first person of European ancestry to be born in America [. . .] After a pilgrimage to Rome, she lived out her life as an anchoress in Iceland, and from her were descended several of the early bishops of Iceland’ (*The Sagas of Icelanders*, p. xxxiii). In ‘Eirik the Red’s Saga’, she is described as ‘the most attractive of women and one to be reckoned with in all her dealings’ (p. 655). Hill may have been reminded of her character by a ‘flight attendant’ who appears in the manuscripts for *Scenes from Comus* as ‘That six | footer blond straight out of the sagas’ (notebook 58, p. 36).
39. Hill quotes Ezra Pound’s aphorism from ‘Envoi (1919)’ in *The Enemy’s Country: Words, Contexture, and other Circumstances of Language* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), pp. 83–102, pp. 93, 102.
 40. Geoffrey Hill, ‘Poetry, Policing and Public Order (1)’, www.english.ox.ac.uk/professor-sir-geoffrey-hill-lectures (accessed 12 July 2020). The second quotation is from *New British Poetry* (p. xxx).
 41. Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 165.
 42. Sheppard writes disparagingly of ‘an empirical lyricism of discrete moments of experience’ (*The Poetry of Saying*, p. 2). Lot’s wife is turned into a pillar of salt when she looks back at Sodom (*Genesis*, book 19). Orpheus tried to bring his wife Eurydice back from the dead with his enchanting music. She had to walk behind him before she reached the upper world; however, when Orpheus glanced at her, she was sent back to the underworld.
 43. Hill, ‘Poetry, Policing and Public Order (1)’, www.english.ox.ac.uk/professor-sir-geoffrey-hill-lectures (accessed 12 July 2020).
 44. Discrepancies within Paterson’s opposition are also borne out in Hampson and Barry’s *New British Poetries*. In the chapter ‘The British Poetry Revival, 1960–75’ (pp. 15–50), Eric Mottram praises John Matthias’ *Twenty-Three Modern British Poets*, in which the ‘mainstream’ poet Ted Hughes appears. (As Jonathan Bate notes in *Ted Hughes: the Unauthorised Life* (London: HarperCollins, 2015), Mottram tutored Hughes in his second year at Pembroke College (p. 73).) In the introduction to *New British Poetries*, however, Hughes – despite his provocative imagery and the obduracy of collections such as *Cave Birds: An Alchemical Cave Drama* (1978) – remains a key poet for the maligned ‘general reader’, who wishes only for ‘surface difficulty’ (p. 4). Mottram also attacks Donald Davie as a ‘mainstream’ writer akin to Larkin or Amis (p. 21), whereas Hampson and Barry applaud his attack on the Movement in *Under Briggflatts* (p. 1).
 45. Hill, ‘Poetry, Policing and Public Order (1)’, www.english.ox.ac.uk/professor-sir-geoffrey-hill-lectures (accessed 12 July 2020).
 46. Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 165.

47. Joanna Moorhead, ‘Carol Ann Duffy: “Poems are a form of texting”’ (interview with Carol Ann Duffy), *The Guardian*, 5 September 2011 (www.theguardian.com/education/2011/sep/05/carol-ann-duffy-poetry-texting-competition) (accessed 12 May 2020).
48. David Crystal, *Txtng: The Gr8 Db8* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), *passim*.
49. Hill, ‘Poetry, Policing and Public Order (1)’, www.english.ox.ac.uk/professor-sir-geoffrey-hill-lectures (accessed 12 July 2020).
50. Jeffrey T. Nealon, *Post-Postmodernism or, the Cultural Logic of Just-in-Time Capitalism* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2012), p. 167.
51. Hill, ‘Poetry, Policing and Public Order (1)’, www.english.ox.ac.uk/professor-sir-geoffrey-hill-lectures (accessed 12 July 2020).
52. Hill, ‘Poetry, Policing and Public Order (1)’, www.english.ox.ac.uk/professor-sir-geoffrey-hill-lectures (accessed 12 July 2020). As I outlined in the Introduction, Hill rails against the supposed ‘vitality’ of the contemporary poetry scene in the UK, with its burgeoning prizes and presses, and outlines instead a decline in the quality of poetry since Pound’s work in the 1950s. In the context of American poetry, Beach argues similarly in *Poetic Culture* that, despite the ‘publishing volume of poetry’ exceeding that of 1965 by ‘a magnitude of ten to one’, ‘the sheer volume of mediocre verse that reaches print makes it difficult for the most challenging or innovative poetry to find its way to a wider public venue’ (p. 45). Hill and Beach echo Joseph Epstein’s point in ‘Who Killed Poetry?’ that there has been a qualitative decline in US poetry since the modernist generation of Pound and Eliot (*Commentary*, 86: 2 [1988], 13–20).
53. Moorhead, “Poems are a form of texting” (interview with Carol Ann Duffy), *The Guardian*, 5 September 2011 (www.theguardian.com/education/2011/sep/05/carol-ann-duffy-poetry-texting-competition) (accessed 12 May 2020).
54. Geoffrey Hill, ‘Poetry, Policing and Public Order (1)’, www.english.ox.ac.uk/professor-sir-geoffrey-hill-lectures (accessed 12 July 2020).
55. Beach, *Poetic Culture*, p. 65. In *Poetic License: Essays on Modernist and Postmodernist Lyric* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1990), Marjorie Perloff echoes A. Alvarez’s description of the archetypal Movement poet in *The New Poetry*, and typifies the US mainstream poet as ‘the poet as boy or girl next door, cheerfully noneccentric, indeed, wilfully ignorant of such things as philosophy or literary criticism’ (p. 60).
56. Lemn Sissay, ‘Carol Ann Duffy and Geoffrey Hill: truly poetic heavyweights’, www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2012/jan/31/carol-ann-duffy-geoffrey-hill-punch-up (accessed 12 July 2020). As Sissay puts it, ‘Geoffrey Hill, the Oxford professor of poetry, in the blue corner, throws a slug at Carol Ann Duffy, the poet laureate, in the red corner: at a lecture in Oxford, Hill likened

- Duffy to a Mills & Boon writer'. As I pointed out in the Introduction, Duffy's response to Hill's criticism was a dignified silence. Her account of Hill after his death on 1 July 2016 was laudatory: 'he was, in poetry, a saint and a warrior who never gave an inch in his crusade to reach poetic truth [...] he could suddenly illuminate, like lightning over a landscape' (www.theguardian.com/books/2016/jul/01/geoffrey-hill-one-of-the-greatest-english-poets-dies-aged-84) (accessed 24 September 2020).
57. Moorhead, "'Poems are a form of texting'" (interview with Carol Ann Duffy), *The Guardian*, 5 September 2011 (www.theguardian.com/education/2011/sep/05/carol-ann-duffy-poetry-texting-competition) (accessed 12 May 2020). 'Death of a Teacher' is available at <https://poetryshark.wordpress.com/2016/02/22/poetic-transformations-in-death-of-a-teacher-by-carol-ann-duffy-poem-analysis/> (accessed 24 September 2020).
 58. In *New British Poetries*, Robert Hampson and Peter Barry critique 'democratic' poetry in the form of the 'general poetry reader' who will 'tolerate a degree of surface difficulty, but only so long as the subject matter remains essentially familiar, domestic and re-assuring' (p. 4).
 59. The quotation is from Che Guevara's speech 'On Growth and Imperialism' at the Ministerial Meeting of the Inter-American Economic and Social Council (CIES) in August 1961. Guevara is quoting from the Declaration of Havana.
 60. *OED*, 2nd edn (my italics).
 61. Martin Gilens and Benjamin I. Page, 'Testing Theories of American Politics: Elites, Interest Groups, and Average Citizens', in *American Political Science Association*, 12(3) (September 2014), 564–81. These drawbacks of democracy are not new: Greek *dēmokratia* was always, of course, élitist in that women, slaves and non-landowners were denied a vote.
 62. Herbert Read, *The Politics of the Unpolitical* (New York: Routledge, 1943), p. 6. In *The Intellectuals and the Masses: Pride and Prejudice among the Literary Intelligentsia, 1880–1939* (London: Faber and Faber, 1992), John Carey reads the modernist response to José Oretga y Gasset's 'triumph of "hyperdemocracy"' (p. 3) as an attempt to exclude 'newly educated (or "semi-educated") readers, and so preserve the intellectual's seclusion from the "mass"' (p. vii).
 63. Jeffrey A. Winters, 'Oligarchy and Democracy', *The American Interest*, 7(2) (2011), www.the-american-interest.com/2011/09/28/oligarchy-and-democracy (accessed 4 August 2020).
 64. Hill, 'Poetry, Policing and Public Order (1)', www.english.ox.ac.uk/professor-sir-geoffrey-hill-lectures (accessed 12 July 2020).
 65. Robin van den Akker, Alison Gibbons and Timotheus Vermeulen, eds., *Metamodernism: Historicity, Affect and Death after Postmodernism* (London/New York: Rowman and Littlefield International, 2017), p. 16. Vermeulen

- and van den Akker outline the metamodernist period as the ‘2000s’, which they define as running between 1999 and 2011 (p. 22). As the Greek protests against austerity indicate, one of the essential features of this period incorporates the rise of anti-centrist politics in the form of leftist anti-globalisation movements and right-wing popular movements, reacting against the ‘politics that came to dominate the postmodern years, culminating in the “thirdway” of, say, Bill Clinton, Tony Blair and Gerhard Schröder’ (pp. 12–13).
66. Don Paterson, *Landing Light* (London: Faber and Faber, 2003), p. 26.
 67. Hampson and Barry, *New British Poetries*, p. 4.
 68. Tim Kendall, ‘Against “Contemporary Poetry”’, *PN Review*, 179 (January–February 2008), 24–7, p. 26.
 69. Beach indicates that the same is true of Ashbery and Robert Creeley in the US: they would not be considered to be mainstream writers, and yet (in 1999) they were ‘two of the best-selling and most widely taught poets in America’ (*Poetic Culture*, p. 17).
 70. Hill, ‘Poetry, Policing and Public Order (1)’, www.english.ox.ac.uk/professor-sir-geoffrey-hill-lectures (accessed 12 July 2020).
 71. According to Mottram, an ‘innovative’ poet touting their first collection will not be published by Faber and Faber, Chatto & Windus, Picador or Cape – the largest publishing houses for twenty-first-century poetry in Britain. Contemporary poetry publishing has achieved a paradox whereby publication on a ‘leading’ poetry list does not mean that the author is capable of achieving singularity in the sense defined by Derek Attridge in *The Singularity of Literature* (2004): poems that are rich enough in their linguistic complexity to be read in different ways at different times. To assert this paradox in a different way, much of contemporary poetry is produced for readers who do not like to read poetry.
 72. Hampson and Barry, *New British Poetries*, pp. 29–30; Hill, ‘Poetry, Policing and Public Order (1)’, www.english.ox.ac.uk/professor-sir-geoffrey-hill-lectures (accessed 12 July 2020).
 73. Hill, ‘Poetry, Policing and Public Order (1)’, www.english.ox.ac.uk/professor-sir-geoffrey-hill-lectures (accessed 12 July 2020).
 74. Peter Howarth, *The Cambridge Introduction to Modernist Poetry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), p. 171.
 75. Anonymus, ‘Introduction’, *Angel Exhaust 9: Tyranny and Mutation: New Radical Poets* (summer 1993), 4–5, p. 5. The editors write instead of ‘our staple audience of hardened modernists’ (p. 5).
 76. Alison Flood, ‘Carol Ann Duffy is “wrong” about poetry, says Geoffrey Hill’, *The Guardian*, 31 September 2012, www.theguardian.com/books/2012/jan/31/carol-ann-duffy-oxford-professory-poetry (accessed 3 August 2020).

77. Hill, 'Poetry, Policing and Public Order (1)', www.english.ox.ac.uk/professor-sir-geoffrey-hill-lectures (accessed 12 July 2020).
78. Carol Ann Duffy, *The Christmas Truce* (London: Picador, 2011), p. 11.
79. In 'Burnt Norton', Eliot refers to a pool surface that 'glittered out of heart of light' (*Four Quartets* [London: Faber and Faber, 1949 (1941)], p. 14). Given Hill's antipathy towards the *Four Quartets* – that I noted in my introduction in relation to *Scenes from Comus* – it is not unlikely that he would extend this criticism to Eliot's diction.
80. Hill, 'Poetry, Policing and Public Order (1)', www.english.ox.ac.uk/professor-sir-geoffrey-hill-lectures (accessed 12 July 2020); Michael Symmons Roberts, *Mancunia* (London: Cape, 2017), p. 23.
81. Hill, 'Poetry, Policing and Public Order (1)', www.english.ox.ac.uk/professor-sir-geoffrey-hill-lectures (accessed 12 July 2020).
82. Instead of 'glittering rime', Hill refers to the 'gleam' of rime in Ludlow castle (p. 29).
83. Hill, 'Poetry, Policing and Public Order (1)', www.english.ox.ac.uk/professor-sir-geoffrey-hill-lectures (accessed 12 July 2020).
84. Carol Ann Duffy, *The Bees* (London: Picador, 2012), p. 3.
85. Hill, 'Poetry, Policing and Public Order (1)', www.english.ox.ac.uk/professor-sir-geoffrey-hill-lectures (accessed 12 July 2020).
86. Throughout *The Bees*, Duffy is not afraid of the obvious full rhyme, as in 'Last Post' ('warm French bread | and all those thousands dead' [p. 4]), or the moon's 'poetry kit', in which the face from 'Echo' is 'like the moon in a well' (p. 6). However, these examples contrast with the effective switch in register and sound in 'Ariel', where Shakespeare's *The Tempest* (1611) confronts contemporary dangers ('Where the bee sucks, | neonicotinoid insecticides') (p. 11), the singular deployment of the moon image in 'Mrs Schofield's GCSE', where 'poetry | pursues the human like the smitten moon' (p. 15), or the 'hovering' verb that completes the first line of 'Cold': 'the snowball which wept in my hands' (p. 58).
87. Kenneth Hopkins, *The Poets Laureate* (Wakefield: EP Publishing Limited, 1973), pp. 25–6. Hopkins notes that Dryden was the first official Laureate after a patent from 1670 confirmed his role, and simultaneous appointment as Historiographer Royal (p. 15). In 1616, Ben Jonson was issued a 'pension of 100 marks, and this pension was clearly in recognition of his services as a poet', but he was not an official Poet Laureate (p. 17).
88. Hopkins, *The Poets Laureate*, p. 75. Hopkins notes that even Cibber ridiculed himself in a set of verses in the *Whitehall Evening Post*, 'which he kept anonymous until *An Apology for the Life of Colley Cibber* came out in 1740' (p. 75).
89. Ted Hughes, *Collected Poems*, ed. Paul Keegan (London: Faber and Faber, 2003), pp. 803, 806, 807.

90. Hopkins, p. 211. Hopkins adds that Laureates such as C. Day Lewis have also generously ‘given the prestige of their office to literary causes and movements calculated to enlarge, enhance and preserve our literature’ (p. 214). Duffy has worked extensively with children: her initiatives include the ‘Mother Tongue Other Tongue’ competition, which celebrates multilingual poetry in schools. Like C. Day Lewis, she has ‘brought poetry to the young, and there could hardly be a more valuable service in a Laureate’ (p. 214).
91. Before Dryden’s official role as Poet Laureate, Charles I gave Jonson ‘one Terse of Canary Spanish wyne yearly’ (Hopkins, *The Poets Laureate*, p. 17). Betjeman actually reinvented the annual perk in the form of 720 bottles of sherry.
92. Charlotte Dobson, ‘Carol Ann Duffy pens a new ode to the . . . gas meter’, www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/news/greater-manchester-news/carol-ann-duffy-pens-new-11207172 (accessed 3 August 2020).
93. Wendy Elliott, the shop manager of Duffy’s local Oxfam shop in Didsbury in 2010, notes that the Poet Laureate wrote ‘Oxfam’ for the charity’s first Bookfest in 2009: the festival is ‘meant to highlight the good work that Oxfam does’ (www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/news/greater-manchester-news/poet-laureate-attend-oxfam-festival-890163) (accessed 3 August 2020).
94. Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 165.
95. Geoffrey Hill, ‘Simple, Sensuous, and Passionate’, *Poetry Book Society Bulletin*, 191 (winter 2001), p. 5.
96. I am quoting here partly from the manuscript version of this stanza held in the Brotherton Library:
- men of seventy have nuisance value.
I snorkel into contrived sleep, I wake,
I address the mirror: *spare me my own
rancour and ugliness*. It too is naked (p. 36)
- appears as the following lines in notebook 57:
- My sleep
finds its expression these days through a mask
not of perversion – perversion’s a fine thing –
neither of Comus, child of Ludlow’s Circe
but of new-senile practical ugliness (p. 12)
97. Hill, ‘Simple, Sensuous, and Passionate’, p. 5.
98. Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 121.
99. Hill, *Scenes from Comus*, p. 41.
100. Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 17.

3 Committed and Autonomous Art

1. Geoffrey Hill, *The Orchards of Syon* (London/New York: Penguin, 2002), pp. 65, 14.
2. Eleanor Cook, 'The Figure of Enigma: Rhetoric, History and Poetry', *Rhetorica: A Journal of the History of Rhetoric*, 19(4) (2001), 349–78, p. 352.
3. Theodor W. Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, eds. Gretel Adorno and Rolf Tiedemann, trans. Robert Hullot-Kentor (London: The Athlone Press, 1997 [1970]), p. 121; Geoffrey Hill, 'Poetry, Policing and Public Order (1)', www.english.ox.ac.uk/professor-sir-geoffrey-hill-lectures (accessed 12 July 2020).
4. Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 121.
5. In *The Selling and Self-Regulation of Contemporary Poetry* (London: Anthem Press, 2020), J. T. Welsh critiques the term 'autonomous', at the same time as he attacks neoliberal versions of creativity that equate the latter with the entrepreneurial. In contrast to Adorno 'treating art and commerce as separate spheres', Welsh deploys Pierre Bourdieu's concept of 'symbolic' capital, and argues that poetry's 'relatively low economic value becomes part of its heightened cultural value' (p. 9). In *Aesthetic Theory*, Adorno actually writes of the impossibility of art and socio-economic pressures existing as 'separate spheres': '[a]rt holds true to the shudder' not by rejecting these encroachments, but by enfolding them into the artworks (p. 118). Hence autonomous art should not be regarded as escaping the market economy, but it nevertheless responds to the latter through recalcitrant rhetoric.
6. Theodor Adorno, *Ästhetische Theorie* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 2014 [1970]), p. 184.
7. Andre Furlani, *Guy Davenport: Postmodern and After* (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press), 2007, p. 150; David James and Urmila Seshagiri, 'Metamodernism: Narratives of Continuity and Revolution', *PMLA*, 129(1) (2014), 87–98.
8. Andre Furlani, *Guy Davenport*, p. 150. As Irene Morra argues throughout *Verses Drama in England, 1900–2015: Art, Modernity and the National Stage* (London/New York: Bloomsbury, 2016), such verse plays are a neglected aspect of modern and contemporary poetry. Morra notes that the common perception of verse drama is that it is 'slowly woven from pastel shades of twee' (p. 1). Harrison's attempts to revitalise the form intend to subvert the 'odour of sanctity', as he regards it, surrounding T. S. Eliot's verse plays (p. 121).
9. Raymond Williams, *The Politics of Modernism*, ed. Tony Pinkney (London/New York: Verso, 1989), p. 90; Tony Harrison, *Plays Three* (London: Faber and Faber, 1996). As the performance notes for *The Labourers of Herakles* explain – when it was staged at the University of Leeds (11 November 2017) – the play was 'an entry at the Eighth International Meeting on Ancient Greek Drama at Delphi, Greece. It was a co-production of the European Cultural Centre of

Delphi and the National Theatre Studio, and was staged on 23rd August 1995 in a specially (half-) constructed venue: the building site that was designated as the new theatre for the European Cultural Centre of Delphi. The production was sponsored, appropriately, by the Herakles General Cement Company of Greece, which was involved in the building project, and whose silo, cement mixers and bags played an important part in the performance’.

10. In an article held in the Brotherton archive, Armitage focuses on the aspects of Harrison’s poems that can make ‘cry-babies out of the blokes in the boozier’: the dominant version of Harrison’s relationship with modernism tells a story in which the poet undergoes a ‘Eureka’ moment akin to Philip Larkin’s repudiation of W. B. Yeats when the Leeds poet begins to write *The School of Eloquence* sequence in the mid-1970s (BC MS 20c ARMITAGE/8). Switching to the example of Thomas Hardy, Larkin no longer wished, he contested, to ‘jack himself up’ into poetry, just as Harrison desires to be the poet his father might read in his family sonnets (*Required Writing: Miscellaneous Pieces 1955–1982* [London: Faber and Faber, 1983], p. 175). Harrison’s work has been read as simply complying with John Carey’s attack on modernism’s insidious snobberies in *The Intellectuals and the Masses* (1992): for Carey, modernism – as he describes it in his recent autobiography – has an inherent ‘anti-democratic animus’, that ‘cultivates obscurity and depends on learned allusions, comprehensible only to the highly educated’ (*The Unexpected Professor: an Oxford Life in Books* [London: Faber and Faber, 2014], pp. 330, 327). In this book, I challenge this critical orthodoxy: firstly, in the context of Harrison’s engagement with Brecht’s work in this chapter, and later in Chapter 5 in relation to his fictionalisation of myth in contemporary settings, a narratological tactic that Joyce, Eliot and other modernist writers were the first to exploit extensively. Modernist references and influences abound in Harrison’s collection *The Loiners* (1970), such as the rewritings of Joseph Conrad’s work in the poems ‘The Heart of Darkness’, ‘The White Queen’ and the two ‘PWD Man’ poems; even the beard of Conrad appears in ‘Doodlebugs’. In the contemporaneous poem ‘The Bonebard Ballads’, we encounter the disarming élitism of Harrison asking the reader to go and see Goya’s painting ‘A Dog Buried in the Sand’ in the Prado gallery in Madrid, if the reader wants to understand the last two lines of his poem (*Selected Poems* [London: Faber and Faber, 1987 (1984)], p. 103). Alert to what he perceived as an ‘anti-democratic animus’ in these lines, Larkin bluntly commented ‘Why the fucking hell should I?’ (Philip Larkin, ‘Under a Common Flag’, *The Observer*, 14 November 1982, p. 23; Carey, *The Unexpected Professor*, p. 330). Harrison’s refusal to translate the Latin epigraph to ‘Newcastle is Peru’ – that

- originates from Seneca's *Medea* (50 BCE) – is reminiscent of Eliot and Pound's similar refusals in *The Waste Land* (before the footnotes) and the *Cantos* (1925), or John Fowles's infamous completion of *The Magus* (1965) with the opening and untranslated lines from an anonymous Latin lyric entitled 'The Vigil of Venus'. At the end of *The Loiners*, an untranslated epigraph from Rimbaud's *Oeuvres Complètes* (1966) introduces 'Ghosts: Some Words Before Breakfast': '*C'est mon unique soutien au monde, à présent!*' (*Selected Poems*, p. 72). In the culture/barbarism dialectic that runs throughout Harrison's work, he tends not to underscore such erudition, as in the film-poem *Metamorpheus* (2000) that I discuss in Chapter 5.
11. Theodor Adorno, 'Commitment', in *Aesthetics and Politics*, eds. Perry Anderson, Rodney Livingstone and Francis Mulhern (London: Verso, 2007 [1977]), pp. 177–95, p. 177.
 12. Harrison's interview comment – quoted by Morra – that 'if people can't understand you lose them very quickly' can only be regarded as ironic in this context (p. 209). Brecht would no doubt not have approved of these untranslated openings to Harrison's plays, and would have regarded them as unnecessarily élitist.
 13. Adorno, 'Commitment', p. 177. The term 'committed and autonomous art' is necessary because it differentiates between 'art for art's sake' – that Adorno argues is a false version of autonomous art – and the work of Kafka, Beckett and Hill, that may superficially appear disengaged, but which is actually intent on embodying the structural inequalities of, and historical iniquities caused by, heteronomy.
 14. Adorno, 'Commitment', p. 177. I discuss Mörike's work 'On Lyric and Society' and Hill's collection *The Triumph of Love* in *Holocaust Poetry* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2005), p. 75.
 15. In 'On Experimental Theatre', Brecht writes about the 'culinary' as 'spiritual dope traffic', and calls for art that can turn 'from a home of illusions to a home of experience' (John Willett, ed., *Brecht on Theatre* (London: Methuen, 1964 [1957]), pp. 130–5 [p. 135]). As I noted in Chapter 1, Michael Donaghy scoffs at 'innovative' poets' detachment from the 'general poetry reader', and wonders how a 'committed' experimental poem "composed from punctuation marks will help bring down the arms trade" (David Wheatley, *Contemporary British Poetry* [London/New York: Palgrave, 2015], p. 113). However, a mainstream poem has never aided either in the abolishment of the international arms trade.
 16. Theodor Adorno, 'Engagement' in *Noten zur Literatur I* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1974), pp. 409–30, p. 409; Adorno, 'Commitment', p. 177.
 17. Adorno, 'Commitment', p. 177.
 18. Fredric Jameson argues that Adorno's conclusions are not 'satisfactory' because they present a 'Lukács-type "reflection theory" of aesthetics, under

- the spell of a political and historical despair that [...] finds praxis henceforth unimaginable', in an 'anti-political revival of the ideology of modernism' ('Reflections in Conclusion' in *Aesthetics and Politics*, p. 209). However, 'Commitment' does not present committed and autonomous art as a simple 'reflection' of 'political and historical despair' but – as the original title for the German publication suggests – a form of deflected 'engagement'. Nor is direct 'praxis' the primary concern of Adorno's essay when faced with the 'deluge': as I point out later in this section, Adorno nevertheless argues that Kafka's prose 'compels the change of attitude which committed works merely demand' (p. 97).
19. Through committed literature, Sartre wishes to emphasise readers' capacity to 'awaken' their 'free choice' to change reality, whereas Adorno stresses that the 'very possibility of choosing depends on what can be chosen' (p. 180). In an Adornian moment in Brecht's *The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui* (London: Methuen, 1976 [1958]), the character Givola announces that 'Each man | Is free to do exactly as he pleases' (p. 94): hesitantly, the Ciceronian goes out, two bodyguards follow him, and 'a shot is heard'. Giri then proclaims, 'All right, friends, Let's have your free decision!', and 'All raise both hands' (p. 94). Adorno's critical approach to Sartre's notion of free choice does not entirely preclude the notion of choice, whereas the editors of *Aesthetics and Politics* contend that 'Sartre's belief in the efficacy of individual engagement seems much less questionable than a theory in which the production of "autonomous" works of art is little less than magical' (p. 147).
 20. 'Commitment', p. 184. In *Marxism and Modernism: an Historical Study of Lukács, Brecht, Benjamin, and Adorno*, Eugene Lunn argues that Brecht's position adheres to a 'common vulgar Marxist identification' of fascism with capitalism (London: Verso, 1985 [1982], p.138). However, Adorno's account of fascism as 'a conspiracy of the wealthy and powerful' is just as reductive as Brecht's presentation of Nazis as gangsters, and does not take account of a myriad of historical factors contributing to Hitler's electoral victory, such as the overwhelming support of lower-middle-class Germans.
 21. However, the criticisms that Adorno directs towards other 'committed' Brecht plays are less surefooted. The philosopher objects to *Mother Courage and Her Children* (1941) because it attempts to reconstruct mid-twentieth-century capitalism in the context of the 'old lawless days' of the seventeenth century (p. 186), and is thereby a 'false social model' (p. 187). This claim takes a blinkered approach to the rise of the mercantile classes in Europe – including characters akin to Mother Courage – from the fourteenth century onwards, and the intensification of capital interests in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Moreover, Adorno argues implausibly that the children's deaths in *Mother Courage and Her Children* are not a direct result

of the Thirty Years' War, or the mother's attempts at profiteering: the fact that she 'has to be absent to earn some money' when they are killed 'remains completely generic to the action' (p. 186). Francis McDonagh's translation of '*ganz allemein*' ('generally') from 'Engagement' (p. 420) into 'generic' is confusing here: Mother Courage's absence to earn money – particularly after her botched attempt to bargain for the life of her second son, Swiss Cheese – is central to the play's interpretation, as she 'shrinks' into an 'agent of social processes', a process that Adorno praises only three pages before his attack on *Mother Courage and Her Children* (p. 183). Brecht thus attempts to stress her misplaced guile rather than praise, as many audiences do, her stubbornness and 'humanity'. This particular 'false social model' is actually the construct of misguided literary criticism, and Adorno's attempt to shore up his argument that *Mother Courage and Her Children* undergoes a process of '*ästhetische Reduktionsprozess*' ('aesthetic reduction') ('Commitment', p. 92; 'Engagement', p. 416). Despite his focus on enigmatical art as an intensely political form, Adorno underemphasises the 'doubleness' required in Brecht's allegory, as the latter presents the action of the Thirty Years' War as analogous to but not coterminous with 'the functional capitalist society of modern times' (p. 186). As Adorno concedes in his qualified praise for Brecht's innovations in dramatic form, if autonomous art can also be committed, then committed art can also, at times, encompass the autonomous. This thinking is central to my analysis in this chapter of Harrison's verse plays: I stress their 'committed' formal successes, particularly in their reimagining of Brecht's alienation effects that pervade the poetry's engagement with Herakles.

22. In *Bertolt Brecht: a Literary Life* (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), Stephen Parker notes the problem in translating '*Verfremdungseffekte*': 'the term is generally known in English as the "Alienation Effect" or "A-effect". We [and I] will adopt that usage, even though the sense is better rendered by "estrangement" or "defamiliarization"' (p. 352). Peter Brooker makes the same point in Peter Thompson and Glendyr Sacks' *The Cambridge Companion to Brecht* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006 [1994]), p. 217. As Brooker argues, 'A-effects' do not originate *only* in Brecht's theatre, but also in the texts that mostly influenced Brecht, such as 'the political theatre of Erwin Piscator and German agitprop; the cabaret of Frank Wedekind and the work of the music hall comedian Karl Valentin; Charlie Chaplin and American silent film; Asian and revolutionary Soviet theatre; as well as Shakespeare and Elizabethan chronicle plays' (p. 211).
23. Adorno, 'Engagement', p. 425.
24. Adorno, 'Commitment', p. 182.

25. The Jocelyn Herbert archive (part of the National Theatre archive), ‘Carnuntum’ notebook, JH/1/21, n.p.n. In another postcard dated August 1995, Harrison writes that their collaborative experiences are ‘truly amazing. I’ve never felt more fulfilled or happy, and I will treasure our days together as long as I live. You have given me so much and I am deeply grateful for everything’ (JH/1/21).
26. JH/3/54, n.p.n. (entries dated 20 May 1995 and 21 July 1995).
27. Tony Harrison archive, the Brotherton Library, ‘Carnuntum 2’ notebook, BC MS 20C Harrison/03/KAI, pp. 328–9.
28. Herbert, ‘Carnuntum’ notebook, JH/1/21, n.p.n.
29. As Oliver Taplin concludes in ‘The Chorus of Mams’, *The Labourers of Herakles* ‘is not likely to go down as Harrison’s greatest theatre work. Both text and performance betray signs of being put together under pressure’ (Sandie Byrne, ed., *Tony Harrison: Loiner* [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997], pp. 171–84 [p. 180]). Taplin witnessed the first performance, and admits that the audience response was “‘mixed’”, due perhaps to the play’s didacticism, or failed ‘commitment’ to plain speaking: ‘they may well have also found the didactic message of Phrynichus [. . .] too overt [. . .] Arguably, even, Harrison failed to fulfil his own admirable maxim: that the play should be self-sufficiently accessible, without requiring any homework or footnotes’ (p. 182).
30. Herbert, ‘Carnuntum’ notebook, JH/1/21, n.p.n.
31. Philip Glahn, *Bertolt Brecht* (London: Reaktion Books, 2014), p. 102.
32. Tony Harrison, *Plays Three*, pp. 65, 81.
33. Herbert, ‘Carnuntum’, JH/2/8, n.p.n.
34. In the pasted-in article in workbook one, ‘From Roman legionary to Robocop’, Oliver Gillie remarks that ‘we think the “thumbs up” signal meant that the gladiator should live, but we have nothing to prove this’ (p. 15).
35. Parker, *Bertolt Brecht: A Life*, p. 269. The reason for Bollux’s name is indicated in workbook one: Harrison includes sections from Thomas Wiedemann’s *Emperors & Gladiators* (1992), one of which mentions that Commodus ‘kept among his minions certain men named after the private parts of both sexes’ (p. 275).
36. Lunn argues that Adorno’s ‘treatment of Brecht was narrow and one-sided. He never seriously engaged the question of the potentiality of Brecht’s montage and distancing methods except as they were manifested within the playwright’s particular political framework. That they were capable of being used more fruitfully by Brecht than in Adorno’s damning examples, or that they might provide a key for other less politically blinded artists, was missing from his account’ (p. 276). Lunn’s summary of Adorno’s critical blind-spots in relation to Brecht’s work is a fair analysis, and Harrison forms an example of a ‘less politically blinded artist’, in contrast with the impact of Brecht’s

- communist sympathies on the first version of *The Measures Taken* (1930). Ironically, as Lunn points out, some Russian communists found this play treasonable in its apportioning of blame to communist characters rather than solely to the aristocracy, that ‘won Brecht Moscow’s embarrassed strictures’ (p. 132). As Parker notes, ‘Most were disinclined to take lessons in party discipline from a figure who was not even a KPD member’ (p. 280).
37. Lunn, *Marxism and Modernism*, p. 54. As Oliver Double and Michael Wilson note in their chapter on Brecht and cabaret, he wished to ‘stir’ the audience at one point by ‘hiring two clowns to pretend to be spectators, bandying opinions about other audience members, making comments about the play and placing bets on its outcome’ (Thompson and Sacks, p. 58). The influence of Frank Wedekind on Brecht, and, by proxy, Harrison, is instructive in this context: Wedekind’s cabaret-style theatre ‘never loses sight of the present moment and the particular venue in which it takes place’; Wedekind also wrote about popular theatre and the importance of the circus in the 1880s (pp. 56, 59).
 38. Andre Furlani, *Guy Davenport*, p. 150.
 39. Herbert, ‘Carnuntum 2’, BC/MS/20c/Harrison/03/KAI, p. 247.
 40. An article pasted into the third notebook also records Hercules defending the empire, but ‘there are so many of these faults and meannesses recorded of Hercules by the ancients, that when one considers them, one is apt almost to lose sight of his great character: and to wonder how they could ever have given him the very foremost place in this distinguishing class of heroes; of those very few, who by their virtue obtained a place among the chief of all the celestial deities, in the highest heaven’ (p. 591).
 41. Herbert, ‘Carnuntum 2’, BC/MS/20c/Harrison/03/KAI, p. 249.
 42. Harrison pastes a section of Pierre Grimal’s *The Civilisation of Rome* (1963) into the back of the second workbook, in which Grimal points out that any reference to ‘Roman cruelty’ is simplistic: ‘this inclination to realism led to an effort to represent legendary episodes, in all their horror, as truthfully as possible [...] We need not attribute these barbarous extravagances to a perversity or cruelty peculiar to the Roman plebs. There is no lack of evidence for similar cruelties and perversions in other parts of the empire, even, if we are to believe Apuleius, in Greece itself’ (p. 436).
 43. The potential distortions of ‘committed’ art are evident in other attempts at multidirectional memory in *The Kaisers of Carnuntum*. In the second notebook, Harrison writes ‘Hitler/Mussolini!’ next to a reference to Commodus’ shaved head (p. 271), and pens ‘Caesar, Caesar, Caesar’ alongside ‘Zieg Heil’ (p. 357). Subsequent attempts to allegorize Fascism in terms of an emperor in ancient Rome arise in the text when, for example, Commodus refers to the ‘Roman Reich’ (p. 70). Didacticism is sometimes at

- the expense of metaphorical efficacy, as when Harrison compares the slaughtered beasts to ‘Jews’ (p. 517). A more successful multidirectional link is established in the workbooks between the historical dictatorships and antisemitism in Austria in the 1990s: the first workbook contains an article on Jörg Haider, and his political programme demanding “‘Austria for the Austrians’” (p. 96), as well as a piece by Ian Traynor on how ‘One in five Austrians believe that the rights of Jews in Austria should be restricted’ (p. 44).
44. JH/3/15, n.p.n.
 45. Herbert, ‘Carnuntum’ notebook, JH/1/21. Kustow’s review also notes that at one point, ‘Two performing bears broke loose backstage. As stagehands scurried after them (one getting clawed in the chase), Barry Rutter was stranded centre stage with three caged lions and a tiger, and no fellow actor in sight.’ Brecht refers to the breaking of ‘illusion’ through alienation effects in ‘From the Mother Courage Model’ (*Brecht on Theatre*, pp. 215–22, p. 217).
 46. ‘On Experimental Theatre’ in *Brecht on Theatre* (p. 136).
 47. Frederick Baker review of *The Kaisers of Carnuntum*, ‘Roman arena comes full circle’ in the Herbert archive, ‘Carnuntum’ notebook, JH/1/21, n.p.n.
 48. Harrison, ‘Carnuntum 2’, BC/MS/20c/Harrison/03/KAI, p. 322.
 49. Tony Harrison, *Plays Three*, p. 89.
 50. Carol Chillington Rutter, ‘Harrison, Herakles, and Wailing Women “Labourers” at Delphi’, *New Theatre Quarterly*, 13(50) (May 1997), 133–43, p. 140.
 51. Adorno, ‘Commitment’, p. 189.
 52. Herbert, ‘Carnuntum’ notebook, JH/1/21, n.p.n.
 53. *The Norton Shakespeare*, 3rd edition (London/New York: W. W. Norton, 2015), p. 3165.
 54. Herbert, ‘Carnuntum’ notebook, JH/1/21, n.p.n.
 55. Adorno, ‘Commitment’, p. 190.
 56. Workbook one presents the possibility of the ostriches symbolising Marcus Aurelius: ‘Every ostrich that I slew | reminded me of pater, you’; ‘I represent all you ignored [. . .] You are the fucking ostrich’ (p. 204).
 57. Harrison, ‘Carnuntum 2’, BC/MS/20c/Harrison/03/KAI, p. 238.
 58. Harrison, *Plays Three*, p. 100. As Marianne McDonald argues, ‘Harrison simplifies history to make his contrast. Marcus Aurelius was in fact a great warrior, who could only write in moments snatched from keeping his empire in order’ (‘Marcus Aurelius: the Kaiser of Carnuntum’, www.didaskalia.net/issues/vol2no3/harrison.html [accessed 28 September 2019]).
 59. My italics.
 60. The date of the *Historia Augusta* is contested, but it most likely first appeared in the fourth century AD.

61. In ‘Observing the Juggler: an actor’s view’, Rutter refers to the ‘Castle car park in Carnuntum’, which ‘was proof positive that given the square yards and the Bleacher seats, plus a few cubic metres of sand, we can do *Trackers* anywhere’ (Neil Astley, ed., *Bloodaxe Critical Anthologies 1: Tony Harrison* [Newcastle: Bloodaxe, 1991], p. 416).
62. Herbert, ‘Carnuntum’ notebook, JH/1/21, n.p.n.
63. In Rome’s Conservatori museum, the *Imperial Clemency* (176–180 AD) relief displays Aurelias’ alleged mercy, with an outstretched hand, to ‘barbarian’ prisoners of war. However, his retracted middle fingers betray a distaste towards the kneeling figures. Similarly, Commodus, trapped underneath Aurelias’ tower in Herbert’s stage set, potentially courts empathy as the verse play’s equivalent of the relief’s barbarians.
64. JH/3/54, n.p.n. (entry dated 21 July 1995).
65. As the notes to the Leeds performance explain, ‘Miletos, an Athenian colony in Asia Minor (modern Turkey), was sacked by the Persians suppressing the Ionian revolt (499–493 B.C.) by Greek cities of Asia Minor. They slaughtered almost the entire male population, and enslaved the women and children. The Athenian tragedian Phrynichos wrote *The Capture of Miletus* in 494 B.C.: it is referred to in Harrison’s play with its Greek title *Halosis Miletou*. If the historian Herodotus is to be believed, the play was too distressing for the Athenian audience, moving them to tears, and causing them to fine him for reminding them of their misfortune and to ban future performances.’
66. Harrison, *Plays Three*, p. 133.
67. Harrison, *Selected Poems*, pp. 179, 180.
68. Bertolt Brecht, *Poems 1913–1956*, eds. John Willett and Ralph Manheim (London: Methuen, 1987 [1976]), pp. 252–3.
69. Neil Astley, ed., *Bloodaxe Critical Anthologies 1: Tony Harrison*, p. 67.
70. Geoffrey Hill, *The Triumph of Love* (London/New York: Penguin, 1999 [1998]), p. 82.
71. Hill deploys this term approvingly in his seventh lecture as Oxford Professor of Poetry in 2012 (<http://media.podcasts.ox.ac.uk/engfac/poetry/2012-11-27-engfac-hill.mp3>) (accessed 28 July 2020).
72. Theodor Adorno, ‘Commitment’, p. 191; Geoffrey Hill, *The Orchards of Syon* (London: Penguin, 2002), p. 1. ‘Now’ could be glossed as an emphatic, avuncular ‘so’; or, more likely, as denoting that ‘now’, at this time, there is no due season.
73. T. S. Eliot, *Selected Poems* (London: Faber and Faber, 1954), p. 51.
74. Geoffrey Hill, *The Orchards of Syon* workbooks, BC MS 20c Hill/2/1/52, p. 9.
75. Hill, notebook 52, pp. 13, 19.

76. Hill, notebook 52, p. 14. ‘Hippo’ simultaneously connotes the hippocampus, which Hill associates with the Hippodrome the next time the theatre is mentioned in notebook fifty-three (pp. 84, 85).
77. T. S. Eliot, *Four Quartets* (London: Faber and Faber, 1959 [1941]), p. 26; Hill, notebook 52, p. 35. The ‘shadows’ in the draft for the first stanza soon encompass life’s ‘exits’, and María Casares, who plays the princess ‘who is Death’ in Jean Cocteau’s film *Orphée* (1950) (p. 9). Thinking ‘ahead’ in section III to the point when his dates will be ‘crammed in’ after his name (p. 3), the narrator is exasperated that there is no ‘solution’ to the fact that ‘We are [...] near death’ (p. 4). In notebook fifty-three, Hill is ‘Newly into ageing’ (53, p. 96), which finally becomes the struggle indicated in the bunched stresses at the beginning of section XLII: ‘**Up against ageing and dying**’ (p. 42); this opening represents the ‘Beautiful though grim’ ‘stamina’ and stoicism required two sections earlier in XL (p. 40). In the notebook, Hill then begins – due to this ageing process – to ‘fancy’

the labour of flight: a low geared-heron
returning to its pool; the way that gulls
beat and tack; the man-o-war bird (53, p. 96)

- ‘[O]ld dying’ remains intertwined with the lyrical: the heron is ‘retiring to its pool’ in the next notebook (notebook 54, p. 13).
78. Hill, notebook 52, p. 35; Hill, *The Orchards of Syon*, p. 1.
79. Theodor Adorno, *Ästhetische Theorie* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 2014 [1970]), p. 184; *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 121.
80. ‘Eboracum’ originates from the Celtic ‘Eburakon’. The ‘Ebor Handicap’ held at York is for horses three years and older. The cathedral has been beset in recent times by expensive repairs: extensive damage was caused by a fire in 1984; the renovation of the Great East Window (2007–18) cost an estimated twenty-three million pounds.
81. Derek Attridge discusses close readings that are too ‘powerful’ in his article ‘Conjurers turn tricks on wizards’ coat-tails’, www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/story.asp?sectioncode=26&cs (accessed 28 September 2019).
82. Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 121.
83. I co-organised Hill’s reading at the University of Salford with Jeffrey Wainwright on 1 July 2000.
84. Adorno, ‘Commitment’, p. 191.
85. *The Cantos of Ezra Pound* (New York: New Directions, 1996), p. 816.
86. Jeffrey Wainwright, *Acceptable Words: Essays on the Poetry of Geoffrey Hill* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005), p. 120.

87. 'Stanley Edgar is Dead; Critic, Author and Teacher, 51', www.nytimes.com/1970/07/31/archives/stanley-edgar-hyman-is-dead-critic-author-and-teacher-51-bennington.html (accessed 28 September 2020).
88. The workbooks indicate Hill's struggle to achieve this majestic end to the third section: 'the maples torch the swamp', 'the swamp/maples put themselves to the torch', 'the swamp-maples torch the sun' and then (less convincingly) the 'swamp-maples torch the foxy wilderness' (notebook 52, p. 21).
89. Robert Macfarlane, 'Gravity and Grace in Geoffrey Hill', *Essays in Criticism*, 58(3) (2007), 237–56, p. 247.
90. Robert Macfarlane, 'Gravity and Grace in Geoffrey Hill', p. 251.
91. My italics.
92. T. S. Eliot, *Selected Poems*, p. 31.
93. Matthew Arnold, 'Dover Beach', in Kenneth Allott, ed., *Arnold: Poems* (London: Penguin, 1985 [1954]), pp. 181–2.
94. As Thomas Day notes, *The Orchards of Syon* is 'self-confessedly less angry, more forgiving, than its predecessor, *Speech! Speech!*' ('French Connections in Geoffrey Hill's *The Orchards of Syon*', *Essays in Criticism*, 6(1) (January 2010), 26–50, p. 26).
95. Theodor Adorno, 'Commitment', p. 177.
96. Ted Hughes, *Collected Poems* (London: Faber and Faber, 2003), p. 36.
97. Hill, Michaelmas term lecture 2012 (untitled), <http://media.podcasts.ox.ac.uk/engfac/poetry/2012-11-27-engfac-hill.mp3> (accessed 28 September 2020).
98. See my discussion of this passage in *Holocaust Poetry*, pp. 76–7. I note that 'the reference to Daniel (3: 6) evokes specifically Jewish suffering (and triumph): when Nebuchadnezzar demanded that whoever did not worship his golden image be cast into the midst of a "burning fiery furnace" [...] By transforming the furnace into an image of the Holocaust [in *The Triumph of Love*], Hill simultaneously drains the narrative of any sense of triumph' (p. 76).
99. Paul Celan, *Breathturn into Timestead: the Collected Later Poetry*, trans. Pierre Joris (New York: Farrar Straus Giroux, 2014), p. 461.
100. John Felstiner, *Paul Celan: Poet, Survivor, Jew* (London: Yale University Press, 1995), p. 30.
101. John Lyon, 'Geoffrey Hill's Eye Troubles' in John Lyon and Peter McDonald, eds., *Geoffrey Hill: Essays on His Later Work* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), pp. 112–26, p. 118; Wainwright, *Acceptable Words*, p. 108. Lyon writes that 'this is a louder poetry, more unseemly and improperly behaved, more extremely self-disrupting in respect of both register and subject matter' (p. 118).

102. Jeremy Noel-Tod, 'Awkward Bow' (review of *The Orchards of Syon*), *London Review of Books*, 25(5) (6 March 2003), 27–8, p. 27.
103. Celan, *Breathturn into Timestead*, p. xl; Furlani, *Guy Davenport*, p. 150.
104. Celan, *Breathturn into Timestead*, p. xlvi.
105. Rowland, *Holocaust Poetry*, p. 62.
106. Felstiner, *Paul Celan*, pp. 165, 167.
107. Theodor Adorno, *Minima Moralia*, trans. E. F. N. Jephcott (London: Verso, 1978 [1951]), p. 25.
108. Brecht, *Poems 1913–1956*, pp. 330–1, p. 331. The 'house-painter' is, of course, Hitler. In 'To Those Born Later' (1938), Brecht similarly asks what 'kind of times are they, when | A talk about trees is almost a crime | Because it implies silence about so many horrors' (pp. 318–9, p. 318).
109. Felstiner, *Paul Celan*, p. 92.
110. April Warman, 'Language and Grace', *The Oxonian Review*, 3(1) (15 December 2003) (www.oxonianreview.org/wp/geoffrey-hill-the-orchards-of-syon) accessed 28 September 2020; Adorno, 'Commitment', p. 177. In 'Geoffrey Hill: The Corpus of Absolution', Ernest Hilbert notes that the title also refers to 'a translation of St. Catherine of Siena's *Dialogo*, a series of meditations on the division between God and the human soul' (www.cprw.com/Hibert/hill.htm) (accessed 4 June 2019).
111. Lunn, *Marxism and Modernism*, p. 155.
112. Stanley Mitchell, 'Introduction', in Walter Benjamin, *Understanding Brecht*, trans. Anna Bostock (London: New Left Books, 1973 [1966]), pp. vii–xix, p. ix.
113. Furlani, *Guy Davenport*, p. 150; Tom Kuhn and Steve Giles, eds., *Brecht on Art and Politics* (London: Methuen, 2003), p. 25.
114. Cook, 'The Figure of Enigma: Rhetoric, History and Poetry', p. 352; *Brecht on Art and Politics*, p. 47; Adorno, 'Commitment', pp. 177, 188.
115. I am referring back here to Adorno's phrase 'uncompromising radicalism' in 'Commitment', p. 188.

4 Iconoclasm and Enigmatical Commitment

1. Eleanor Cook, 'The Figure of Enigma: Rhetoric, History and Poetry', *Rhetorica: A Journal of the History of Rhetoric*, 19(4) (2001), 349–78, p. 352.
2. Kayo Chingonyi, "'It has to appear like a gift': An Interview with Ahren Warner", 16 June 2013, <https://kayochingonyi.com/2013/06/16/it-has-to-appear-like-a-gift-an-interview-with-ahren-warner/> (accessed 5 June 2020).
3. Franz Kafka, *The Blue Octavo Notebooks* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Exact Change Books, 2016 [1948]), p. 26; Theodor W. Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, eds.

- Gretel Adorno and Rolf Tiedemann, trans. Robert Hullot-Kentor (London: The Athlone Press, 1997 [1970]), p. 165.
4. David James, *The Legacies of Modernism: Historicising Postwar and Contemporary Fiction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), p. 2; Douglas Mao and Rebecca L. Walkowitz, eds., *Bad Modernisms* (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2006), p. 3.
 5. Ahren Warner, *Pretty* (Newcastle: Bloodaxe, 2013), p. 79; *Confer* (Newcastle: Bloodaxe, 2011), p. 41.
 6. James, *The Legacies of Modernism*, p. 3.
 7. Tony Williams, 'You ask for a song' (review of *Confer*), *Magma*, 52 (March 2012), 57–8, p. 58; Michael Woods, review of *Pretty*, *Iota*, 93 (2013), 131–2, p. 132.
 8. Chingonyi, "It has to appear like a gift": An Interview with Ahren Warner', 16 June 2013, <https://kayochingonyi.com/2013/06/16/it-has-to-appear-like-a-gift-an-interview-with-ahren-warner/> (accessed 5 June 2020).
 9. As I noted in the Introduction, Hill makes these comments about Pound and Eliot in his November 2011 lecture as Oxford Professor of Poetry, www.english.ox.ac.uk/professor-sir-geoffrey-hill-lectures (accessed 29 September 2020).
 10. Charles Simic and Don Paterson, eds., *New British Poetry* (St Paul, Minnesota: Graywolf Press, 2004), p. xxiii; Theodor W. Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 125.
 11. In her review of *Confer*, Carol Rumens notes that 'Having positioned itself against difficulty, Bloodaxe has made a sensible revision in adding Ahren Warner to its list' ('Medium, Conjurer, Flâneur' [*Poetry Review*, 101(4) (winter 2011), 95–8, p. 97]). Nevertheless, as I discuss later in this chapter, Bloodaxe has also published the work of, for example, J. H. Prynne, B. S. Johnson and Basil Bunting.
 12. Don Paterson, *Rain* (London: Faber and Faber, 2009), p. 58.
 13. Roddy Lumsden, ed., *Identity Parade: New British and Irish Poets* (Newcastle: Bloodaxe, 2010), p. 103.
 14. James Byrne, *Blood/Sugar* (Tadmorden: Arc, 2009), p. 71.
 15. Richard Burton, *A Strong Song Tows Us: the Life of Basil Bunting* (Oxford: Infinite Ideas Ltd, 2013), p. 206.
 16. Burton, *A Strong Song Tows Us*, p. 105.
 17. As with David James's incisive and expansive exploration of form in *Discrepant Solace* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), I invoke the word to indicate 'stylistic tenor and texture, idioms of diction, syntactical and rhythmic connotations, as well as the overarching organization of a given narrative' (p. 6).

18. Peter Howarth, *The Cambridge Introduction to Modernist Poetry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), p. 215.
19. Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, pp. 34, 35.
20. Andre Furlani, *Guy Davenport: Postmodern and After* (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 2007), p. 150; James, *The Legacies of Modernism*, p. 3.
21. Outsiders are vulnerable as well as distinctive, as when Bardamu registers his outlandish cowardice as a World War One soldier, at the same time as he remains, like his comrades, ‘meat’ for the enemy (Louis-Ferdinand Céline, *Journey to the End of the Night*, trans. Ralph Manheim [Richmond: Alma, 2012 (1932)], p. 15). The description of the colonel as ‘tangled meat’ connects with the portrayal, three pages later, of the regiment’s rations as ‘pounds and pounds of gut, chunks of white and yellow fat, disembowelled sheep with their organs every which way, oozing little rivulets into the grass’ (p. 18).
22. James, *The Legacies of Modernism*, p. 2.
23. Francis Scarfe, ed., *Baudelaire: The Complete Verse* (London: Anvil, 1986), p. 203.
24. Michael Rothberg, *The Implicated Subject: Beyond Victims and Perpetrators* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2019), p. 1.
25. Ahren Warner, *Hello. Your Promise has been Extracted* (Newcastle: Bloodaxe, 2017), p. 76.
26. James Byrne, ‘I am a Robingya: Poetry from the World’s Largest Refugee Camp and Beyond’, *Kenyan Review* (<https://kenyonreview.org/kr-online-issue/literary-activism/selections/james-byrne-763879>) (accessed 9 June 2020).
27. Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 125.
28. James, *Legacies of Modernism*, p. 3.
29. In Artaud’s essay ‘Coleridge the Traitor’, the Romantic poet is dismissed as ‘a weakling’ (*Anthology*, trans. Jack Hirschman [San Francisco: City Lights, 1965], pp. 128–34, pp. 134). In his ‘Letter against the Kabbala’ (4 June 1947) (pp. 113–23) he states that he ‘abhors’ the ‘old kike spirit’ in Kafka’s work. Despite Artaud’s assertion to Madame Toulouse in October 1924 that there was ‘nothing doing’ with Surrealism, by 10 November, his photograph appeared in the first issue of *La Révolution surréaliste*, co-edited by Pierre Naville and Benjamin Péret, that also contained work by Breton and Pierre Riverdy (Ronald Hayman, *Artaud and After* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977], pp. 54–5). He broke with Surrealism in summer 1926, after he tried ‘to act as mediator between Breton and Jean Paulhan, who had been appointed editor of the *N.R.F.* when Rivière died in 1925’ (p. 63). In November 1925, Artaud was officially expelled from the group after a meeting at Café de la Prophète, and referred to in the minutes as

- a ‘decaying carcass’ (p. 64). Artaud’s ‘outsider’ status thus does not equate with that of the Surrealists in general: whilst ‘the iconoclasm of the other Surrealists was charged with *joe de vivre*’, Artaud, as Breton put it, “‘carried around with him the landscape of a Gothic novel, torn by flashes of lightning’” (p. 63).
30. Hayman, *Artaud and After*, p. 55.
 31. Antonin Artaud, *Collected Works*, volume 1, trans. Victor Corti (London: Calder and Boyars, 1968), p. 76. In ‘Van Gogh: The Man Suicided by Society’, Artaud contends that ‘a sick society invented psychiatry to defend itself against the investigation of certain visionaries whose faculties of divination disturbed it’ (*Anthology*, p. 135).
 32. Warner, *Pretty*, p. 64; Artaud, *Anthology*, p. 34.
 33. Artaud, *Anthology*, p. 35; Antonin Artaud, *Oeuvres Complètes*, volume 1 (Paris: Gallimard, 1956), p. 89.
 34. Warner, *Pretty*, pp. 66, 70; Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 120.
 35. Warner, *Pretty*, p. 64; Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 118.
 36. Warner, *Pretty*, pp. 68, 67; Geoffrey Hill, ‘Poetry, Policing and Public Order (1)’, www.english.ox.ac.uk/professor-sir-geoffrey-hill-lectures (accessed 12 July 2020).
 37. Warner, *Pretty*, p. 64.
 38. Artaud, *Collected Works*, p. 76.
 39. Artaud, *Oeuvres Complètes*, p. 87; Warner, *Pretty*, p. 63; Artaud, *Anthology*, p. 38.
 40. Philip Larkin, *Letters to Monica*, ed. Anthony Thwaite (London: Faber and Faber, 2010), p. 319.
 41. Artaud, *Oeuvres Complètes*, p. 76.
 42. Artaud, *Oeuvres Complètes*, p. 87; Artaud, *Anthology*, p. 26.
 43. Artaud, *Anthology*, p. 38.
 44. Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 118; Artaud, *Anthology*, p. 38.
 45. Artaud, *Oeuvres Complètes*, p. 95; Warner, *Pretty*, p. 72; Artaud, *Anthology*, p. 38; Artaud, *Collected Works*, p. 75.
 46. James, *The Legacies of Modernism*, p. 3.
 47. Artaud, *Oeuvres Complètes*, p. 95; Warner, *Pretty*, p. 72.
 48. Artaud, *Collected Works*, p. 76.
 49. Artaud’s dismissal in this passage of the intellectual as ‘pigshit’ (*Anthology*, p. 38) works its way into the texture of Warner’s collection as whole. ‘Metousiosis’ in *Pretty*, for example, contains a strikingly Artaudian declaration:

So many nights I wake to find myself like this,
tracing the contours of my self – near catatonic – [. . .]
where, beneath the glaze of *cogitans*, touch
can trigger surety – flesh and bone assurance —
beyond this party trick of intellect (p. 45)

‘[C]ontours’, ‘catatonic’, ‘nerves’, ‘touch’, ‘flesh’, ‘bone’, ‘intellect’: the lexical field of ‘Nervometer’ infiltrates this passage from ‘Metousiosis’. Moreover, ‘this party trick of intellect’ recalls the ‘all writing is pigshit’ section from *Le Pèse-Nerfs* (*Anthology*, p. 38), and the line from part one of ‘Nervometer’, ‘You must not admit too much literature’ (*Pretty*, p. 63). Warner begins the last line of his translated sequence with a word absent from the original French, ‘Uncovered’ (p. 75), that emphasises a state beyond speech: similarly, ‘Metousiosis’ contrasts the ‘surety’ of the naked, and blemished, body with the ‘party trick of intellect’ (p. 45). The ‘party trick’ of ‘Metousiosis’, with its references to Rainer Maria Rilke’s ‘Second Elegy’, Paul Cezanne, Egon Schiele and Aeschylus, would no doubt have incurred Artaud’s scathing tone: artistic references are entirely absent from *Le Pèse-Nerfs*. If the momentarily iconoclastic dismissal of intellect constitutes Furlani’s metamodernist ‘continuity’ from *Le Pèse-Nerfs*, then the ‘departure’ lies in Warner’s focus in this passage on the poet-narrator’s bodily minutiae, such as the alienated hand that becomes a ‘puppet’, to the extent that ‘flesh and bone’ provides succour to the poet’s nocturnal angst. In contrast, Artaud’s corporeal ‘*minutiae*’ – apart from the machinations of the ‘skull’ (p. 67) – are almost entirely absent from *Le Pèse-Nerfs*: there is no sense that the somatic can provide a reassuring alternative to the insubstantial ‘mental substance’ of ‘*res cogitans*’.

50. Eliot, *Selected Poems*, p. 11.
51. James, *Discrepant Solace*, p. 7.
52. Paul McDonald, ‘From Paris to Emerging Poets’, *Envoi*, 169 (February 2015), 72–6, p. 73 (my italics). Michael Woods similarly refers to an ‘attractive edginess to this sequence that engages with a destabilising Artaudian impulse’ (p. 132).
53. T. S. Eliot, ed., *Literary Chapters of Ezra Pound* (London: Faber and Faber, 1960), p. 12. Pound is writing specifically about neo-Georgian poetry.
54. Hayman, *Artaud and After*, p. 37.
55. *OED*, 2nd edn.
56. Warner, *Pretty*, p. 72.
57. Warner, *Confer*, p. 64.
58. Artaud, *Anthology*, pp. 322–7.
59. The French poet’s radical theory of the ‘theatre of cruelty’ is alluded to here in relation to film: Warner compares Artaud’s conception of theatre as an unsettling space in which an audience needs to confront and exorcise its worst fears to the cathartic propensities of contemporary thrillers. Artaud detected in early film an artistic form in which his ‘theatre of cruelty’ might thrive, but he grew to deplore the ‘star’-based system of Hollywood, despite his brief career as an actor in the 1920s: Warner alludes to his largest film role,

- in *Napoléon* (1927), directed by ‘Monsieur [Abel] Gance’ (*Pretty*, p. 15). At the poem’s closure, Warner refers to Artaud’s grimace, in a suitably Surrealist fashion, as a ‘Messerschmidt’, which, in turn, gestures towards the French poet’s internment during World War Two. This ‘grimace’ is finally described in a register and diction that anticipates *Le Pèse-Nerfs*: the ‘Messerschmidt’ is ‘galvanic’ (p. 15), an adjective that denotes a sudden production of an electric current; the phrase also subtly evokes Artaud’s shock treatment for mental illness in Rodez.
60. F. Scott Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby* (London: Penguin, 1950 [1926]), p. 59.
 61. Ezra Pound, ‘*Dans un Omnibus de Londres*’, *Collected Shorter Poems* (London: Faber and Faber, 1968), p. 160.
 62. Andrew Thacker, *Modernism, Space and the City* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2019), pp. 172, 179.
 63. Albert Bermel, *Artaud’s Theatre of Cruelty* (London/New York: Methuen, 2001 [1977]), p. 28; Thacker, p. 179.
 64. Richard Aldington, ‘In the Tube’, *The Egoist*, 2(5) (1 May 2015), 74. In ‘A Fresh look at Arthur Rimbaud’s “Métropolitain”’, Michael Spencer outlines the French poet’s appreciation of the London underground in 1872 during his peregrinations with Paul Verlaine (*Modern Language Review* 63[4] [October 1968], 849–53). The abstract, ‘vivid and unexpected colours’ in Rimbaud’s poem contrast with Aldington and Warner’s focus on the passengers, rather than disturbing scenery that gives way to the respite of the pastoral (p. 851).
 65. Warner, *Confer*, p. 30.
 66. Artaud, *Anthology*, p. 158.
 67. Peter Jones, ed., *Imagist Poetry* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 2001 [1972]), p. x.
 68. Bermel, *Artaud’s Theatre of Cruelty*, p. 28.
 69. Warner, *Confer*, p. 30; Aldington, ‘In the Tube’, p. 74. Similarly, F. S. Flint looks ‘in vain for a sign, | For a light’ in the eyes of the ‘mass’ in his poem ‘Tube’ (*Otherworld Cadences* [London: Poetry Bookshop, 1920], p. 36). However, Flint’s poem differs from Aldington’s (and Warner’s) in that the ‘mass’ is not beyond coercion: poets can ‘leaven’ it until the crowd ‘changes’, and attains an artistic ‘spirit that moves’.
 70. Artaud, *Anthology*, p. 158; Jones, ed., *Imagist Poetry*, p. x; Warner, *Confer*, p. 30.
 71. *OED*, 2nd edn; Ezra Pound, ‘Hugh Selwyn Mauberley’, in *Ezra Pound: Selected Poems 1908–1959* (London: Faber and Faber, 1975), pp. 98–112, p. 101.
 72. Aldington, ‘In the Tube’, p. 74.
 73. Deborah L. Parsons, *Streetwalking the Metropolis: Women, the City and Modernity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 25.
 74. Hill, ‘Poetry, Policing and Public Order (1)’, www.english.ox.ac.uk/professor-sir-geoffrey-hill-lectures (accessed 12 July 2020).

75. Parsons, *Streetwalking the Metropolis*, p. 3; Warner, *Confer*, p. 30.
76. Céline, *Journey to the End of the Night*, p. 18.
77. Thacker, *Modernism, Space and the City*, p. 180.
78. Warner, *Confer*, p. 30.
79. Warner refers to Apollinaire in section XIV in relation to his alleged stealing of the *Mona Lisa* (*Pretty*, p. 26). Due to his foreign background, and radical views, Apollinaire was considered to be a prime suspect, and was arrested on 22 August 1911, but released after five days. Two years later, Vincenzo Perggia, an ex-employee of the Louvre, was arrested when he attempted to sell the painting to an art dealer.
80. This incident occurred on 25 August 1944: there are at least three different versions of the story; in the least plausible one, Hemingway offers Picasso a scrap of an SS uniform, and claims he killed the soldier who owned it. It is unclear how Warner intends the reader to interpret this story. The pun on grenadine/grenade, in addition to the phrases that describe Picasso's activity before the incident – he 'would wander' past the Gestapo, and 'natter' over a coffee – perhaps imply opprobrium of the painter's civilian status during the war, as opposed to Hemingway's inclusion in the liberating US army (*Pretty*, p. 19).
81. Peter Buse, Ken Hirschkop, Scott McCracken and Bertrand Taithe, *Benjamin's Arcades: An unguided tour* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005), p. 4.
82. Furlani, *Guy Davenport*, p. 150.
83. Francis Scarfe, ed., *Baudelaire*, p. 179.
84. Buse et al, *Benjamin's Arcades*, p. 53.
85. James, *The Legacies of Modernism*, p. 3.
86. Warner's interest in the word '*désinvolte*' links to Adorno's reference to '*désinvolture*' in *Aesthetic Theory* that encapsulates the lyric poet's 'dispensation from the strictures of logic' (p. 55).
87. Artaud, *Anthology*, p. 38.
88. Philip Larkin, *Collected Poems* (London: Faber and Faber, 1988), p. 102.
89. Francis Scarfe, ed., *Baudelaire*, p. 16. The '*putain*' also forms a specific intertextual link: 'Paquette' refers to a prostitute in Voltaire's *Candide* (1759), who infects Pangloss with syphilis and later squanders the protagonist's money. The full passage from *Les Fleurs du Mal* is as follows:

*Aimi qu'un débauché pauvre qui baise et mange
Le sein martyrisé d'une antique catin,
Nous volons au passage un plaisir clandestin
Que nous pressons bien fort comme une vieille orange*

Scarfe translates this as: 'Like any poverty-stricken lecher who kisses and nibbles an old whore's martyred breasts, we steal more furtive pleasure on

- the way down and squeeze it to the last drop like a wizened orange' (p. 53).
90. Hayman, *Artaud and After*, p. 6.
 91. Baudelaire rails against prostitution as an 'ant-heap', weaving 'its furtive passage everywhere, like an enemy planning a surprise attack; it burrows through the city's filth like a worm filching away men's food' (*Baudelaire*, p. 189). The translator detects sarcasm in Baudelaire's '*Les femmes de plaisir*' in 'Morning Twilight', and translates the phrase as 'The women of "pleasure"', with the added 'rubber gloves' of quotation marks (p. 203). As in the passage about the 'ant-heap', Baudelaire's moral stance is clear: these women have '*la paupière livide, | Bouche ouverte, dormaient de leur sommeil stupide*' ('with bleary eyelids and gaping mouths, [they] were sleeping their stupid sleep') (p. 203).
 92. The stark differences between these two playwrights have often been remarked: Artaud's emphasis on popular theatre as a form of catharsis, 'a facing of the worst that could happen', for example, contrasts with Brecht's sense of socialist education through his *Lehrstücke*, which I discussed in Chapter 3. However, they do concur that theatre is not a space for the 'culinary' but a 'social necessity' – even if some form of vicarious pleasure might inevitably be involved (Bermel, *Artaud's Theatre of Cruelty*, pp. 14, 11).
 93. It could be argued that Warner's satire forms a specifically postmodernist, rather than modernist-influenced, diatribe against the 'culinary', since postmodernist writers such as Bret Easton Ellis and J. G. Ballard similarly critique rampant commodification in their novels. However, the difference lies in Ballard and Ellis's simultaneous fascination with the subject matter from popular culture that they criticise in novels such as *American Psycho* (1991), *The Atrocity Exhibition* (1970) and *Crash* (1973).
 94. Parsons, *Streetwalking the Metropolis*, p. 10.
 95. Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, pp. 225–6; Warner, *Hello. Your Promise has been Extracted*, p. 92.
 96. Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 226; Warner, *Pretty*, pp. 18, 13.
 97. This incident was due, as the poet-narrator intimates, to the corrupt activities of the companies dominating the port, and traffic on the Hai river towards Beijing: with little external oversight, inter-family corruption and illegal hiring practices, the explosion was a direct result of unregulated capitalism, rather than merely an accident.
 98. Rothberg, *The Implicated Subject*, p. 1.
 99. Jade Cuttle, 'The talented poets living in the world's largest refugee camp', *The Daily Telegraph*, 26 July 2019, 25–6, p. 25.

100. James Byrne and Shehzar Doja, eds., *I am a Rohingya: Poetry from the Camps and Beyond* (Todmorden: Arc, 2019).
101. James Byrne, *Places You Leave* (Todmorden: Arc, 2021), p. 7.
102. Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 120; Byrne, *Places You Leave*, p. 7.
103. Byrne, 'I am a Rohingya: Poetry from the World's Largest Refugee Camp and Beyond', <https://kenyonreview.org/kr-online-issue/literary-activism/sections/james-byrne-763879> (accessed 10 June 2020).
104. Byrne and Doja, eds., *I am a Rohingya*, p. 32.
105. *The Cantos of Ezra Pound* (New York: New Directions, 1996), p. 816.
106. James, *Discrepant Solace*, p. 24.
107. Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 125.
108. Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 125; T. S. Eliot, 'Tradition and the Individual Talent', *Selected Essays* (London: Faber and Faber, 1951 [1932]), pp. 13–22, p. 21.
109. Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 120; James, *Discrepant Solace*, p. 27.
110. James, *Discrepant Solace*, p. 27.
111. W. B. Yeats, *Selected Poetry*, ed. A. Norman Jeffares (London: Pan, 1974 [1962]), p. 99.
112. James Byrne, *The Caprices* (Todmorden: Arc, 2020), pp. 64, 51.
113. Victor I. Stoichita and Anna Maria Coderch draw attention to ambiguity within the image too, but only in terms of its 'sexual undertones', rather than visual identification: 'it will probably always be impossible to determine with any certainty whether the satire of avarice also contains sexual undertones, as the two purses featured in the foreground and certain ambiguous gestures in the middle distance might lead us to believe' (*Goya: The Last Carnival* [London: Reaktion Books, 1999], p. 203).
114. There is a comparable ambiguity in the 'Tantalus' image. Tantalus' wringing of hands may denote his impotency in the face of the young woman draped across his stomach. The sturdy blocks in the image contrast, in this reading, with the frailties of human desire; nature, and natural desires, are squashed into the side of the frame. However, Byrne's last line, 'the shadow weight of sky across a tomb', hints at another possibility, in which the thwarted desire is at the expense of the dead woman; the diagonal line in the top right-hand corner of the frame mirrors the slanted line of the raised tomb later in the sequence, in 'And still they don't go!' (p. 80). Just as Tantalus' son Pelops in Greek myth was offered as a sacrifice to the gods, Tantalus pleads with the gods in the poem for his son's reincarnation (Hermes gave life again to Pelops in the original myth). This possibility is even clearer in Byrne's first version of the poem in *Everything Broken Up Dances* (North Adams: Tupelo Press, 2015), in which Tantalus is 'ghosting Hades', and 'crush[es] [his] love under a tombstone' (p. 38).
115. Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 129.

116. The original poem has ‘Blake’s’, but I presume this possessive is a misprint. I have decided to correct the original, rather than insert an obtrusive ‘[sic]’ or ‘[Blakes]’ within the line’s parentheses.
117. Ben Jacobs and Oliver Laughland, ‘Charlottesville: Trump reverts to blaming both sides including “violent alt-left”’, www.theguardian.com/us-news/2017/aug/15/donald-trump-press-conference-far-right-defends-charlottesville (accessed 20 April 2020).
118. *Poems of Mr John Milton* (London: Humphrey Moseley, 1645), p. 104.
119. Percy Bysshe Shelley, *The Major Works*, eds. Zachary Leader and Michael O’Neill (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), pp. 400–11, p. 404.
120. James Byrne, *Withdrawals* (Newton-le-Willows: Knives Forks and Spoons Press, 2019), p. 21
121. *Poems of John Milton* (London/New York: Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd, n.p.d.), p. 9.
122. Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 225.
123. Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 126; James Byrne, *White Coins* (Todmorden: Arc, 2015), p. 14.
124. *OED*, 2nd edn.
125. James, *Discrepant Solace*, p. 27; Byrne, *White Coins*, p. 11.
126. James, *Discrepant Solace*, p. 27.
127. Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, pp. 121, 126.
128. Geoffrey Hill, *The Orchards of Syon* workbooks, notebook 52, BC MS 20c Hill/2/1/52, p. 35.
129. Hill, notebook 52, p. 35.
130. Paul Stubbs, review of *Blood/Sugar*, *The Black Herald*, 1 (January 2011), 34–6, p. 36.
131. Byrne, *Blood/Sugar*, pp. 72, 75; Ted Hughes, *Collected Poems* (London: Faber and Faber, 2003), pp. 33–4, p. 34.
132. Helen Carr, *The Verse Revolutionaries: Ezra Pound, H.D. and the Imagists* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 2013), p. 462.
133. www.bloodaxebooks.com/about (accessed 10 April 2020).
134. Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, pp. 115–16.
135. Eliot, ‘Tradition and the Individual Talent’, p. 17.
136. James, *Modernist Futures*, p. 89.
137. Julian Barnes, *The Sense of an Ending* (London: Vintage, 2012 [2011]), p. 22. The ‘wrangle for the ring’ here echoes Larkin’s poem ‘Wild Oats’, and ‘Dockery and Son’ is referred to twice on page 104. Webster’s prayer for the ordinary also recalls Larkin’s ‘Born Yesterday’ that praises ‘Nothing uncustomary’ (Philip Larkin, *Collected Poems* [London: Faber and Faber, 1988], p. 84). This poem was penned for the christening of Kingsley Amis’s daughter, Sally. As with Larkin’s positive appraisal of

Hull's ordinariness throughout his later life, Webster contends that he is 'not odd enough not to have done the things I've ended up doing with my life' (p. 64).

138. Zadie Smith, *NW* (London: Penguin, 2013 [2012]), pp. 28, 29.
 139. Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, pp. 124, 122, 121.

5 The Double Consciousness of Modernism

1. Roddy Lumsden, ed., *Identity Parade: New British and Irish Poets* (Newcastle: Bloodaxe, 2010), p. 103.
2. Sandeep Parmar, 'Not a British Subject: Poetry and Race in the UK', <https://lareviewofbooks.org/article/not-a-british-subject-race-and-poetry-in-the-uk> (accessed 19 May 2019).
3. Michael Bell, *Literature, Modernism and Myth: Belief and Responsibility in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 78.
4. Edith Hall mentions this text in *The Return of Ulysses: A Cultural History of Homer's Odyssey* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008), pp. 133–4. There are relatively few pre-modernist examples of the fictionalisation of myth in Hall's wide-ranging book, such as Pavel Katenin's *The Old Soldier Gorev* (1835), which transfers the *Odyssey* to 'a real, Russian contemporary community' set during the Napoleonic Wars (p. 25).
5. Bell, *Literature, Modernism and Myth*, p. 34.
6. Andre Furlani, *Guy Davenport: Postmodern and After* (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 2007); David James and Urmila Seshagiri, 'Metamodernism: Narratives of Continuity and Revolution', *PMLA*, 129(1) (2014), 87–98.
7. Theodor W. Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, eds. Gretel Adorno and Rolf Tiedemann, trans. Robert Hullot-Kentor (London: The Athlone Press, 1997 [1970]), p. 126.
8. Hall, *The Return of Ulysses*, p. 52.
9. I am grateful to my colleague Dr David Miller for our discussions about myth, Romanticism and fictionality.
10. Alfred Tennyson, *Poetical Works* (London/New York: Oxford University Press, 1959 [1953]), p. 51.
11. T. S. Eliot, 'The Waste Land', in *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, Volume 2 (New York/London: W. W. Norton, 2006), p. 2302.
12. Michael McKeon, *The Origins of the English Novel, 1600–1740* (Baltimore, Maryland: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002 [1987]).
13. Ezra Pound, *The Cantos of Ezra Pound* (New York: New Directions, 1993 [1973]), p. 3; Theodor W. Adorno and Max Horkheimer, *Dialectic of*

- Enlightenment*, trans. John Cummins (London: Verso, 1986 [1944]), p. 46. As Hall notes, Pound's project 'is more than a Modernist plunge into the abyss of myth: he is creating his own version of the poet's traditional homage to the *Odyssey* as the very text that he rightly believed constitutes the source of the Western poetic subject' (*The Return of Ulysses*, p. 25). Working with the original texts was essential to Pound's philosophy: 'Better mendacities', as he puts it in 'Hugh Selwyn Mauberley', than 'the classics in paraphrase!' (*Selected Poems 1908–1959* [London: Faber and Faber, 1975], p. 99).
14. Bell, *Literature, Modernism and Myth*, p. 78; Adorno and Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, p. 46.
 15. This counterpointing is central to many other of Harrison's dramatic works, such as *Akin Mata* (1966) and *The Common Chorus* (1992), as a 'combination of fixed form and fleeting content' (Tony Harrison, *Collected Film Poetry* [London: Faber and Faber, 2007], p. xi). I am grateful to Dr Rachel Bower from the University of Leeds for pointing out this quotation, and for our discussions about *Akin Mata*.
 16. Antony Rowland, *Holocaust Poetry* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2005), p. 101.
 17. Michael Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memories: Remembering the Holocaust in the Age of Decolonisation* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009), p. 3.
 18. Hall tracks the multitudinous reimaginings of *The Odyssey* in the work of, for example, Pound and Joyce. It is telling that Prometheus rather than Odysseus is more predominant in Harrison's work. There is certainly an Odysseian sensibility behind *V* (1985) that tracks the poet's journey from his Beeston youth to exile in the geographical specificities of north Leeds, and in which the skinhead appears as a kind of ghost in a libation that ironically invokes the spirit of the living poet. Yet it is Harrison's reconstruction of the atrocities of the twentieth century via Prometheus that predominates in his later work. Harrison may well have been reacting to what Adorno and Horkheimer evaluate as Odysseus' bourgeois propensities. In a wonderfully tongue-in-cheek passage in *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, they undercut Odysseus' attempt to prove his identity to Penelope through his detailed account of his construction of their marriage bed: Odysseus is 'the proto-typical bourgeois – the with-it hobbyist [imitating] the actual labor [*sic*] of a craftsman' (p. 74). In the archive of Harrison's correspondence in the Brotherton Library, Harrison also documents his struggle to find a modern idiom for Homeric Greek (BC MS 20c Harrison OS/FAD-RBL Correspondence). Harrison has been asked to consider a radio drama adaptation of *The Odyssey* for the BBC, and responds as follows: 'I've immersed myself again in the Greek text with a lot of excitement though I couldn't, for all my attempts, find a modern way into it that would have

- made my own style take off [. . .] after a lot of soul-searching I have to give priority to my original work. The piece I am working on is a large scale theatre work and it would be hard to alternate the work with translating and dramatizing *The Odyssey*' (letter to Janet Whitaker, 11 June 2002, p. 1).
19. Sandeep Parmar, *Eidolon* (Bristol: Shearsman Books, 2015), p. 65. Parmar argues that Woolf's point is that 'we essentially cannot *know* the Greeks because we are so culturally different and their age was not one of aesthetic "schools" or development phases but one that was somehow locked crystalline into a monolithic antiquity' (p. 64). However, Woolf's essay 'On Not Knowing Greek' in *The Common Reader* (London/Toronto: The Hogarth Press, 1975 [1925]) is actually more about 'knowing' Greek: she suggests, for example, that we 'know' Electra through her dialogue (p. 43). Readers are also impressed by 'heroism itself' (p. 44) in *Electra* (414–420 BCE) and *Antigone* (441 BCE). Allegedly, we appreciate Antigone, Ajax and Electra as the 'originals' of the human character, as opposed to Chaucer's mere 'varieties of the human species' in the *Canterbury Tales* (1387–1400) (p. 44). Nevertheless, Woolf stresses that there are geographical, historical and linguistic reasons for this seemingly 'impersonal' literature, so that 'they admit to us a vision of the earth unravaged, the sea unpolluted, the maturity, tried but unbroken, of mankind' (pp. 54–5). Contemporary readers do not know 'how the words sounded, or where precisely we ought to laugh, or how the actors acted' (p. 39).
 20. Simon Armitage, 'On Tony Harrison', *Stand*, no. 215, Vol. 15 (3), 2017, 7–11, p. 8.
 21. This proto-modernist influence arises in one of the most quoted stanzas from V: 'You piss-artist skinhead cunt, you wouldn't know | and it doesn't fucking matter if you do, | the skin and poet united fucking Rimbaud | but the *autre* that *je est* is fucking you' (*Selected Poems*, p. 242). In an effort to both widen and close the distance between the poet and skinhead, Harrison reverts to 'T.W.' in order to distinguish his learning from the skinhead, at the same time as the demotic language draws the poet into his interlocutor's linguistic ambit. Of all the examples in literature that Harrison could have drawn from in his specific case of othering, it is telling that he deploys a proto-modernist influence from over twenty years earlier. The French writer is a sign of the poet's cultural supremacy over the skinhead, but Rimbaud is also integrated in this stanza's vision of someone who can encapsulate, like the French author, the 'skin and poet'. Yet there is also something odd about the meaning of these lines, and the way Rimbaud is deployed, that goes beyond the hidden inference of Harrison 'hating' the skinhead through the aural pun on '*je est*', which sounds the same as '*je hais*' ('I hate'). Harrison's quotation from Rimbaud's work comes from *Lettres du Voyant* (1871), and Rimbaud's

letters to Charles Izambard and Paul Demeny. ‘*Je est autre*’ comes from a passage which (in Marjorie Perloff’s translation) reads: ‘It is wrong to say: I think. One ought to say: I am being thought | I is another. If brass wakes up a trumpet, it is not its fault’ (*The Poetics of Indeterminacy: Rimbaud to Cage* [Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1983 (1981)], p. 60). Trumpeting his erudition, the poet nevertheless acknowledges his origins in the ‘brass’ of working-class culture that encompasses the skinhead. Perloff understands these lines from Rimbaud’s letter to mean that ‘the “schizoid” poet stands back and inspects his “moi” as if it belonged to somebody else’ (p. 61). Harrison’s deployment of Rimbaud thus induces a selective reading of his letters and poetry, since Harrison does not wish to create a ‘verbal field where the identity of the “I” is dissolved’ (p. 62). This impacts on a reading of the quoted stanza, since Harrison as poet-figure insists oddly that it ‘doesn’t matter’ if the skinhead knows Rimbaud’s work, or understands what ‘the *autre* that *je est*’ means (*Selected Poems*, p. 242). The Rimbaud beloved of poststructuralist poets and critics who creates an elusive ‘verbal field’ is no use to a poet-figure who wants to stress the difference between the author and skinhead, even if the latter were au fait with French and symbolist poetry (*The Poetics of Indeterminacy*, p. 62). It would ‘fucking matter’ in that if the skinhead knew Rimbaud he might well *be* the poet: in a sense, *V* ultimately suggests that he is, since the skinhead is figured as a classical ‘shade’, and an alternative vision of the poet himself (*Selected Poems*, p. 242). This strange case of it ‘not mattering’ if the skinhead can draw on proto-modernist literature also draws attention to the odd use of ‘but’ in this stanza. The poet-figure presents Rimbaud as akin to the author: someone who can ‘unite’ the ‘skin and poet’, so that there would be no need for the ‘*je*’ to be ‘*autre*’. The conjunction between the third and fourth line distinguishes between the examples of the poet and Rimbaud, in the sense of ‘but’ as meaning ‘otherwise’, ‘on the contrary’ or ‘on the other hand’ rather than ‘only’ or ‘except’. But surely ‘and’ would be more appropriate here, since the two examples show the same process: to paraphrase, the skinhead and poet are united in Rimbaud just as they are in the poet-figure, not in contrast to Rimbaud. ‘But’ is here not an innocuous conjunction, but an example of what Adorno terms a weak ‘coordinating particle’ in his essay ‘On Epic Naiveté’ (*Notes to Literature*, vol. 1, trans. S. W. Nicholson [New York and Chichester: Columbia University Press, 1991], pp. 24–9, pp. 27–8). It reveals an uneasiness in the metaphorical chain of the skinhead/Rimbaud/Harrison/poet that runs throughout this stanza, and *V* as a whole. It also indicates disquiet about the proto-modernist intertext here, as if the literary connection between Rimbaud and Harrison is as equally fraught as the link between the two poets and the skinhead.

22. Armitage, 'On Tony Harrison', p. 11. In 'Summoned by Bells', Harrison's entanglement in issues of democracy draws more openly on a modernist intertext: he pastiches the form of the first section of Pound's 'Hugh Selwyn Mauberley', with its trimeters and tetrameters. Rather than John Betjeman's verse autobiography, the title alludes to Pound's apparent despising of church bells: in *Ezra Pound's Kensington* (1965), Patricia Hutchins comments on the 'unkind' bells of St Mary Abbots, which – according to James Campbell – 'aggravated his incipient derangement' ('Home from Home', *The Guardian*, 17 May 2008, www.theguardian.com/books/2008/may/17/poetry3 [accessed 17 May 2017]). As Adrian Barlow recounts in his article 'Ring Out, Wild Bells!', it 'appeared to [Pound] impossible that any clean form of teaching could lead a man, or group, to cause that damnable and hideous noise and inflict it on helpless humanity' ('Ring Out, Wild Bells', 5 June 2015, <http://adrianbarlowsblog.blogspot.co.uk/2015/06/ring-out-wild-bells.html> [accessed 17 May 2017]). Harrison begins the poem with an imagined quotation from Pound: 'O Zeppelins! O Zeppelins! | prayed poet E.P. | any Boche gets 60 pence | to bust this campanolatory!' (*The Gaze of the Gorgon* [Newcastle: Bloodaxe, 1992], p. 24). 'Summoned by Bells' reveals that Harrison's equivalent of Pound's 'Doubles, triples' and 'caters' – usually rung on ten-bells and other higher odd-bell stages – is the sound of house alarms. Securicor alarms interfere with Harrison's rhythm and concentration: it is not surprising that the fourth stanza contains a metrical break precisely on the word 'bells'. These 'new bells of John Bull' are, for Harrison, entwined with his vision of nationalistic mass culture, complete with its jingoistic nationalism, deadening popular culture (encapsulated in video consumption) and religious genuflection. Harrison caricatures himself here as the modernist 'outcast', who is about to leave his house for, presumably, a poetry reading, his 'bag there ready packed' with books. As with the poet in 'Hugh Selwyn Mauberley', Harrison depicts himself as out of key with his time, striving through such readings to 'resuscitate the dead art | Of poetry' (*Ezra Pound: Selected Poems 1908–1959*, p. 98). According to Harrison's poem, this 'dead art' can only be revitalised in a democracy obsessed with the temporalities of popular trash. Harrison paradoxically rails against the consumerist masses in the most accessible of Pound's forms – the quatrains at the beginning of 'Hugh Selwyn Mauberley' – before the poem begins to fragment in part IV. As Sandie Byrne notes in *H, v & o: The Poetry of Tony Harrison* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998), 'Summoned by Bells' ends on a distinctly bourgeois vision of the illiterate thief who steals the 'curocity's' books (p. 108). The poem's stance on popular culture, and modern Britain as the 'half savage country' of 'Hugh Selwyn Mauberley', is symptomatic of the 'second modernist ideology' of

- a resistance to popular culture (Raymond Williams, *The Politics of Modernism*, ed. Tony Pinkney [London/New York: Verso, 1989], p. 5).
23. David James, *The Legacies of Modernism: Historicising Postwar and Contemporary Fiction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), p. 2.
 24. Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 120.
 25. Bell, *Literature, Modernism and Myth*, p. 78.
 26. Harrison, ‘OPΦEAE’ (‘Orpheus’) notebook (c. 1998), BC MS 20c Harrison/03/ORP, pp. 15, 17. The last two quotations are pasted in from Ivan M. Linforth’s *The Arts of Orpheus* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1941). Harrison then moves on to the first mention of the Thracian women cutting off Orpheus’ head and fastening it to a lyre, and subsequently throwing it into the river or sea (*The Arts of Orpheus*, pp. 128–9; workbook, p. 28). Virgil’s *Georgics* (29 BCE) then follow, and the first reference to the head singing after Orpheus’ death (p. 28).
 27. Harrison, ‘OPΦEAE’ (‘Orpheus’) notebook, p. 257.
 28. The amount of material on Sappho in the workbook suggests that she had a more extensive presence in the original conception of the film. There are references, for example, to Yopie Prins’s *Victorian Sappho* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1999), and a leaflet for a tourist shop in Skala Eressou (Harrison, ‘OPΦEAE’ [‘Orpheus’] notebook’, p. 191). On a postcard to Harrison held in the Brotherton archive (14 September 1999), the cameraman Alistair Cameron notes that shots of Harrison’s plastic head ‘went brilliantly’ in ‘Eresos (Dyke City) again!’ (Harrison, ‘Correspondence’, BCMS 20c Harrison OS/FAD-RBL). Harrison’s continued interest in Eressou is indicated in an article included at the end of the Orpheus workbook (not long before the screening of the film-poem) by Stephanie Theobald and Michael Howard, entitled ‘Lesbians go mad in Lesbos’ (*The Guardian*, 14 September 2000), discussing the town’s reaction to a proposed ‘Wet Pussy Pool Party’ (pp. 294–5).
 29. The article ‘Book tells it straight about sex lives of ancient Greeks’, published in *The Guardian* (16 August 1999), discusses Nikos Vrissimtzis’ *Love, Sex and Marriage in Ancient Greece: A Guide to the Private Life of the Ancient Greeks* (1999) (Harrison, ‘OPΦEAE’ [‘Orpheus’] notebook, pp. 167–8).
 30. Harrison, ‘OPΦEAE’ (‘Orpheus’) notebook, p. 150.
 31. Jonathan West, letter to Mrs Holland, 17 August 1999, p. 1 (Harrison, ‘OPΦEAE’ [‘Orpheus’] notebook, p. 150).
 32. Harrison, ‘OPΦEAE’ (‘Orpheus’) notebook, pp. 7–8. The pasted-in quotation about the pit originates from an article by Professor Toucho Zhecher.

33. Angela Carter, 'Notes from the Front Line', in Michelene Wandor, ed., *On Gender and Writing* (Boston/London: Pandora Press, 1983), pp. 69–77, p. 69; Tony Harrison, *Collected Film Poetry*, p. 386.
34. Bell, *Literature, Modernism and Myth*, p. 34.
35. Harrison, *Collected Film Poetry*, p. 398.
36. Theodor Adorno, 'Commitment', in Perry Anderson, Rodney Livingstone and Francis Mulhern, eds., *Aesthetics and Politics* (London: Verso, 2007 [1977]), pp. 177–95, p. 177.
37. Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 121.
38. Harrison, 'OPΦEAE' ('Orpheus') notebook, pp. 17, 22, 33.
39. Harrison must have been unaware of the demands of what was named the Research Assessment Exercise in 2000. The 'Codgers' line in the workbook is replaced with the two lines: 'I think it needs that ancient scream | to pierce the skulls of Academe' (Harrison, 'OPΦEAE' ['Orpheus'] notebook, p. 234).
40. Oliver Taplin, 'Contemporary Poetry and Classics', in *Classics in Progress: Essays on Ancient Greece and Rome* (Oxford: The British Academy [Oxford University Press], 2002), pp. 1–20, p. 11.
41. Harrison, *Collected Film Poetry*, p. 385.
42. Theodor Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, trans. E. B. Ashton (New York: Seabury Press, 1973 [1967]), p. 367.
43. Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 126.
44. Nabina Das, review of *Eidolon*, *Mascara Literary Review*, 23 August 2016, <http://mascarareview.com/nabina-das-reviews-eidolon-by-sandeep-paramar> (accessed 14 July 2017).
45. Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, pp. 126, 121.
46. Robert Sheppard, *The Poetry of Saying: British Poetry and its Discontents, 1950–2000* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2005); Parmar, 'Not a British Subject', <https://lareviewofbooks.org/article/not-a-british-subject-race-and-poetry-in-the-uk> (accessed 19 May 2019).
47. Harrison, *Collected Film Poetry*, p. 398; Euripides, *The Trojan Women – Helen, The Bacchae*, trans. Neil Curry (London/Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), p. 7. Harrison's celebration of humanist carpe diem grates against Bell's sense of the modernist self as 'consciously ungroundable', just as Eliot's later retreat into Catholicism does not fit into Bell's sense of an identity with 'no essential centre' which 'lies at the heart of modernism' (p. 36). In contrast to postmodernist writers in whose work identity is 'ungroundable' in its multiplicity, and in a constant state of becoming, Harrison's modernist sensibility intuits 'unity within incommensurable differences' (p. 80). Akin to writers such as Eliot – but with very different ideological results – Harrison is 'obliged' in poems such as 'The Grilling' from *Under the Clock* to meditate closely 'on what it meant to have a conviction, since, in the cultural

fragmentation of modernity, any belief inevitably became more arbitrary, relative, and self-conscious' (p. 3). In this poem, Harrison follows that archetypal modernist philosopher, Nietzsche, in his affirmation of life 'on the model of art' (p. 27). Reacting against Schopenhauer's philosophy, in which the aesthetic forms an opposition to everyday life and its woes, Nietzsche interpreted mythic narratives not as ideals divorced from human existence, but as a way of living (p. 27). Similarly in 'The Grilling', Harrison interweaves the satyrs and his Bacchic celebration of choice morsels and imbibing with the shadow of Vesuvius. Harrison also adheres to the mythic 'double consciousness' of Joyce in his counterpointing through impiety, that Bell underplays in *Literature, Modernism and Myth*. Bloom's ablutions become part of a reimagined *Odyssey* just as the satyrs with their refulgent appendages arise out of the fiery detritus of Vesuvius and twentieth-century history in 'The Grilling' (p. 39). Bell writes of the post-war turn in Europe against myth, largely – unlike Mann's work – in response to fascism (p. 5): he singles out Adorno and Horkheimer's *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (1944) as having been particularly persuasive in its criticism of the 'pre-civilised' world of mythic powers, crystallised in the section of the *Odyssey* in which the bound Odysseus struggles against the irrational charms of the Sirens' song (pp. 132–3). However, like Bell – and unlike Adorno and Horkheimer – Harrison does not regard myth as coterminous with atavistic nostalgia. Ultimately, 'The Grilling' is engaged in the urgent problem of 'what it might now mean to live a conviction, what it is to inhabit a belief' (p. 3).

48. Bettany Hughes, *Helen of Troy: Goddess, Princess, Whore* (London: Pimlico, 2006 [2005]), p. xxxv.
49. H. D., *Helen in Egypt* (Manchester: Carcanet, 1985 [1961]), pp. vii, 129.
50. Hughes explains that *eidolon* is a Greek word meaning a 'ghost, an image or idea' (p. 11). Later in *Helen of Troy* she is 'an *eidolon* that burns with projected emotion' (p. 116). Hughes notes Stesichorus' second version of the Helen myth (pp. 160–1), but the latter covers only two pages of her wide-ranging book.
51. Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 126.
52. Walt Whitman, 'Eidolons', www.infoplease.com/primary-sources/poetry/walt-whitman/walt-whitman-aidolons (accessed 17 June 2020).
53. Eleanor Cook, 'The Figure of Enigma: Rhetoric, History and Poetry', *Rhetorica: A Journal of the History of Rhetoric*, 19(4) (2001), 349–78, p. 352.
54. Whitman, 'Eidolons', www.infoplease.com/primary-sources/poetry/walt-whitman/walt-whitman-aidolons (accessed 17 June 2020); Parmar, *Eidolon*, pp. 65, 67.
55. Robert Hullot-Kentor, 'Translator's Introduction', *Aesthetic Theory*, pp. i–xxi, p. xvi.

56. Parmar, *Eidolon*, p. 26; H. D., *Helen in Egypt*, p. 12.
57. Hughes, *Helen of Troy*, p. 66; Parmar, *Eidolon*, p. 26.
58. Lawrence Durrell, *Collected Poems* (London: Faber and Faber, 1968), p. 273; *OED*, 2nd edn.
59. Parmar, *Eidolon*, p. 56; Durrell, *Collected Poems*, p. 273.
60. Anna Reading, 'Memobilia: The Mobile Phone and the Emergence of Wearable Memories', in *Save As ... Digital Memories* (New York/Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2009), pp. 81–95, p. 81.
61. Instead of the 'butchery' of her eyes, in *Helen in Egypt* Achilles is transfixed by Helen's eyes, 'shimmering as light on the changeable sea' (p. 54).
62. Durrell, *Collected Poems*, p. 273. In *Virginia Woolf's Greek Tragedy* (London/New York: Bloomsbury, 2020 [2019]), Nancy Worman engages with Woolf's ambivalent approach to imperialism. The novelist's 'Greek metonymies' frequently serve to 'critique the brutalities of empire', but they also 'shape her passionate pursuit of modernist aesthetics that tends to view Greece with a fondly proprietary eye' (p. 80). Woolf's exoticisation of Greece and the classics 'has uncomfortable political underpinnings, since it colludes with imperialist and colonialist perspectives' at the same time as the novels appear to critique the values of the latter (p. 16). She does not simply endorse Euripides' impersonality: any consideration of 'Woolf's use of Greek and Greece must take into account the figuring of the female as outsider and colonized, in relation to which "Greece" both shares this status and stands in opposition to it' (p. 4).
63. Durrell, *Collected Poems*, p. 273; Parmar, *Eidolon*, p. 31.
64. Hughes, *Helen of Troy*, p. 218.
65. Theodor Adorno, 'Commitment', in R. Livingstone, P. Anderson and F. Mulhern, eds., *Aesthetics and Politics*, trans. F. MacDonagh (London: New Left Books, 1977), pp. 177–95, p. 189.
66. Tony Harrison, *Under the Clock* (London/New York: Penguin, 2005), p. 40; Das, review of *Eidolon*, <http://mascarareview.com/nabina-das-reviews-eidolon-by-sandeep-paramar> (accessed 14 July 2017).
67. Harrison, *Under the Clock*, p. 39; Parmar, *Eidolon*, pp. 68, 36.
68. Armitage, 'On Tony Harrison', p. 8.

Conclusion

1. Geoffrey Hill, 'Poetry, Policing and Public Order (1)', www.english.ox.ac.uk/professor-sir-geoffrey-hill-lectures (accessed 12 July 2020). Hill refers to T. S. Eliot's phrase 'the exasperated spirit' from part two of 'Little Gidding' in *Four Quartets* (London: Faber and Faber, 1959), p. 54.
2. Geoffrey Hill, 'Monumentality and Bidding', www.english.ox.ac.uk/professor-sir-geoffrey-hill-lectures (accessed 16 July 2020).

3. Hill, 'Poetry, Policing and Public Order', www.english.ox.ac.uk/professor-sir-geoffrey-hill-lectures (accessed 12 July 2020).
4. Geoffrey Hill, Michaelmas Term lecture (27 November 2012), www.english.ox.ac.uk/professor-sir-geoffrey-hill-lectures (accessed 16 July 2020).
5. Geoffrey Hill, 'Legal Fiction and Legal "Fiction"', www.english.ox.ac.uk/professor-sir-geoffrey-hill-lectures (accessed 16 July 2020); David James, *The Legacies of Modernism: Historicising Postwar and Contemporary Fiction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), p. 2.
6. David James and Urmila Seshagiri, 'Metamodernism: Narratives of Continuity and Revolution', *PMLA*, 129(1) (2014), 87–98.
7. Hill, 'Legal Fiction and Legal "Fiction"', www.english.ox.ac.uk/professor-sir-geoffrey-hill-lectures (accessed 16 July 2020).
8. David James and Urmila Seshagiri, 'Metamodernism: Narratives of Continuity and Revolution', *PMLA*, 129(1) (2014), 87–98, p. 87.
9. Timotheus Vermeulen and Robin van den Akker, 'Notes on Metamodernism', *Journal of Aesthetics and Culture*, 2 (2010), 2–14; Robin van den Akker, Alison Gibbons and Timotheus Vermeulen, eds, *Metamodernism: Historicity, Affect and Depth After Postmodernism* (London: New York: Rowman and Littlefield International, 2017); Andre Furlani, *Guy Davenport: Postmodern and After* (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 2007); Luke Turner, 'Metamodernism Manifesto' and 'Metamodernism: A Brief Introduction', www.metamodernism.org (accessed 29 April 2021); Nick Bentley, 'Trailing Postmodernism: David Mitchell's *Cloud Atlas*, Zadie Smith's *NW*, and the Metamodern', *English Studies*, 99: 7–8 (November 2018), 723–43; Dennis Kersten and Usha Wilbers, eds., 'Metamodernism: A Special Issue', *English*, 99: 7–8 (November 2018).
10. Theodor W. Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, eds. Gretel Adorno and Rolf Tiedemann, trans. Robert Hullot-Kentor (London: The Athlone Press, 1997 [1970]), p. 121.
11. James and Seshagiri, 'Metamodernism', p. 97.
12. A secret is different to an enigma, of course: the former suggests a single entity that can be discovered; the latter connotes a conundrum that may never be solved.
13. Hill, 'Legal Fiction and Legal "Fiction"', www.english.ox.ac.uk/professor-sir-geoffrey-hill-lectures (accessed 16 July 2020).
14. Jeffrey T. Nealon, *Post-Postmodernism or, the Cultural Logic of Just-in-Time Capitalism* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2012), p. 153.
15. Metamodernist poetry's resistance to commodification registers a point of overlap between the two different versions of metamodernism. In the third AHRC symposium on metamodernism at the University of Oslo

- (21 September 2018), Tim Vermeulen referred to these poetics of resistance as akin to a ‘pinching of the map’, in which overriding consumerism remains intact, but can be challenged by metamodernist art.
16. Tony Harrison, *The Inky Digit of Defiance: Selected Prose 1966–2016* (London: Faber and Faber, 2017), p. 288.
 17. Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 120.
 18. Hill, Michaelmas Term lecture, 27 November 2012, www.english.ox.ac.uk/professor-sir-geoffrey-hill-lectures (accessed 16 July 2020).
 19. Hill, ‘Legal Fiction and Legal “Fiction”’, www.english.ox.ac.uk/professor-sir-geoffrey-hill-lectures (accessed 16 July 2020).
 20. Hill, Michaelmas Term lecture, 27 November 2012, www.english.ox.ac.uk/professor-sir-geoffrey-hill-lectures (accessed 16 July 2020); Hill, ‘Legal Fiction and Legal “Fiction”’, www.english.ox.ac.uk/professor-sir-geoffrey-hill-lectures (accessed 16 July 2020).
 21. Hill, Michaelmas Term lecture, 27 November 2012, www.english.ox.ac.uk/professor-sir-geoffrey-hill-lectures (accessed 16 July 2020).
 22. Hill, Michaelmas Term lecture, 27 November 2012, www.english.ox.ac.uk/professor-sir-geoffrey-hill-lectures (accessed 16 July 2020); Peter Barry, *Poetry Wars* (Cambridge: Salt, 2006), p. 137.
 23. For some poetry critics such as Marjorie Perloff, tracking the legacies of modernism signals a return to neglected aspects of early twentieth-century literature in order to circumvent the ‘tired dichotomy’ between modernism and postmodernism, whereas for others (including the critic Ken Edwards) ‘innovative’ poetry is symptomatic of a ‘parallel tradition’ that has flourished throughout the postmodern era (*21st-Century Modernism: The “New” Poetics* [Malden/Oxford: Blackwells, 2002], p. 1; Ken Edwards, ‘The Two Poetries’, *Angelaki*, 3/1 [April 2000], 25–36, p. 32).
 24. These critics are drawing, of course, on Raymond Williams’s use of the phrase ‘structure of feeling’ as a way of characterising a delicate, elusive and yet tangible aspect of our cultural activities. Williams wishes to describe the common characteristics of any particular historical moment, but without any idealist sense of the ‘spirit’ of an epoch. Rather than a definable zeitgeist, Vermeulen and Akker refer to a ‘new generation’ of artists who are increasingly abandoning ‘the aesthetic precepts of deconstruction, parataxis, and pastiche’ in favour of ‘reconstruction, myth, and metaxis’ (‘Notes on Metamodernism’, p. 2).
 25. Adrian Searle, ‘Altermodern Review: “The Richest and Most Generous Tate Triennial Yet”’, www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2009/feb/02/altermodern-tate-triennial (accessed 16 July 2020).
 26. As both a symptom and a means of resistance, metamodernism is necessarily ‘shot through with productive contradictions, simmering tensions,

- ideological formations and – to be frank – frightening developments (our incapacity to effectively combat xenophobic populism comes to mind)’ (*Metamodernism*, pp. 5–6). Centrist politics is now giving way to leftist anti-globalisation and right-wing popular movements, and yet the ‘neoliberal path’ still dominates, ‘leading to a clusterfuck of world-historical proportions’ (p. 17). In the same volume, Josh Toth notes that ‘the very rhetorical strategies’ (such as critiques of the concepts of ‘truth’ and ‘authenticity’) that ‘we typically associate with postmodernism are now being deployed by the political right’ (‘Toni Morrison’s *Beloved* and the Rise of Historioplasmic Metafiction’, pp. 41–53, p. 42).
27. James MacDowell, ‘The Metamodern, the Quirky and Film Criticism’, in *Metamodernism*, pp. 25–40, p. 28. MacDowell proposes the ‘quirky’ as ‘a useful lens through which to view strands of contemporary culture’ (p. 26), and endorses post-ironic films that are self-conscious but also contain ‘metamodern’ moments such as the ‘quirky’ turn from the main narrative in *The Fantastic Mr Fox* (2009) in which the eponymous creature sheds a tear at the plight of the feared wolf.
 28. Ahren Warner, *Pretty* (Newcastle: Bloodaxe, 2013), p. 72.
 29. David James, *The Legacies of Modernism: Historicising Postwar and Contemporary Fiction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), p. 3; T. S. Eliot, *Selected Poems* (London: Faber and Faber, 1954), p. 53.
 30. Ahren Warner, *Confer* (Newcastle: Bloodaxe, 2011), p. 41.
 31. Francis Scarfe, ed., *Baudelaire: The Complete Verse* (London: Anvil, 1986), p. 59.
 32. David Kennedy, *New Relations: The Refashioning of British Poetry 1980–94* (Bridgend: Seren, 1996), p. 18.
 33. These authors trace the ‘waning’, for example, of disaffection, irony and the spectacular in contemporary European culture (*Metamodernism*, p. 2).
 34. As Rotherg writes in *The Implicated Subject: Beyond Victims and Perpetrators* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2019), as taxpayers, ‘we are indeed all implicated in the actions of our government, whatever our ideological opposition to or affective disengagement from particular policies’ (p. 19).
 35. John Keats, ‘Ode on Melancholy’, *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*, ed. Margaret Ferguson, Mary Jo Salter and Jon Stallworthy, 5th edition (New York/London: W. W. Norton, 2005), p. 937.
 36. Paul Batchelor, review of *Hello. Your Promise has been Extracted*, www.newstatesman.com/culture/poetry/2018/01/poets-nuar-alsadir-and-ahren-warner-reveal-intriguing-habits-perception (accessed 10 January 2020).
 37. Paul Muldoon, ‘The Loaf’, *Moy Sand and Gravel* (London: Faber and Faber, 2002), p. 47.

38. Warner, *Pretty*, p. 67. Curiously, ‘rendering’ occurs in *Aesthetic Theory* too, as a trope for the critical process as it attempts to understand works of art (p. 186). Walter Benjamin’s attention in ‘Surrealism’ to the minutiae of urban ephemera includes a focus on ‘roof tops, lightning conductors, gutters, verandas [. . .] stucco work’ (*One Way Street and Other Writings*, trans. Edmund Jephcott and Kingsley Shorter [London: Verso, 1992], pp. 225–39, p. 228). These details all feature in Warner’s photographs in *Hello. Your Promise has been Extracted*.
39. Rothberg, *The Implicated Subject*, p. 12.
40. Lauren Berlant, ‘The subject of True Feeling: Pain, Privacy, and Politics’, in Sara Ahmed, Jane Kilby, Celia Lury, Maureen McNeil and Beverley Skeggs, eds., *Transformations: Thinking Through Feminism* (London: Routledge, 2000), pp. 33–47.
41. Batchelor, review of *Hello. Your Promise has been Extracted* (21 January 2018), www.newstatesman.com/culture/poetry/2018/01/poets-nuar-alsadir-and-ahren-warner-reveal-intriguing-habits-perception (accessed 10 January 2020). Benjamin Myers is similarly offended by the ‘sensationalism’ of such historical evocations (www.worldliteraturetoday.org/2018/july/hello-your-promise-has-been-extracted-ahren-warner) (accessed 25 January 2020). Myers concludes that ‘this is not how Celan does it’.
42. Gibbons, van den Akker and Vermeulen, *Metamodernism*, pp. 5, 17.
43. Rothberg, *The Implicated Subject*, p. 1.
44. Peter Boxall, *Twenty-First-Century Fiction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), p. 59. In his paper ‘Imaging the Future’ at the first AHRC research network symposium on metamodernism at Manchester Metropolitan University (31 January 2018), Boxall referred instead to the ‘reanimation of formal histories’ and ‘resurgent modes of realism’ in Ian McEwan’s *The Children’s Act* (2014).
45. Linda Hutcheon, *The Politics of Postmodernism* (London: Routledge, 2002 [1989]), p. 181.
46. www.amazon.co.uk/New-British-Poetry-Don-Paterson/dp/1555973949 (accessed 30 September 2020). As I noted in the Introduction and Chapter 1, the reviewer avers that the ‘UK poetry scene is smaller than its US counterpart, so the “poetry wars” there must be like a knife fight in a phone booth’.
47. In Lipovetsky’s *Hypermodern Times* (Cambridge/Malden: Polity Press, 2005), the hypermodern defines ‘a new social and cultural climate’, that each day moves ‘a little further away from the relaxed, carefree attitudes of the postmodern years’ (p. 45). Individual freedom begets personal regulation, combined with ‘anxiety about a future fraught with risk and uncertainty’

- (p. 6). However, hypermodernity – akin to Vermeulen and van den Akker’s ‘oscillations’ – ‘is the reign neither of absolute happiness, nor of total nihilism’ (p. 25): the ‘astonishing’ fact is that ‘the society of mass consumption, emotional and individualistic as it is, allows an adaptable spirit of responsibility to coexist with a spirit of irresponsibility’ (p. 26). Chiming with Gibbons, van den Akker and Vermeulen’s sense of the return of affect and empathy, ‘the frenzy of “always more” does not kill off the qualitative logic of “not more, but better” and the importance of feelings: it gives them, on the contrary, a greater social visibility, a new mass legitimacy’ (p. 55).
48. Sato’s comments were made during a symposium on metamodernism at Radboud University (Nijmegen) (29 October 2015).
 49. Turner, ‘Metamodernism: A Brief Introduction’, www.metamodernism.org (accessed 29 April 2020).
 50. Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 34.
 51. Theodor W. Adorno, *Minima Moralia: Reflections from Damaged Life*, trans. E. F. N. Jephcott (London: Verso, 1978 [1951]), p. 52.
 52. Furlani, *Guy Davenport*, p. 150.
 53. Furlani, *Guy Davenport*, p. 149.
 54. Martin Jay, *Adorno* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1984), p. 159.
 55. Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 55.