Mechanized Voices and Machinic Bodies: The Music Box in US Popular Media

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ABSTRACT

The music box, an automatic musical instrument, was developed by watchmakers in the early nineteenth century. Using a musical comb made of metal, each tooth would be tuned to a specific note that was struck by a metal pin, giving it its classic metallic, resonant sound. Before the phonograph and the rise of the recording industry at the turn of the twentieth century, music box manufacturers strove to make their machines the primary method of listening to and enjoying music in the home.

This dissertation explores the music box's emergence in United States popular media and its relationship to contemporary discourses on gender, race, and voice. I argue that these discourses helped turn the music box into a pop cultural trope, in which it acquired traits that aligned it with femininity and otherness. As one of the earliest commodified musical machines, the music box set a precedent for how mechanization elided with contemporary notions of feminization. Because its sound was described in terms of the human voice, it *sounded* marginalization as much as it connoted it. Newspapers and literary magazines established and perpetuated the music box as a gendered and racialized cultural trope in the mid-nineteenth century, which has persisted into today's media.

The first two chapters outline how mid-nineteenth-century writers used the music box to describe voices and bodies, respectively, that were considered machine-like. Mechanized voices and machinic bodies, as I call them, were marked by gender and/or racial difference. The third chapter considers these tropes with respect to the phonograph in literature, which had the unique ability to record and play back the human voice. In the final

chapter, I consider how the music box trope shifted in silent film and early sound film examples.

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INTRODUCTION

The film *Ex Machina* (2015) stars "Ava," a humanoid automaton that/who has been designed in the form of a woman. Nathan, Ava's creator, has potentially created the first true artificial intelligence with sentience, an act that echoes the biblical creation of Eve from Adam's rib. On the surface, the film articulates the distinction between human (man) and machine (woman), but beneath this visual surface Ava's voice and musical underscoring raise fundamental questions about gender, sound, and technology. Alicia Vikander, who portrayed Ava in the film, described acquiring "robot voice" as such: "I wanted to be something refined and almost doe-like. […] I've always had quite a dark and husky voice, so I tried to find something more…gentle and light."[1] Audie Cornish of NPR's *All Things Considered* described Ava's theme as "tinkling, romantic music," which in another filmic context might represent "a love scene." Alex Garland, the film's director, added that the theme "has a slightly nursery-type feeling about it, those chimes, which is intended to present Ava the machine as having a kind of innocence, […] a sort of undamaged, untarnished quality."[2] The so-called chimes, which in other sources have been described as a celeste or

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[1] Alicia Vikander, "How Alicia Vikander Perfected Her Robot Voice for Ex Machina - Late Night with Seth Meyers," YouTube video, 1:41–2:10, posted by Late Night with Seth Meyers June 4, 2015, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xSmi5B7I1EQ.
[2] "More Fear of Human Intelligence than Artificial Intelligence in 'Ex Machina,'" *All Things Considered*, NPR, last modified April 14, 2015, accessed October 5, 2015, http://www.npr.org/2015/04/14/399613904/more-fear-of-human-intelligence-than-artificial-intelligence-in-ex-machina.

"like a music box," inscribe Ava's femininity and imbue her character with a seeming innocence, exacerbated by her voice, that is assumed through much of the film.[3]

These sonic descriptions of Ava's theme—which match the treble-y, metallic tinkling of the music box—echo tropes established when the music box was prominent in popular media in the nineteenth century. Taking this film as a point of departure, my dissertation argues that discourses on race, gender, and voice shaped mainstream perceptions of the music box in nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century US popular media. Articles in newspapers and literary magazines established and perpetuated the music box as a gendered and racialized cultural trope in the mid-nineteenth century, a trope that persists in today's media. The tropes presented in *Ex Machina* and in commentary surrounding the film illuminate the three primary interventions of this project. First, Garland's likening of the chime sound to innocence and the nursery, as well as Cornish's associations with romance, invoke rhetoric tied to feminization. Garland and Cornish's commentary align with the historical associations of the music box, an instrument that has been linked to the nursery, the home more generally, and sites of séances—all of which are, and have been, feminized spaces.[4] Second, as an automaton, Ava is marked as other or non-human. Automata,

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[3] Christopher R. Weingarten, "Hear the 'Ex Machina' Score by Portishead's Geoff Barrow and Ben Salisbury," *Rolling Stone*, April 3, 2015, accessed October 5, 2015; and Chal Ravens, "From Drokk to droids: Geoff Barrow and Ben Salisbury unravel their *Ex Machina* score," *FACT Magazine*, April 10, 2015, accessed October 5, 2015, http://www.factmag.com/2015/04/10/geoff-barrow-ben-salisbury-ex-machina-soundtrack-interview/.

[4] For more on gender and mediumship, see Jill Galvan, *The Sympathetic Medium: Feminine Channeling, the Occult, and Communication Technologies, 1859–1919* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2010).

clockwork mechanisms that proliferated and became mythologized as proto-robots during the eighteenth century, were one of the immediate technological precursors of music boxes. They were also used to describe racialized bodies as non-normative; nineteenth century laborers, such as enslaved African Americans and contracted Chinese immigrants, were deemed ineligible for citizenship in part because they supposedly had machinic, rather than human, bodies. Finally, in terms of sound, Ava's technologized voice accords with her theme song, emphasizing her innocence from both diegetic and extra-diegetic perspectives.[5] This linking of voice and music box emerged as early as the mid-nineteenth century, when music critics interchanged voice and machine to comment upon the (un)musicality of opera singers.

Although many today think of it as a novelty toy, the music box was one of the earliest commodified musical machines—first manufactured in the early nineteenth century—and set a precedent for the elision of mechanization with contemporary understandings of feminization and race. The fraught relationship between technology and humanity, of course, was not new—castrati, humanoid automata, and Enlightenment philosophy all reflected concerns about what constituted the human and the natural—but the prevalence of the music box and, later, the phonograph introduced sounds and voices separate from their

[5] The term *diegetic*, based on the Oxford English Dictionary, refers to "the narrative presented by a cinematographic film or literary work; the fictional time, place, characters, and events which constitute the universe of the narrative." Diegetic sound typically exists within the narrative and can (theoretically) be heard by the characters. Underscoring refers to musical cues that accompany the narrative but do not exist within it.

sources into mainstream US consciousness.[6] Ambivalence and anxiety surrounding musical machines also connected to larger issues of post-Industrial Revolution mechanization. The growth of factories led to the mechanization of labor, resulting in an increased scrutiny of laborers that acutely impacted laborers of color.[7] At the same time, writers invoked the music box as a metaphor to address how certain people seemed to behave like machines. By the twentieth century, anxieties about musical machines were not as pronounced, yet similar tropes carried over into sound film of the 1930s and 1940s. Instead of connoting otherness, the music box belonged to people marked as other, and it spoke to their personal and cultural memories through the tunes it played.

My project highlights the role sound plays in popular notions of identity, a role that is still underexplored in scholarship. When nineteenth-century critics invoked the music box as a metaphor to describe female opera singers, for instance, they emphasized what they saw as a problematic femininity. A mechanized voice was not an ideal voice; as such, the music

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[6] On castrati and Enlightenment philosophy, see Martha Feldman, "Denaturing the Castrato," *The Opera Quarterly* 24, no. 3–4 (2009): 178–99. Regarding Enlightenment-era automata, see Adelheid Voskuhl, *Androids in the Enlightenment: Mechanics, Artisans, and Cultures of the Self* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2013); and Gaby Wood, *Edison's Eve: A Magical History of the Quest for Mechanical Life* (New York: Knopf, 2002). Regarding problems of the disembodied woman's voice, see Theodor W. Adorno, "The Curves of the Needle," trans. Thomas Y. Levin, *October* 55 (Winter 1990): 48–55; and Christine Ehrick, "'Savage Dissonance:' Gender, Voice, and Women's Radio Speech in Argentina, 1930–1945," in *Sound in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*, ed. David Suisman and Susan Strasser (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010), 69–91.

[7] For rhetoric surrounding Chinese immigrant labor, see Lucy M. Cohen, *Chinese in the Post-Civil War South: A People without a History* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1984); and Andrew Gyory, *Closing the Gate: Race, Politics, and the Chinese Exclusion Act* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998). For an account of the plantation as machine, see Sylvia Wynter, "Sambos and Minstrels," *Social Text* 1 (1979): 149–56.

box sounded marginalization as much as it connoted it. *Ex Machina* knowingly perpetuated one conception of the music box as innocent-sounding, but it failed to critically engage with that sound's history as it followed Ava's transformation into a femme fatale. Understanding the music box as a cultural trope reveals another way in which society perpetuates gendered norms and racialized stereotypes.

Literature Review

While my primary texts are print and filmic media, the field I most broadly contribute to is voice studies, which crosses several sub-disciplines. As I discuss in the first chapter of the dissertation, music critics characterized the music box sound as other through descriptions that conflated it with women's voices. Within operatic scholarship, musicologists such as Heather Hadlock, Naomi André, Martha Feldman, and Carolyn Abbate have provided a crucial foundation for understanding the gendering and otherness of operatic voices.[8] Hadlock's *Mad Loves*, for instance, historically contextualizes E. T. A. Hoffmann's women characters as they related to contemporary psychological practices, while Feldman's "Denaturing the Castrato" historicizes the criticism surrounding castrati's voices. Scholars such as Wayne Koestenbaum, Rebecca Pope and Susan Leonardi, and Jennifer Fleeger have more specifically highlighted the otherness, or "mismatch," of the diva's operatic voice with

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[8] Heather Hadlock, *Mad Loves: Women and Music in Offenbach's Les Contes d'Hoffmann* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000); Naomi André, *Voicing Gender: Castrati, Travesti, and the Second Woman in Early-Nineteenth-Century Italian Opera* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006); Martha Feldman, "Denaturing the Castrato"; and Carolyn Abbate, *In Search of Opera* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001).

her body.[9] Nina Eidsheim's article on Marian Anderson and "sonic blackness" explicitly discusses the othered voice as a racialized one, and it is significant for the way it discusses biases against black women's voices—and the racialized voice more broadly—both historically and in current productions.[10] Hadlock, Abbate, Felicia Miller Frank, and others have also discussed comparisons of women's voices with instruments and technologies, informing the first and third chapters of my project.[11] As with the music box, these comparisons have historically denied the humanity of women's voices.

Studies of the racialized voice are marginalized in musicological scholarship; as such, my dissertation is also influenced by texts outside of musicology that engage with the racialized voice both literally and metaphorically, such as those of Michel-Rolph Trouillot,

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[9] Wayne Koestenbaum, *The Queen's Throat: Opera, Homosexuality, and the Mystery of Desire* (New York: Poseidon Press, 1993); Susan J. Leonardi and Rebecca A. Pope, *The Diva's Mouth: Body, Voice, Prima Donna Politics* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1996); and Jennifer Fleeger, *Mismatched Women: The Siren's Song Through the Machine* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014). For related scholarship on the diva's voice and queerness, see, for instance, Freya Jarman-Ivens, *Queer Voices: Technologies, Vocalities, and the Musical Flaw* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011); and *Queering the Pitch: The New Gay and Lesbian Musicology*, second edition, ed. Philip Brett, Elizabeth Wood, and Gary C. Thomas (New York: Routledge, 2006).
[10] Nina Eidsheim, "Marian Anderson and 'Sonic Blackness' in American Opera," *American Quarterly* 63, no. 3 (September 2011): 641–71. Important for her argument, she incorporates the term "acousmatic blackness" from Mendi Obadike, "Low Fidelity: Stereotyped Blackness in the Field of Sound" (PhD diss., Duke University, 2005).
[11] Heather Hadlock, "Sonorous Bodies: Women and the Glass Harmonica," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 53, no. 3 (2000): 507–42; Abbate, *In Search of Opera*; and Felicia Miller Frank, *The Mechanical Song: Women, Voice, and the Artificial in Nineteenth-Century French Narrative* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995). See also Emily Thompson, "Machines, Music, and the Quest for Fidelity: Marketing the Edison Phonograph in America, 1877–1925," *The Musical Quarterly* 79, no. 1 (Spring 1995): 131–71.

Saidiya Hartman, and Jon Cruz.[12] Trouillot focuses on the historical silencing of black voices that were a part of the Haitian Revolution; Hartman and Cruz engage with the contingent voices of enslaved workers in antebellum America, as well as their shifting status as supposedly free yet contingent during and after Reconstruction. These accounts detail the limits of whose voices get heard, how they are heard, and why. The music box, as it related to vocal and bodily otherness in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, indexed the contingent status of those marked as such.

This project also builds on work about the history of technology, particularly scholarship on automata and the phonograph. Automata, as clockwork mechanisms, were the immediate technological precursor to the music box, and have been written about at greater length.[13] Noted for their status as technological wonders prior to the Industrial Revolution, scholars such as Minsoo Kang have focused on automata because of their clear visual relationship between human and machine.[14] The phonograph has been discussed even

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[12] Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1995); Saidiya V. Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slaver, and Self-Making in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997); and Jon Cruz, *Culture on the Margins: The Black Spiritual and the Rise of American Cultural Interpretation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999).
[13] For a more general history of automata see Adelheid Voskuhl, *Androids in the Enlightenment: Mechanics, Artisans, and Cultures of the Self* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2013); Minsoo Kang, *Sublime Dreams of Living Machines: The Automaton in the European Imagination* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010); and Gaby Wood, *Edison's Eve*. For more on the automaton with respect to gender and race, see, for instance, Louis Chude-Sokei, "The Uncanny History of Minstrels and Machines, 1835–1923," in *Burnt Cork: Traditions and Legacies of Blackface Minstrelsy*, ed. Stephen Johnson (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2012), 104–32; and M. Norton Wise, "The Gender of Automata in Victorian Britain," in *Genesis Redux: Essays in the History and Philosophy of Artificial Life*, ed. Jessica Riskin (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 163–95.
[14] See Kang, *Sublime Dreams of Living Machines*.

more extensively.[15] Some scholars have pointed to the gendering of the phonograph; for instance, Mark Katz and William Howland Kenney have noted that the phonograph, once its popularity rose and costs decreased in the early 1900s, took the feminized role of parlor entertainment in middle-class homes that had previously been designated to young women at the piano.[16] As John M. Picker has further indicated, even when the phonograph was used in the workplace in the late nineteenth century, its function as an office dictation tool in the late nineteenth century aligned it with women's work.[17] While these scholars have addressed the gendered phonograph, they have attended less to gendering *processes*. Listening to the music box gives nuance to the large body of work on phonographs, not simply because the music box existed first but because, as I argue in Chapter 3, the music box's prevalence as a cultural trope informed literature on the phonograph.

Much of music box literature, while prevalent, falls outside traditional scholarly realms and focuses more on the machine's technological developments rather than its

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[15] Some of the notable literature on the phonograph, particularly for musicologists, include Roland Gelatt, *The Fabulous Phonograph 1877–1977* (New York: Macmillan, 1977); Mark Katz, *Capturing Sound: How Technology Has Changed Music* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2004); William Howland Kenney, *Recorded Music in American Life: The Phonograph and Popular Memory, 1890–1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999); Friedrich Kittler, *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter*, trans. Geoffrey Winthrop-Young and Michael Wutz (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999); Jonathan Sterne, *The Audible Past: Cultural Origins of Sound Reproduction* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003); Timothy D. Taylor, Mark Katz, and Tony Grajeda, eds., *Music, Sound, and Technology in America: A Documentary History of Early Phonograph, Cinema, and Radio* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012); and Emily Thompson, "Machines, Music, and the Quest for Fidelity."

[16] William Howland Kenney, *Recorded Music in American Life*; and Mark Katz, *Capturing Sound*.

[17] John M. Picker, *Victorian Soundscapes* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 130.

cultural impacts. Nonetheless, these texts provide some necessary historical context for my arguments.[18] Recent musicological articles, while fewer in number, do deal with the music box as a cultural influence; however, because they focus on specific European art music composers, their arguments do not always extend to the role of the music box in an Americanist context. Denise Gallo's "Verdi's Music on Mechanical Boxes," although mainly focusing on the titular composer, nonetheless provides some important information on the music box in America, as well as the popularity of certain operatic tunes in the US and elsewhere.[19] Jeffrey Kallberg's chapter on Chopin's Berceuse argues for the potential influence of the music box on the piano work; in addition, he points to the music box's associations with racialized and gendered otherness in automata, particularly by the nineteenth century.[20] Finally, Alexandra Wilson, Arman Schwartz, and W. Anthony Sheppard have written on the influence of music box melodies on Puccini's operas, the

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[18] Alfred Chapuis, *The History of the Musical Box and of Mechanical Music*, Second Edition, trans. Joseph E. Roesch (The Musical Box Society International, 1992 [1955]); Arthur W. J. G. Ord-Hume, *Clockwork Music* (New York: Crown Publishers, 1973); and Roy Mosoriak, *The Curious History of Music Boxes* (Chicago: Lightner Publishing, 1943). Other notable texts, in chronological order, include Alexander Buchner, *Mechanical Musical Instruments*, trans. Iris Urwin (London: Batchworth Press, 1954?); Helen Hoke and John Hoke, *Music Boxes: Their Lore and Lure* (New York: Hawthorn Books, 1957); John E.T. Clark, *Musical Boxes* (Birmingham, UK: Forgotten Books, 2012 [1961?]); Arthur W. J. G. Ord-Hume, *Collecting Musical Boxes and How to Repair Them* (New York: Crown Publishers, 1967); David Tallis, *Music Boxes: A Guide for Collectors* (New York: Stein and Day, 1971); and Gilbert Bahl, *Music Boxes: The Collector's Guide to Selecting, Restoring, and Enjoying New and Vintage Music Boxes* (Philadelphia: Courage Books, 1993). See also *The Music Box: An International Journal of Mechanical Music*, the active journal of the Musical Box Society International.

[19] Denise Gallo, "Verdi's Music on Mechanical Boxes," *Verdi Forum* 28 (2001): 4–7.

[20] Jeffrey Kallberg, "Chopin's Music Box," in *Chopin's Musical Worlds: The 1840s: Warszawa 2007*, series ed. Artur Szklener (Warsaw: Narodowy Instytut Fryderyka Chopina, 2008), 189–202.

former two with *Turandot* and Sheppard additionally with *Madame Butterfly*.[21] To varying degrees, they each address the melodies' mechanized origins to showcase how the music box itself contributed to the characterizations of Turandot and Cio-Cio San as other. I extend these discourses to think about how the music box contributed to racial and gendered otherness in US popular media.

Music Box Technology: An Overview

The developmental history of the music box is significant for how the music box was portrayed and remembered in US popular media from the early nineteenth through the mid-twentieth centuries. As I show in the first two chapters of this dissertation, nineteenth century writers, when describing the music box, conveyed an understanding of the inner workings of the machine. By the time the music box appeared in films, however, much of the technological achievements of the prior century were largely forgotten. One especially important shift was in the capacity of the music box; instead of being able to play multiple tunes, music boxes in films are always only capable of playing one. As I discuss in the fourth chapter, this became the most significant factor in linking the music box to memory and nostalgia in film.

[21] Alexandra Wilson, "Modernism and the Machine Woman in Puccini's 'Turandot,'" *Music & Letters* 86, no. 3 (2005): 432–51; Arman Schwartz, "Mechanism and Tradition in Puccini's *Turandot*," *The Opera Quarterly* 25, nos. 1–2 (2009): 28–50; and W. Anthony Sheppard, "Puccini and the Music Boxes," *Journal of the Royal Music Association* 140, no. 1 (2015): 41–92. Each of these articles responds in part to William Ashbrook and Harold Powers, *Puccini's* Turandot: *The End of the Great Tradition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991).

The music box, while certainly not the first automatic instrument, was the first to be mass produced. Like the automata that preceded them, music boxes depended on clockwork mechanisms, meaning that horologists were among the first to develop them. Scholars cite Solomon Favre as the inventor of the musical comb in 1796, which distinguished the music box from prior mechanical instruments. With each metal tooth tuned to a different pitch, a pinned cylinder or perforated disc would then pluck the teeth to replicate certain musical tunes (see Figures 1 and 2). Since Favre designed the musical comb for the pocket watch, the combs were necessarily very small and could thus only play simple melodies. The short length of the teeth necessarily made the pitches a higher frequency, defining the music box from the start as a treble instrument. The small size of the cylinder dictated the length of music box melodies, reducing tunes to four- or eight-measure phrases.

While there are isolated accounts of musical snuff boxes given as gifts in the first years of the nineteenth century, it was not until about 1815 that the music box industry formally began in Switzerland. With the rise of the industry and increasing demand for music boxes, manufacturers experimented with ways to make the music box better. They had three goals for this: 1) improve the sound quality and volume; 2) increase the number of tunes it could play; and 3) provide more timbral diversity. Regarding the first point, this largely came down to the use of resonators. As Roy Mosoriak wrote: "You must bear in mind that the music works produced up to 1833 [*tabatières*] were pip-squeaks with only a small volume of sound coming from them. Efforts to increase the volume of sound and range of tone resulted

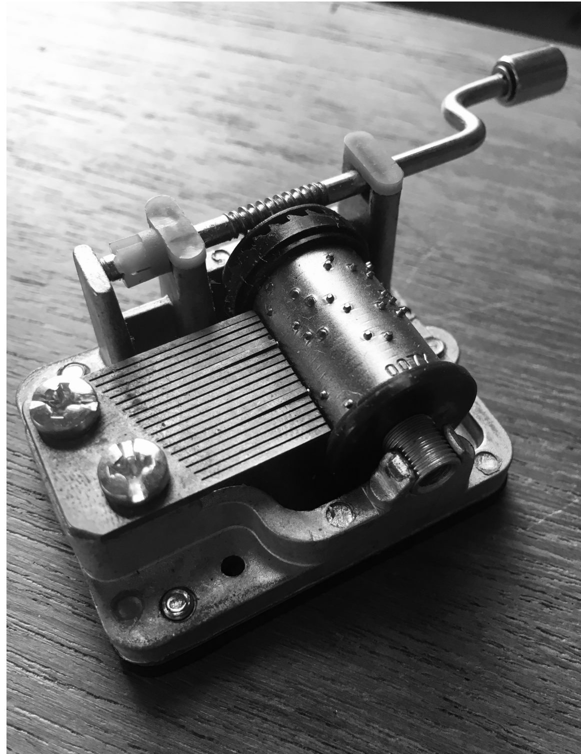

Figure 1: The cylinder mechanism of a music box. The crank is a manual way to rotate the cylinder; other music boxes can be wound, making them more automatic. Workers attached pins to the "blank" cylinder based on the tune it would play. The two slightly raised teeth on the musical comb are about to be plucked by pins. In the absence of a box to house the mechanism, the wooden surface would work as a resonator to amplify the sound. Photo taken by the author.

Figure 2: A disc music box made by The Regina Music Box Company circa 1899. This model was coin-operated and was wound with a key. The disc would rise from the bottom and fix into place at the top. Two musical combs, seen to the middle-right, would pluck the indented metal as the disc rotated. Photo from the Murtogh D. Guinness Collection of Mechanical Musical Instruments and Automata at the Morris Museum in New Jersey.

in the large-size music box (the 'cartel') in 1833."[22] To this end, the typical housing of the music box mechanism in a wooden box was as much structural as it was aesthetic; unlike the small, metallic housing of the pocket watch, a larger wooden box allowed for better amplification. Increased resonance also meant the tune could become an indiscriminate wash of sound, similar to holding down the sustain pedal on a piano; developers thus also experimented with dampening mechanisms to ensure the resultant tune was loud yet clear. Finally, as music boxes increased in size makers also started installing multiple combs, with the idea that multiple combs playing simultaneously would increase the volume of sound.

Increasing music box size was also integral to offering multiple tunes within one instrument. After the novelty of the earliest instruments wore off, repetition became an issue for manufacturers. Increasing the diameter of the cylinder, which increased surface area, as well as slowing the rate at which the cylinder rotated allowed manufacturers to pin multiple tunes on the same cylinder. Another method was to pin one series of tunes, then pin a second series on the same cylinder but offset slightly from the first series. Once one series had been played, the listener could then shift (this task eventually became automated) the cylinder to one side to play the second series with the same musical comb. A more complicated development was the creation of interchangeable cylinders, which would solve the problem of repetition once and for all. As Alexander Buchner notes, "The first attempts to provide interchangeable cylinders were not technically very successful; not until 1862 did A. Paillard of St. Croix succeed in devising a suitable mechanism for changing the

[22] Mosoriak, *The Curious History of Music Boxes*, 30.

cylinders."[23] When the disc music box finally emerged on the market in the 1880s, switching from one tune to the next with different discs (like the gramophone several years later) became a much simpler task.

Finally, while I define the music box timbre in this dissertation as based on the metallic sound produced by the musical comb, it is important to acknowledge that music box makers strove to provide timbral diversity in their instruments. John E. T. Clark writes that "about 1850 the Flutina or reed organ accompaniment was introduced, and later the musical box with drum and bells in view came into existence."[24] Some of these effects, like the Flutina, were based on organ stops that sent air through different pipes to change timbre; these effects were also key elements of orchestrions, panharmonicons, and other larger-scale instruments developed to, in effect, create a mechanized orchestra. Other music box manufacturers experimented with the timbre of the musical comb itself. As Buchner indicates: "One very popular type, common in the second third of the nineteenth century, was known as the 'mandoline.' The effect was obtained by repeating the dominant note several times, which required special tuning of the comb and several teeth for the same note. Another effect was the 'zither' or 'harp,' gained by placing a piece of thin paper or cloth on the comb. The comb then sounded like a plucked string instrument."[25]

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[23] Buchner, *Mechanical Musical Instruments*, 53.
[24] Clark, *Musical Boxes*, 21.
[25] Buchner, *Mechanical Musical Instruments*, 53.

Chapter Summaries

Chapter 1, "Opera, Divas, and the Mechanization of Voice in 'Euphemia's Music-Box,'" positions the music box as a medium through which nineteenth-century listeners imagined the voice of the other. This link between music box and voice emerged through an imagined continuity of sound, manifested through metaphors and other descriptors, which created tensions between humanity and instrumentality. The chapter centers on the short story "Euphemia's Music-Box," published in *Harper's Bazaar* in 1872, as a literary case study that highlighted the othering of voices via the music box and mechanization. I examine critiques of opera singers from US newspapers to showcase the ways in which writers implemented the music box as a metaphor to represent non-normative singing voices. Women's operatic voices were expected to produce transcendent experiences for their listeners; referring to performers as music boxes was, paradoxically, a criticism of singers' bodily presence.

The second chapter, "Machinic Bodies: The Music Box and Racialized Freakery in 'The Story of Agee Sang Long,'" illuminates the feminization of the music box as it specifically pertained to the racialized body. I show how the music box was tied to conceptions of the machinic or automaton body, where voice remained an integral component. While this thread continued to follow gendered norms that I establish in the first chapter, it also intersected more explicitly with race. Laborers of color, from enslaved field workers to Chinese immigrants, were described as having machinic bodies, a description often used in arguments in favor of their continued oppression. But the music box did not just connote non-normativity; those marked as other also interacted with the machine. And because they were simultaneously ascribed machinic bodies, a phenomenon

emerged where their interaction with technology was a form of fascination in popular media. Anna Eichberg King's "The Story of Agee Sang Long," published in *Harper's Bazaar* in 1886, provides a case study for how these discourses emerged in literary fiction.

Chapter 3, "Uncanny Voices: The Phonographic Voice in Nineteenth Century Fiction," considers the ways that the music box tropes that I established in the first two chapters influenced authors writing about the phonograph in the late nineteenth century. This chapter builds on the work of John M. Picker, Felicia Miller Frank, and Gaby Wood, who discuss the gendered phonograph, by critically analyzing how the phonograph related to feminized and racialized otherness.[26] Using E. T. A. Hoffmann's 1816 story "The Sandman" as a literary precursor and the psychological uncanny, as first articulated by Ernst Jentsch, as an analytical framework, I discuss the feminization of the phonograph through two late nineteenth century literary examples: Ernest Howard Crosby's "The Professor's Daughter" (1891); and Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897). Through these examples, I define what I call the "phonographic voice" and its manifestations in popular culture.

The final chapter, "Memory and Erasure: The Re-Codification of the Music Box Trope in Film," explores how the sonic tropes discussed in previous chapters were re-codified in early twentieth century films featuring the music box. I argue that while the music box was still associated with those marked as other, it was also re-framed as a transcendent vessel with no direct associations to its techno-historical development. As such, the power characters ascribed to the music box, which usually involved some form of wish fulfillment,

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[26] John M. Picker, *Victorian Soundscapes*; Felicia Miller Frank, *The Mechanical Song*; and Gaby Wood, *Edison's Eve*.

became re-contextualized within more normative structures. I discuss four mainstream films of the early 1940s—*The Shop Around the Corner* (1940); *Kathleen* (1941); *Since You Went Away* (1944); and *Going My Way* (1944)—that demonstrate how the music box trope re-emerged in sound cinema. I end the chapter by considering the ramifications of the forgotten history of the music box for popular media today.

CHAPTER ONE
Opera, Divas, and the Mechanization of Voice in "Euphemia's Music-Box"

In the anonymously published 1872 story "Euphemia's Music-Box," the titular teenager, also known as Effie, falls in love with her Italian music teacher, Luigi Nardi. But Effie's father, Mr. Ralston, disapproves of the match because of Luigi's dual identity as "an Italian" and a musician. After an incident that reveals Effie and Luigi's mutual love, Ralston flies into a rage and Luigi departs shortly afterward. In the ensuing year, the father grows increasingly alarmed as Effie wastes away. Effie pines silently for Luigi and gives no outward indication of her inner torment, which gives Ralston plausible deniability that his prejudiced actions contribute to her suffering. But the reader is privy to part of Effie's inner monologue and her memories; upon hearing her neighbor's music box playing a "Neapolitan air," Effie is reminded of an essence of Luigi's presence:

> I am afraid as she [Effie] sat in the garden, almost as her father had left her that morning, the music-box he was to bring to her had but little share in her languid musings. She had for a moment envied Miss Bacon, but that was because her music-box was just then playing a soft little Neapolitan air very frequent on Luigi Nardi's lips in that past time. Latterly he had had a way of greeting her with the fragment of which they were fondest, while he took her hand and looked into her eyes; so it had become wholly associated with him and with his coming, and she had thought she would like to be able to cheat herself into an instant's expectation of his presence. Otherwise the music-box was only a music-box to her—a thing of mere wood and workmanship.[1]

This passage reveals three interrelated points about voice and otherness with respect to the music box. First, because the music box belongs to her neighbor, Miss Bacon, Effie cannot control when she hears the tune. As such, the unexpected nature of her encounter with the

[1] "Euphemia's Music-Box," *Harper's Bazaar* 5, no. 5 (1872): 90.

Neapolitan air triggers her memories of Luigi. Second, for Effie, the music box is an interior voice that becomes externalized through the tune it plays, communicating her forbidden love for her Italian music teacher. Finally, the automatic quality of the music box enables Effie to imagine being "able to cheat herself into an instant's expectation of" Luigi's presence. Given the treble range of the tune on a music box, and since the melody is not obviously attached—visually or sonically—to one specific performer, she can superimpose an image of Luigi onto the box and imagine his lips whistling the tune. Just as the music box becomes a medium through which Effie can escape patriarchal authority, she also hears the machine as Luigi's voice. Effie's association of the music box melody with the voice of her Italian lover would not have surprised nineteenth century readers, as they likely had read similar descriptions of music boxes in newspapers, poetry, and concert reviews.

This chapter positions the music box as a medium through which nineteenth-century listeners imagined the voice of the other. Through newspapers in particular, the link between music box and voice emerged through an imagined continuity of sound, manifested through metaphors and other descriptors that created tensions between humanity and instrumentality. In early portrayals, poets described the music box sound in terms of otherworldly voices, such as fairies or sprites, which sounded silvery and bell-like. In turn, concert reviews applied these descriptors to women's operatic voices by the mid-nineteenth century. "Box," in nineteenth-century slang, tended to refer to the mouth; in concert reviews, writers implemented the music box to critique non-normative singing voices.[2] While the

[2] See John S. Farmer and W. E. Henley, *A Dictionary of Slang and Colloquial English: Abridged from the Seven-Volume Work, Entitled: Slang and Its Analogues* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1905).

music-box voice was a non-ideal voice across the board, it acutely impacted women, particularly foreign-born divas who toured in the United States. Critics discussed their voices not just in terms of tone but also in terms of technical precision. As women's operatic voices were expected to produce transcendent experiences for their listeners, referring to performers as music boxes, paradoxically, criticized singers' bodily presence. And the consequence of this was one of control: mechanized, music-box voices were too exact and pointed too closely to a controlling (woman's) body, rather than the woman's voice being a conduit to a more spiritual, transcendent state.[3]

By 1872, when "Euphemia's Music-Box" first appeared in *Harper's Bazaar*, the music box had been featured in popular literature for several decades.[4] As early as 1816, the light, metallic tinkling sound of the music box was romanticized as an ideal in poetry; certainly, "Euphemia's Music-Box" perpetuated this ideal with the "soft little Neapolitan air" communicating Effie's longing for Luigi. But the story also represented a culmination of ideas regarding how the music box sounded to contemporary listeners: that the music box was not simply a machine but a *voice*, and this mechanized voice was both feminized and

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Some slang terms for mouth included bone-box, clack-box, gob-box, and prattle-box. "Music-box" could also refer to a piano, depending on the context.

[3] Whether positively or negatively described, the idealization of voice as transcendent had ramifications for women performers. While I tend to focus on the negative, Jenny Lind was a positive exemplar of this phenomenon. For more on Jenny Lind's reception in the US, see Lowell Gallagher, "Jenny Lind and the Voice of America," in *En Travesti: Women, Gender Subversion, Opera*, ed. Corinne E. Blackmer and Patricia Juliana Smith (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), 190–215. In either case, the voice as "conduit" was still a denial of body.

[4] Harper's Bazaar was initially published as "Harper's Bazar" from its inception in 1867 until they changed the spelling in 1929. For the purposes of clarity, I only refer to the magazine by its current spelling.

racialized as other. Alongside more sentimental and romantic portrayals of the music box, US critics invoked the music box to comment on the musical or unmusical qualities of musicians' performances. Echoing the rhetoric surrounding automata, it moved beyond musical metaphor to connote weakness, predictability, and monotony through at least the end of the nineteenth century. An 1895 review criticized F. Marion Crawford's novel *The Ralstons* as having "the mechanical correctness of machine-made lace" and being "as monotonous as a music-box tune."[5] And in 1896, Sir Charles Gavan Duffy characterized the Young Irelander Michael Joseph Barry as such:

> Barry was still smaller and slighter than MacNevin, but his face was less mobile and expressive, and his intellect less spontaneous, but far more practical. Having written passing well, he afterwards came to speak with power and persuasion, and his judgment was sound and prompt; but it was observed by an unfriendly critic that his intellect resembled a musical box; whatever it was capable of producing lay within arbitrary limits, and was relieved or varied by no spontaneous gushes of unexpected music.[6]

Despite these more negative invocations of the music box, romantic conceptions of machinic innocence have become the dominant narrative, with many twentieth century technological histories of the music box nostalgically recreating its appeal to listeners.[7]

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[5] "Review of New Books," *Morning Oregonian* (Portland, OR), February 24, 1895.

[6] Charles Gavan Duffy, *Young Ireland: A Fragment of Irish History, 1840–45*, Final Edition, vol. 1 (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1896), 113.

[7] Some of the more notable historical-technical books on the music box published in English emerged shortly after World War II, and they nostalgically recall a time before world wars and the ubiquity of electronics in the home. See, for instance, Roy Mosoriak, *The Curious History of Music Boxes* (Chicago: Lightner Publishing, 1943); Alexander Buchner, *Mechanical Musical Instruments*, trans. Iris Urwin (London: Batchworth Press, 1954?); Alfred Chapuis, *The History of the Musical Box and of Mechanical Music*, Second Edition, trans. Joseph E. Roesch (The Musical Box Society International, 1992 [1955]); Helen Hoke and John Hoke, *Music Boxes: Their Lore and Lure* (New York: Hawthorn Books, 1957); John E.T. Clark, *Musical Boxes* (Birmingham, UK: Forgotten Books, 2012 [1961?]);

I use the short story "Euphemia's Music-Box" as a literary case study to structure the chapter, which foregrounds gender, race, and voice. The story puts a slightly different spin on a long-standing issue: the othering of voices through mechanization. Although mechanization had been a common epithet against operatic voices since the time of castrati, the music box's prevalence in American society through the nineteenth century meant that it became the real-world proxy for mechanical sound. Unlike its predecessor, the automaton, which was by and large a voiceless body, the music box was a bodiless or disembodied voice. Its use in criticizing opera stars, many of whom were not native to the US, meant that the music box came to highlight these as non-normative voices. Through the narratives I trace below, I show how the music box metaphor became a tool for denying humanity to marginalized identities.

Effie's Longing: The Romanticized Music Box

When Effie hears her neighbor Miss Bacon's music box, she momentarily imbues the machine with the power to restore Luigi's voice and body. Effie's romantic longing, and her use of the music box to fulfill that longing, borrows from poetic imagery that has surrounded the music box since its inception. In Leigh Hunt's 1816 poem "On Hearing a Little Musical Box," the poet displays his wonder and surprise at the box's distinct timbre:

Arthur W. J. G. Ord-Hume, *Collecting Musical Boxes and How to Repair Them* (New York: Crown Publishers, 1967); David Tallis, *Music Boxes: A Guide for Collectors* (New York: Stein and Day, 1971); Arthur W. J. G. Ord-Hume, *Clockwork Music* (New York: Crown Publishers, 1973); and Gilbert Bahl, *Music Boxes: The Collector's Guide to Selecting, Restoring, and Enjoying New and Vintage Music Boxes* (Philadelphia: Courage Books, 1993).

> HALLO!—what?—where?—what can it be
> That strikes up so deliciously?
> I never in my life—what? no!
> That little tin box playing so![8]

Although the music box as a technology was not new, the music box industry was very much in its nascent stages, and the music box itself was not widely available until 1815.[9] Hunt tried to capture the experience of hearing the machine that, for him, had no sonic precedent; he faltered, struggling for words, reacting both with a greeting and with partially-formed questions. But the poem largely works to articulate how the music box sounded; and in doing so, Hunt established how the music box was—and would continue to be—heard as an example of machinic innocence in popular culture. From the first lines, he tries to reconcile the unfamiliar yet pleasing sounds he hears for the first time. He imagines a mythical creature, from a star rather than earth, playing the tune inside the box and on a pearl guitar. The

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[8] Leigh Hunt, "On Hearing a Little Musical Box," Poets Corner, *Maryland Gazette and Political Intelligencer*, August 1, 1816. At the end of the poem, a note was added: "For [the line "in thee some humanity"] and the other beautiful thought in the closing line of the paragraph, the author is indebted to two friends who enjoyed the music with him—the former to a gentleman who treated him with it, the latter to a lady."

[9] Begun in the Swiss cities of St. Croix and, later, Geneva in the first years of the nineteenth century, the music box industry could not expand until after the War of 1812 and the restoration of Switzerland as an independent, neutral nation from Napoleonic French control. For more on the early history of the music box industry, see Alfred Chapuis, *The History of the Musical Box and of Mechanical Music*, 142–43; and Arthur W.J.G. Ord-Hume, *Clockwork Music*, 66–67. Ord-Hume starts the industry at 1810 and claims that it did not take off for another 20-30 years. I have found one major exception to Chapuis's 1815 claim: a Dublin (Ireland) journal reviewed a transcription of a musical box tune in 1814, owned by "Mr. Mullen, of Dame-street" and penned by a J. (presumably Jonathan) Blewitt. "Review of Music," *Monthly Museum: or, Dublin Literary Repertory of Arts, Science, Literature and Miscellaneous Information* 1 (March 1814): 370.

tinkling sound of the music box—made by the striking of metal reeds on metal pins—both harks to natural sounds and exceeds them, yet it always remains complementary to nature:

> Now we call thee heavenly rain,
> For thy fresh, continued strain;
> Now a hail, that on the ground
> Splits into light leaps of sound;
> Now the concert neat and nice,
> Of a pigmy paradise;
> Sprinkles then from singing fountains;
> Fairies heard on tops of mountains;
> Nightingales endued with art,
> Caught in listening to MOZART;
> Stars that make a distant tinkling,
> While their happy eyes are twinkling;
> Sounds for scattered rills to flow to;
> Music for the flowers to grow to.

The sound of the music box blurs the line between the human and the mechanical. The music box sounds like a fairy and a nightingale but cannot be either; the former would have to exist, and the latter would have to be able to sing Mozart. Articulating the music box timbre as evoking both natural and unnatural sound, as real and imaginary, has an additional effect: for Hunt, the music box cannot be "mere machinery," but instead contains "divine and human things." Hunt's descriptors continued through the nineteenth century in later poetic accounts and stories featuring the music box.[10]

[10] For instance, L. Maria Childs's short story "The Neighbor-in-Law," first published in 1846, featured a music box whose sound, to a child who had never seen or heard one before, was like birdsong. And an 1870 fairy story described the sound of the "sweet lily-bells" of the Fairy Queen's wand as "like the first notes of a music-box." See L. Maria Childs, "The Neighbor-in-Law," *The Cleveland Herald*, June 19, 1846; and "A Fairy Story," *Daily Evening Bulletin* (San Francisco, CA), January 15, 1870.

The tension between machinery and "divine and human things" also manifested through descriptions of the music box having a voice, and this coincided with writers taking a more ambivalent stance on romantic imagery as the nineteenth century progressed. Thomas Moore's lyric "The Musical Box" (1840) repurposed the magical sprite metaphor of Hunt's poem, but instead of from a pearl guitar, the music emitted from the sprite's voice.[11] The poem is mostly arranged as a dialogue between two lovers, told from the man's point of view as the woman explains how the music box works. In doing so, she blends its seemingly magical qualities with its mechanical components: "Till, thus, I touch the magic spring— Then, hark, how sweet and blithe his song."[12] The twist, in comparison to Hunt's glowing review, is that the man is horrified by this description; he thinks of the sprite's song as akin to slavery, with musical performance becoming an obligation—responding to the mechanical spring—rather than an artistic expression of freedom.[13]

W. H. C. Hosmer's poem "The Musical Box" (1866) also captured this ambivalence; while ultimately evoking a sense of wonderment like Hunt had done fifty years prior, he also appropriated Moore's prison metaphor. Additionally, he explicitly described the music box in terms of the voice throughout the poem. In the first of four stanzas, Hosmer highlights the mythical attributes of the music box sound:

[11] "The Musical Box" first appeared in US newspapers in 1840; however, it was listed as a song as early as 1839, with the words set by John Barnett. Since it has been catalogued in Moore anthologies under "Ballads, Songs, Miscellaneous Poems, &c.," it is likely this was first written as a song rather than a poem.
[12] "The Musical Box," *Morning Herald* (New York, NY), July 17, 1840.
[13] I address the contingent mechanical or machinic body more explicitly in the next chapter.

It was fabled of old that the harp of Apollo
Gave musical power to the stone where it lay;
That Echo, the Nymph, would the melody follow
Until the wild strain on the wind died away.
But sweeter, far sweeter are tones that are falling
In delicate gushes of song on mine ear;
I think that the voices of angels are calling,
The veil lifted up of a lovelier sphere.

As with Hunt's poem, Hosmer expresses doubts that the music box is solely mechanical. But unlike Hunt's characterization, the music box sound in Hosmer's poem does not always connote pure innocence. Instead, it evokes nostalgia, with the sound waking memories "from long, mournful slumbers," but also the melancholy of the nightingale's song, with "sounds like billow that burst on the shore." In the third stanza, Hosmer points out that for some, like Ariel, the sweet sounds of the music box are more like a prison.

In the final stanza, Hosmer emphasizes the music box sound's likeness to voices, not just of angels, as in the first stanza, but of sirens, fairies, and (human) women:

The lay of the Syren that greeted Ulysses
Could not have beguiled with such magic of tone;
Though one lured to reef, hidden rock, dark abysses,
The other informed with a voice of Heaven's own.
Some Fay that has strayed from the Land of the Fairy
Has captive been made by the sorcerer's power,
And warbles out notes, only matched by my Mary
When singing her vespers at twilight's sweet hour.

The blending of these three voice types to describe the music box, while a seeming contradiction, speaks to the ways in which the music box could be simultaneously appealing and unnerving. The mythological siren's voice, as the poem reminds us, lured sailors to their doom; the music box's sound is even more enchanting. Yet while the music box's sirenic capability is there, for Hosmer the machine's effect is one of transcendence. If the music box

could captivate, it was also a captured voice; borrowing from Moore's lyric again, the fairy voice quality of the music box only exists after being trapped there. Finally, all these qualities culminate in the voice of the narrator's presumed lover. Her beguiling and captivating voice makes the (male) narrator experience transcendence; put another way, the narrator expresses his love for her through the beauty of her music box-like voice. As was the case with Effie, love imbues the music box with vocal power.

Women's voices, like the voices of sirens or fairies, were imagined as having power over men, and the music box provided another metaphor for conveying that power. In other poetic examples, the woman's voice *was* a music box, which could have positive or negative connotations. In an 1849 poem, "To a Miniature," the narrator falls in love with a woman's portrait and imagines her coming to life. He expresses frustration at the limits of the painting, specifically that he cannot hear her voice:

> Oh! I could'st thou break the silent spell
> That binds thy lips so long,
> Each soft, enchanting tone would tell
> That thou wert born for song.
> To me, Art's melody but mocks—
> For, in the gilded South,
> The softest, sweetest music box
> Is woman's rosy mouth![14]

In this case, the sound of the voice is less clear; nonetheless, the implication is that the music box provides the sonic equivalent of the woman's visual beauty. But such positive

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[14] J. W. Overall, "To a Miniature," *Greenville Mountaineer* (SC), October 5, 1849. It was reprinted in 1874 as "To Jewel's Miniature" in *The Galveston Daily News* (TX) and credited to a Robbin.

associations between the music box and voice did not always occur, especially when that voice was a woman's.

These poetic examples, by and large, were so focused on the purportedly transcendent sound of the music box that they superseded the machine's mechanical components. Moore's "The Musical Box," with its metaphor of slavery, is a rare but strong counterexample of a poetic work that considers the music box as a machine. Composer John Barnett's setting of the lyric further emphasized the music box's more problematic, mechanical qualities. The piece, primarily a strophic song, features piano interludes in the style of a music box that plays during the lovers' conversation. While showcasing the technical abilities of the pianist and highlighting the sonic characteristics that defined the music box sound, these interludes also contextualize and interrupt the would-be dialogue. In the first stanza, the woman, Rose, exclaims:

> "Within this box, my magic hid
> A tuneful sprite imprisoned lies
> Who sings to me whene'er he's bid
> Though roving once his voice and wing
> He'll now lie still the whole day long
> Till thus I touch the magic spring
> Then hark, how sweet and blithe his song."

The music box then "plays" twice, with each iteration echoing the first few notes of the strophic melody before moving in a different melodic and harmonic direction.

The melody's echo becomes more pernicious as the song wears on. In the next stanza, the (male) narrator pleads to his lover, "the poet's lay

> Must ne'er ev'n beauty's slave become
> Through earth and air his song may stray
> If all the while his heart's at home

> And though in freedom's air he dwell
> Nor bond nor chain his spirit knows
> Touch but the spring thou knows't so well
> And hark how sweet the love song flows.

He echoes Rose's words with his concluding remarks, attempting to twist her words toward a more positive end; yet the music box carries on as before, indifferent to or unable to respond to his efforts. In the final stanza, the narrator laments his defeat: "The doom of poets is to yield […] The sprite and I are fellow-slaves / And I too sing whene'er I'm bid." The music box imitation has the last say, continuing in the same manner despite the narrator's changing emotional state. "The Musical Box" speaks to the romantic connotations associated with the music box since they first appeared in Hunt's poem, but the music box's tune also comes to represent the narrator's feelings of entrapment in his relationship. In this way, the mechanical qualities of the music box superseded its pleasing sound, its status as an automatic instrument undercutting its ability to communicate the human or divine, as Hunt had claimed.

Moore's lyric, then, signaled a poetic shift in which the mechanical components of the music box were used to convey negative qualities in people. And just as "To a Miniature" imagined the ideal qualities of a woman's music box-like voice, the 1870 poem "A Musical Box" used the music box to criticize a woman's less-than-ideal behaviors. The narrator describes a beautiful but superficial woman, who is "perfect to whirl with in a waltz," "plays with her bracelets," and "enchants [men] of half-fledged wits." But he asks his presumed male reader:

> Is this the thing for a mother or wife?
> Could love ever grow on such barren rocks?

> Is this a companion to take [for life]?
> One might as well marry a musical box.
>
> You exhaust in a day her full extent;
> 'Tis the same little tinkle of tunes always;
> You must wind her up with a compliment,
> To be bored with [only the] airs she plays.[15]

The poem thus takes a moralistic tone, implementing the music box as a metaphor for women's alleged improprieties. Specifically, he highlights the instrument's repetitive nature, only being able to play a limited number of tunes. Further, while the instrument is automatic, it nonetheless requires manipulation to set it in motion, like clockwork mechanisms overall. Similarly, the superficial woman needs compliments to function socially, but even then, she only has a limited number of stories to tell. Her beauty and superficial charms mask her inanity to all but the most perceptive men. This particular music box metaphor became an aphorism of sorts; in an 1880 speech, the preacher Robert Collyer referenced this poem to caution against the stereotypical "Girl of the Period" when looking for a wife.[16]

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[15] "A Musical Box," *Daily Evening Bulletin* (San Francisco, CA), January 19, 1870. The words in brackets are taken from reprints that feature these changes. By 1880, the poem was credited to a W. W. Story, with other minor changes to the text that occurred in multiple reprints.

[16] "Anvil to Pulpit: The Graphic Story of Robert Collyer's Life. The Great Preacher's Boyhood in His Yorkshire Home. Lessons from His Experience that Young Men Should Heed," *Rocky Mountain News* (Denver, CO), September 26, 1880. In a lecture, first printed in the *New York Tribune*, Collyer offers suggestions to students of "Eastman's business college in Poughkeepsie" for how to be successful in life; among them was finding a good wife. Toward the end, he quotes a portion of the poem: "Hear Story's description of the Girl of the Period: 'She is perfect to whirl in a waltz. And her shoulders show well on a soft divan, sash lounges at night and spreads her silks, and plays with her bracelets, and flirts her fan. But is this the thing for a mother and wife? Can love ever grow on such barren rocks? Is this the companion to take for life? You might as well marry a music box!'"

Poetry in US newspapers created and perpetuated competing ideas about what the music box sound represented. In more sentimental imaginings, like Leigh Hunt's "On Hearing a Little Musical Box," the music box's metallic sound was heard as otherworldly and magical. Referencing mythological instruments and their sonic power, poets represented the music box as able to match or even exceed this power. Further, these idealized qualities became quickly aligned with the idealized voice, especially as pertaining to women. This not only happened with poetic comparisons to feminized mythological creatures—like fairies and sirens—but also female love interests, as with Hosmer's "The Musical Box" or "To a Miniature." But poetry also expressed the dehumanizing potential of the music box as a mechanical instrument. Here, too, women received the brunt of critique, whether they condoned the mechanization of music (Moore/Barnett's "The Musical Box") or were themselves as mechanical as the music box ("A Musical Box").

If the music box could represent the ideal sonic qualities of an ideal voice, it could also communicate something more problematic: that the voice was superficially beautiful. What qualified as an ideal voice was shifting and unstable, and it depended on whose voice was being heard and described. In poetic accounts, as I described above, this voice tended to be a woman's and presumed white. However, other marginalized voices faced criticism against an imaginary ideal, particularly along the lines of race. Metaphors of mechanization, like the music box, played a role in highlighting the non-normativity of these voices.

Ralston's Disapproval: Italian Opera and the Racialized Voice

While Effie suffered in silence, Ralston endeavored to find out the source of his daughter's troubles. A conversation with his brother-in-law, Dr. Miller, distilled the problem as rooted in Ralston's (un)conscious biases against Luigi:

> "Ralston," [Dr. Miller] began again, suddenly, "has Effie any trouble on her mind?"
>
> Mr. Ralston fidgeted under the keen eyes regarding him. "Trouble? How do you mean? There—what's the good? Yes, she has."
>
> "Ah! some sort of love disappointment, perhaps?"
>
> "Precisely that."
>
> "And what was the difficulty?"
>
> "Oh! It wasn't the right sort of thing at all," was the short answer.
>
> "Why not?"
>
> "Well, the man was an Italian—and a musician—"
>
> "Well?"
>
> "Well!" retorted Mr. Ralston, testily, feeling he was being driven to ground—"don't I tell you he was an It—"
>
> "Oh, but that's nonsense, of course," said the doctor, with a cheerful directness. "It covers altogether too much ground. You might as reasonably say he is an American and a shoe-maker, and *therefore* a suitable match for Effie. Dante was an Italian, and Beethoven a musician, but you've got the bust of one and the poems of t'other in your library."
>
> Mr. Ralston was silent. The doctor went on: "The only question here is of the individual. What's wrong with the man himself?"
>
> "Nothing that I know of," admitted Mr. Ralston, reluctantly enough.[17]

Whereas Effie's romantic attachment to Luigi caused her to imagine his voice and image via the music box, from Ralston's perspective Luigi's status as an Italian musician made him an unfit suitor. Despite Ralston welcoming Luigi into his home as an employee, once Luigi went outside those bounds he was no longer welcome to occupy the same spaces. And it was not

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[17] "Euphemia's Music-Box," 90.

until Dr. Miller's rejoinder that Ralston realized his disapproval may have been without merit.

Ralston's unwillingness to understand Luigi and Effie's love for each other resulted from his diminishing their respective voices. With Luigi, in particular, Ralston heard him as a racialized voice. I take the term "racialized voice" from Nina Eidsheim's article "Marian Anderson and 'Sonic Blackness' in American Opera," in which she suggests that "the perceived presence of the black body in a voice that otherwise meets all of the standards of a professional classical voice [...] is called into presence in an otherwise idiomatic classical voice."[18] In broader terms, the racialized voice entails the perception that racialized difference can be heard; however, this difference does not manifest in the voice itself but in how listeners hear it. Ralston, then, understands Luigi's voice through a long history of bias against Italian musicians; it is not until his conversation with Dr. Miller that Ralston interrogates his own biased ear.

By 1872, when the story was published, Luigi's ethnicity, lower class, and employment as a music teacher would have recalled decades of biased critiques of Italian opera and musicians, even if the character otherwise exhibited none of the stereotypical behaviors. Through his conversation with Dr. Miller, Ralston revealed this bias against Italian musicians and perhaps Italian immigrants more generally. Anti-Italian sentiment was

[18] Nina Eidsheim, "Marian Anderson and 'Sonic Blackness' in American Opera," *American Quarterly* 63, no. 3 (September 2011): 647. She develops this work more philosophically in "Race and the Aesthetics of Vocal Timbre," in *Rethinking Difference in Music Scholarship*, ed. Olivia Bloechl, Melanie Lowe, and Jeffrey Kallberg (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 338-65.

certainly present in the United States in the latter half of the nineteenth century. As Matthew Frye Jacobson has addressed, the 1891 lynchings of eleven Italian prisoners represented a culmination of anti-Italian bias in the Jim Crow South. He writes that although Italians, politically, "were indeed white enough for naturalization and for the ballot, [...] socially they represented a problem population at best." In particular, Italian immigrants chose jobs that were marked as black, such as farm labor, and "fraternized" with the black population.[19] The 1891 lynch mob operated under the assumption that Italians were inherently criminal; white supremacists considered them as "savage" as black people or people from indigenous tribes.[20]

But cultural stereotypes of Italians persisted in the United States throughout the nineteenth century, particularly in the realm of opera. As Katherine K. Preston notes, part of this stemmed from ambivalence toward Italian opera itself. In the first half of the nineteenth century, English adaptations of Italian operas were more popular than the original-language compositions. While Italian troupes were able to secure funding and even have financially successful performances during this period, because they were viewed as novelties they tended not to survive more than one or two seasons. The first Italian troupe to perform in the United States, Manuel García's Italian Opera Company, was initially

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[19] Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color: European Immigrants and the Alchemy of Race* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998), 57. Within Italy, too, southern regions such as Sicily and Naples were stereotyped as other compared to the northern cities of Rome, Venice or Florence. The "Neapolitan air" that is associated with Luigi, as I discuss later, marks him as doubly marginalized. For more on racism in Italy, see Angela Zanotti, "Undercurrents of Racism in Italy," *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society* 7, no. 2 (1993): 173–88.

[20] Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color,* 56. Savagery also connoted noisiness; regarding the 1863 Irish mob riots in New York City, an anonymous writer described them as "whooping, yelling, blaspheming, howling, [and] demonic." Quoted in ibid.

received well when it premiered original-language productions of Rossini and others in 1825; however, the novelty wore off and the troupe left again the next year. Even with the "growing taste for Italian melody" in later decades, troupes also had to combat "the negative impression of exclusivity created by the sumptuous surroundings and private boxes of the new opera house."[21] García's troupe owed its initial success to lower-class opera-goers as well as more upper-class benefactors, and indeed nineteenth-century theater catered to all social classes. The purported exclusionary elitism continued to haunt Italian opera companies, even as they became a cultural mainstay in American culture by the mid-nineteenth century.

Exclusionary theater may not have bothered an upper-class patriarch like Ralston, but performers themselves also contributed to negative stereotypes of Italians at large. Troupes were not always well-managed, and US newspapers latched onto the drama that sometimes ensued among musicians. In 1845, as Preston outlines, an Italian troupe "fell apart quite literally" when a singer stopped during the last act of a performance and "half the orchestra walked out over a wage dispute. The New York press was both scandalized and thoroughly disgusted by the behavior of the troupe as a whole."[22] The drama of troupe mismanagement had larger consequences: in the 1840s and 1850s, "the image of Italian

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[21] Katherine K. Preston, *Opera on the Road: Traveling Opera Troupes in the United States, 1825-60* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993), 107, 111. Philip Hone, in 1835, made the same argument: "private boxes [...] cost six thousand dollars each, to be sure, and the use of them is all that the proprietors get for their money; but it forms a sort of aristocratical distinction." Quoted in Charles Hamm, *Yesterdays: Popular Song in America* (New York: Norton, 1979), 69.
[22] Preston, *Opera on the Road*, 127.

opera performers as greedy, contentious, lazy, and dishonest individuals" became a common stereotype in US media.[23]

Xenophobic sentiment also manifested more explicitly; as one writer complained in 1847:

> Every one in the city but myself has heard "Lucia di Lammermoor," and the other performances of the troupe now engaged at Palmo's. I am very fond of music, but (may I be forgiven for it!) I have some prejudices as strong, and no doubt as unreasonable, as those of blunt John Bull. I hate Italian singers. Like the war-horse toward the battle, I "scent" them "afar off." They look so greasy and are so redolent of pomatum, and bear's oil, olives and sardines. And then the varlets are so vain! Our actors are bad enough in the egotism which seems to flourish so luxuriantly in the foot-lights, but the poorest supernumerary of an Italian company deems himself the wonder of men, and the idol of women. What superb voices the rascals have! How they do excel in music! And yet, beyond this, and some lingering radiations of the genius, whose sun declined long ago [...], what is left of the land that produced Cicero and Petrarch. Oh! Monkeys and hand organs![24]

While admitting his biases may be unreasonable, and under the guise of Italian creative genius not being what it used to be in the age of Cicero or Petrarch—of the Roman Republic and the Italian Renaissance, respectively—the author nonetheless employs cultural stereotypes to complain about the so-called deficiencies of Italian singers. Despite their "superb voices," the author complains that Italian singers' performances in no way match the artistic genius of old. And ultimately, the author lumps the singers in with lower-class Italian street musicians, whose hand organs mechanically reproduced popular songs.[25] It also addresses the contradictions of the racialized voice, which impacted vocal quality but was

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[23] Ibid., 127-28.
[24] Query, "Scraps," *Spirit of the Times* 17, no. 7 (1847): 73.
[25] For more on the association of the hand organ (or barrel organ) with the Italian lower class, see John M. Picker, *Victorian Soundscapes* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 41–81.

not a result of actual vocal difference per se. The irony of mentioning Italian singers' superb voices is that the critic had already professed, "I hate Italian singers." As such, the purported deficiencies of Italian singers' performances, which diminished the impact of their voices, cannot be separated from the rest of the critique, which was based on ethnic stereotypes.

Mechanized sound also played a role in the racialization of voice. The hand organ, a mechanical instrument contemporary with the music box, was used by the 1847 critic to indicate deficiencies in the quality of Italian singers. The hand organ, like the music box, could reproduce songs with the crank of a handle; beyond that, little effort was needed to make the music heard. A hand-organ, to the above critic, thus conveyed mediocrity rather than true artistry; an appealing voice alone did not make for an effective operatic performance. In an otherwise positive review of a performance of Verdi's *Il trovatore* in 1856, another reviewer made a similar claim about Italian opera companies:

> It seems to be the general sentiment of all who attended the National Theatre on Wednesday night that the pure Italian opera has never been presented to our citizens to greater advantage than on that occasion. Something more than musical skill and beauty and compass of voice is required for the complete and effective performance of a great opera. The dramatic talent is equally necessary. It is herein that Italian singers are most commonly deficient; and it is the usual superiority of the English troupes in this respect, rather than their English version of the simple plots, already so well known, that has gained for them so decided a preference in the United States. Merely as actors the members of this company deserve high praise.[26]

Even as Italian opera gained popularity and respect as an art form, Italian singers were not considered the ideal performers to interpret it. Whether it was because of their presumably weak acting skills or another projection of their stereotyped difficulty as performers, the

[26] "The Opera," *The Daily National Intelligencer* (Washington, DC), January 11, 1856.

reviewer nonetheless concluded that English troupes were superior to Italian troupes. US nativism, in this way, not only put down the musical achievements of Italian performers but praised the efforts of whiter troupes.[27]

The music box, like the hand organ mentioned above, was employed to critique Italian singers' performances. By the mid-nineteenth century, the music box became a new metaphor for identifying mechanical aspects of performance, from stiffness of performance to sound quality to technical precision. Although the general critique of mechanical or otherwise unmusical performances was not new—castrati were especially notable objects of such criticism—the music box was a relatively new musical machine that many newspaper readers would at least have been familiar with, if they did not own one.[28] In 1864, *The Daily National Intelligencer* printed the following critique of Italian opera:

> What we had designed to dwell upon is that which, now, we have merely space left to hint. The Italian Opera has dazzled this country with the brilliancy of its vocalists—but, great as have been the names they have brought us, their performances have seldom been complete. Either they have been miserable actors—witness [Signor] Brigaoli, who has but little more facial expression or physical life than a music box—or else the troupe has resolved itself (as in the case of [Giulia] Grisi and [Giovanni Matteo] Mario) into but little more than a foil to those precious stones, the stars; or, the instrumentation has wanted perfection.[29]

US critics, in proclaiming Italian opera's deficiencies, imbued it with an aura of the mechanical and invoked the music box as a non-human attribute of musical performance.

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[27] Italian singers were still part of English troupes, so part of this critique concerns the management of troupes as well as performance.

[28] For more on the relationship between the castrato and the mechanical, see Bonnie Gordon, "The Castrato Meets the Cyborg," *The Opera Quarterly* 27, no. 1 (2011): 94–122. For more on gendered backlash against castrati's voices, see Martha Feldman, "Denaturing the Castrato," *The Opera Quarterly* 24, nos. 3–4 (2009): 178–99.

[29] Erasmus, "The Opera," *The Daily National Intelligencer* (Washington, DC), April 4, 1864.

With this review, the opera star Brigaoli is a music box because he comes across as immobile in performance, what could have also been referred to as "wooden" or "stiff." This choice of metaphor is also significant for how it relates to the concern that Italian operatic performance involves little more than vocal brilliance. But as earlier reviews had claimed, even the performer's voice could fall short of critical expectation: far from achieving a transcendent, heavenly quality—as sentimental poets imagined the ideal voice—singers like Grisi and Mario were described as mere foils to the stars. The mechanical, music box-like performance diminished the affective power of the racialized voice.

The racialized voice was defined against the idealized voice, the latter which contained two related yet paradoxical components: first, that there was some kind of substance to support the voice; and second, that this substance would not detract from the voice itself. If, in sentimental poetry, the music box could represent the ideal voice, via music criticism a contradictory idea emerged that the music box quality betrayed a lack of humanity. The woman who was a music box, according to W. W. Story's poem, was seductively beautiful but could never hope to be an ideal wife. Similarly, Italian singers failed to achieve the ideal voice because they had nothing else to show for it; once the singing voice was omitted from the equation, the performances or personality traits that remained were seen as deficient. In "Euphemia's Music-Box," Luigi's voice remained othered because of his association with only a "soft little Neapolitan air," even from the more sympathetic perspective afforded by Effie's love for him. Like Leigh Hunt's poetic description of a seemingly humanized music box, Effie hears Luigi as a mechanized voice, eliding man and machine by ascribing human qualities to her neighbor's music box.

The Music Box Voice: The Diva and Instrumentality

The music box voice, as it applied to operatic singers via US media, was informed by both sentimental poetry and conceptions of the racialized voice in opera. As I outlined above, both carried contradictory meanings: poetic descriptions of the music box emphasized its sound as an idealized voice but also pointed out its more dangerous, seductive potential; the racialized voice was superb yet blemished by the body it was housed in. The music box voice, too, was a contradiction in that it both relied upon and diminished the singer's humanity. As it particularly applied to female opera singers, the music box voice highlighted the singer's timbral appeal and technical facility, yet these same qualities could be used to describe her voice as a machine. The use of the music box to describe vocal quality and timbre emphasized the instrumentality of the female operatic voice more than her humanity.

The various critiques and stereotypes of Italian singers described above—from their odor to their difficult temperaments to their vocal abilities to their poor acting—mirrored contemporary critiques of divas, who often were doubly marked as other because of their ethnicity and femininity. The diva had a non-normative voice at least partially because she was a working woman in an era that praised the domestic woman. But as several scholars have pointed out, the diva conveyed non-normativity in other ways.[30] Susan Leonardi and

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[30] For a brief overview of operatic diva studies literature, see Wayne Koestenbaum, *The Queen's Throat: Opera, Homosexuality, and the Mystery of Desire* (New York: Poseidon Press, 1993); Susan J. Leonardi and Rebecca A. Pope, *The Diva's Mouth: Body, Voice, Prima Donna Politics* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1996); Corinne E. Blackmer and Patricia Juliana Smith, eds., *En Travesti*; Philip Brett, Elizabeth Wood, and Gary C. Thomas, eds., *Queering the Pitch: The New Gay and Lesbian Musicology*, second edition (New York: Routledge, 2006); Naomi André, *Voicing Gender: Castrati, Travesti, and the Second Woman in Early-Nineteenth-Century Italian Opera* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006); and

Rebecca Pope note, for instance, that Italian opera divas, in real life and fiction, tended to be singled out as "dark caucasian[s]" who were "excessive, transgressive, stupid, [and] loudmouthed."[31] In their chapter on masculinist diva literature—i.e. novels that were mostly written by heterosexist men and invoked the diva character as a cautionary tale of proper womanhood gone awry—Leonardi and Pope write that divas perversely lured both men and women with their sirenic voices.[32] Of course, to the delight of many queer opera fans, divas are notorious gender benders, but this transgression did not always pan out well for the diva herself. And even if they were not always marked *as* racially other, fictional divas still tended to be associated with those marked as such, like Christine Daaé with the disfigured "ghost" Erik in Gaston Leroux's *The Phantom of the Opera* or Trilby with the Jewish Svengali in George du Maurier's *Trilby*.[33]

Even without the additional factor of race, critics described women's singing voices more often than men's as instruments. For instance, an 1845 *The Boston Daily Atlas* reviewed one of Scottish tenor John Templeton's vocal recitals:

> After Mr. Templeton gave his first entertainment, we spoke of his pretensions as a vocalist. Having then given an opinion on his vocal powers, it is unnecessary to repeat it. But we are desirous to speak of him as a gentleman; for mere musical attributes, in a vocalist, unaccompanied with intelligence and suavity of manners, *may make a very good musical box*, but can never attain the high position of intellectual

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Jennifer Fleeger, *Mismatched Women: The Siren's Song Through the Machine* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014).

[31] Leonardi and Pope, *The Diva's Mouth*, 17. An 1883 review affirmed this stereotype, complaining that Adelina Patti "is very much of a child. But in that she is no exception to her race. Italians are the most like children of any people, unless it be Scandinavians." "Musical Measures: Patti and Scalchi," *The Milwaukee Sentinel*, January 28, 1883.

[32] Ibid., 54.

[33] For more on the diva character within these two novels, see Jennifer Fleeger, *Mismatched Women*, chap. 1. See also Koestenbaum, *The Queen's Throat*, 104–107.

> endowments. [...] It is a desideratum to find, united in one person, the attributes of a gentleman and a good vocalist. Mr. Templeton is a capital model singer—and they, who are ambitious of cultivating the vocal art, should esteem it a favor to attend his excellent entertainments.[34]

This review highlights the mechanized voice as informing conceptions of masculinity, with Templeton as a positive exemplar. A "mere" voice, similar to Italian opera singers described above, would be no different from a machine that could play the same music. For the gentleman, however, the singing voice as functioning like a music box was defined against the substance of his character, which included "intelligence and suavity of manners." Templeton was also lauded for his elocutionary skills, not just for his singing. As such, these qualities moved him beyond the status of machine, of being a mere "musical box," to convey more than what a musical voice could offer.

The gentleman's voice contrasted with the diva's voice, as exemplified in an 1851 *Boston Investigator* review of Anna Bishop:

> A Western Critic, who has heard Madame Anna Bishop, discourseth thus:—We had the pleasure of attending this lady's concert in Utica, on Saturday last, and of having a seat so near her sweet-sounding mouth as to enable us to identify each particular one of the ranks of snowy teeth *which guard her delightful music-box*—and which—alas! (according to report) at times bit voraciously into bread and butter!—Truly—'how wonderfully are we made!'—and what a curious web is woven by this double-threaded shuttle, which carries down pork and potatoes, and brings up "Casta Diva" and "Comin' thro' the Rye."[35]

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[34] "Music," *The Boston Daily Atlas*, November 10, 1845, my emphasis. Templeton (1802–1886) went on a long-term American tour in 1845, and by this time had already spent a few weeks in New York City. Around the same time, *The New York Herald* touted the "new and brilliant era of English Opera" and expressed concern that Templeton, especially noted for singing alongside Maria Malibran on the opera stage, would perform Italian arias. This concern turned out to be unfounded, as his concerts featured English, Irish, and Scottish songs. "Theatricals," *The New York Herald*, October 1, 1845.

[35] "Variety: Criticism," *Boston Investigator*, August 13, 1851, my emphasis. Anna Bishop (1810–1884) was an English opera singer whose voice was extremely well regarded in

More explicitly than the Templeton review, this critic refers to the voice *as* a music box, which related to contemporary slang terms for the mouth. However, in this case, it also emphasizes how Bishop's behaviors, outside her voice, make her less like a lady, namely through her eating habits. The reviewer isolates her snowy white teeth in particular, which are both visually beautiful protectors of her sonically beautiful voice and also violently tear through food. Voice, in this case, is *the* substance for a woman, not just as an opera singer but as a person of refinement or "lady." It was aided by her aesthetically pleasing appearance but hindered by other activities and behaviors; like Plutarch's mythical nightingale, the female operatic singer was a voice and nothing more. And because vocal quality was paramount, it also became a double-edged sword: an idealized voice, critically speaking, could propel the diva far above the status of the average woman; the non-ideal or mechanized voice could dehumanize her further.

The music box voice, which combined (human) voice and (machinic) instrumentality, resonated with later eighteenth-century discourse surrounding the glass harmonica. It was here, too, that the instrumentalized voice became explicitly feminized, before the music box emerged in popular consciousness. As Heather Hadlock has argued, when the glass harmonica—invented by Benjamin Franklin as a more playable version of

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American newspapers from her debut in 1847 onward. One of her best-known roles was the titular character from Bellini's *Norma*. She was almost as famous for her well-publicized separation from the English composer Henry Bishop and subsequent relationship with harpist Nicolas-Charles Bochsa until the latter's death in 1856. Bishop and Bochsa's relationship was potentially also the inspiration for the Svengali-Trilby pairing in George du Maurier's 1894 novel *Trilby*. It is notable that Trilby, as "La Svengali," was continually hypnotized by Svengali so he could control her voice, and otherwise barely spoke while in this state.

musical glasses—first emerged in the mid-eighteenth century, it quickly became aligned with women in multiple ways, including voice. In 1761, Anne Ford remarked that musical glasses sounded "more like the human Voice than any musical Instrument."[36] And responding to Johann Adolf Hasse's cantata *L'Armonica* for glass harmonica and soprano voice, written for musician-sisters, Metastasio wrote that when the soprano "sings along to the sound of the *armonica*, she knows how marvelously to blend her own voice with it, so that sometimes it is not possible to distinguish the difference between them."[37] The glass harmonica's purported similarity to the soprano voice coincided with claims that it had the purest sound, that is, material traces from the instrument and performer could not be heard.[38]

The idealized sound of the glass harmonica, as with poetic accounts of the music box sound, was short lived. As Hadlock outlines, the eventual rejection of the glass harmonica culminated in the writings of E. T. A. Hoffmann and his early nineteenth century contemporaries. She notes Hoffmann's "systematic association of women and armonica" and goes on to indicate that "Romantic writers built up the image of the armonica as an idea of perfect music while rejecting it in real life," much in line with the actual rejection of women's voices in contemporary society.[39] More to the point, Samuel Taylor Coleridge (as paraphrased by Hadlock) complained of the glass harmonica that it "could not satisfy 'a true

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[36] Anne Ford, quoted in Heather Hadlock, "Sonorous Bodies: Women and the Glass Harmonica," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 53, no. 3 (2000): 509.
[37] Pietro Metastasio, quoted in Hadlock, "Sonorous Bodies," 513. Hadlock interchanges "glass harmonica" and "armonica," while I solely use the former term.
[38] These claims, of course, were idealistic at best, and that "only the soprano register escapes the percussive undertone [of fingers stroking the glass], sounding clear and flutelike." Hadlock, "Sonorous Bodies," 510.
[39] Hadlock, "Sonorous Bodies," 537.

musical taste' because its *mere sonority* distracted the listener from appreciating the science of harmony and composition," which Coleridge referred to as the "body of the sound."[40] What Coleridge thus suggested was that "mere sonority" pointed too closely to a body, in the glass harmonica's case an instrumental body.

While the glass harmonica allowed critics and musicians to imagine the ideals of bodiless performance, the music box, as a fully mechanical instrument, seemed to actualize this ideal. Nonetheless, the music box metaphor, and its associations with mechanized sound, served to ground the female operatic voice as non-ideal. In 1850, a review from *The Boston Daily Atlas* invoked the music box to describe vocal timbre in otherwise familiar terms:

> Madame Annetta Stephani made her debut as a vocalist, and was received, particularly in the aria from the Magic Flute, with great applause. In this aria she gave an imitation of a flute with great delicacy and precision. Her voice runs very high and is quite clear and fine, but its quality is rather thin, and she sings almost entirely with mezzo power. Her intonation is very true, particularly in distant intervals, but *her singing has something of the music-box nature about it*, which does not satisfy the hearer. It is pretty, and delicate, and nice, but it is not expansive. It is a clever vocal exhibition, but does not seem to go deeper than mere voice.[41]

Though described as a music box voice, Stephani's voice also matches the clear, flutelike, idealized timbre of the glass harmonica's treble range, and the delicate, feminized sound of the glass harmonica accords with Stephani's purportedly weaker upper range. And matching the contradiction of the instrument's idealized sound with its real-world capabilities, the limitations suggested by Stephani's "mere voice" as primary substance points too closely to her own body; this, in turn, highlights her voice as paradoxically sounding too human and

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[40] Ibid., my emphasis.
[41] "Music," *The Boston Daily Atlas*, February 27, 1850, my emphasis.

too mechanical. Yet even with this paradox, "mere voice" ultimately ascribes instrumental, rather than human, qualities to the female operatic voice.

The choice of piece to highlight Stephani's mechanical qualities is also telling in its own right. It is hard to imagine that "the aria from the Magic Flute" is anything but the Queen of the Night's second-act aria, "Der Hölle Rache kocht in meinem Herzen." Carolyn Abbate has commented on how the Queen's voice is doubled by the flute at certain moments. Because Stephani performed with an orchestra, the flute double may have helped her sound more flute-like, or perhaps the critic elided the two. Even through her contemporary critical lens, Abbate also echoes the critic's identification of the mechanized voice through her description of the coloratura section's peculiarities:

> In her act 2 melismas, the Queen sings only arpeggios, no scales at all. There are no conjunct melodic runs up or down some diatonic ladder or other, no conventional operatic *passaggi* of the kind familiar from eighteenth-century *seria* arias. And with this technical departure, an unprecedented voice comes into being, one with no capacity for melodic conjunction. In this—and not in any simple loss of words—voice metamorphoses into an impossible device, a wind instrument unknown in 1791, unknown ever since. When this instrument-voice is echoed by the high violins and doubled by the flute [...], the equivalence of voice and instrument is expressed as a set of mirrors exactly parallel to one another, in which one cannot say what is reflected, and what is really there.[42]

She goes on to conclude: "Voice is suspended in a sonic overworld, as if it wanted to linger there for a few seconds, in itself serene but at the same time, to the listener, strange in a way that disarms the very fear that threatens one's astonishment: it is cold. [...] [The Queen's] voice emerges from the instrumental as a marvel, and, transmuted from organic to metallic,

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[42] Carolyn Abbate, *In Search of Opera* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 92.

reverts to the instrumental as an uncanny sound."[43] On the one hand, the music box-like nature of Stephani's voice could have been a product of her chosen aria (for the non-normative Queen of the Night, no less) rather than something innate to her vocal quality. But regardless of the origins of the mechanization process, Stephani's voice becomes reduced to a mere technological instrument, her voice belying her human appearance.

The Boston Daily Atlas reviewer defined Stephani's music box voice according to its timbral qualities, which related both to poetic descriptions of the music box as well as earlier instrumental discourse like the "bodiless" glass harmonica. In addition, the sound of Stephani's voice was informed by the technological status of the music box circa 1850. Multiple sources cite 1833 as the year when larger, "cartel" music boxes were being made, which enabled more tunes to be played as well as at a higher volume.[44] As Roy Mosoriak claims, before this point, "the music works produced up to 1833 were pip-squeaks with only a small volume of sound coming from them."[45] Further, Alexander Buchner notes that Nicole Frères, one of the early industry's best known makers, developed the *forte-piano* type of box, in which two combs of different lengths allowed for dynamic contrast.[46] About the same time, though, John E. T. Clark indicates that "the small cheap toy musical box was made; this was the Manivelles or crank-handle type," usually playing one tune.[47] And smaller music boxes, also known as *tabatières*, were still common and generally far cheaper than the

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[43] Ibid., 94.
[44] See Mosoriak, *The Curious History of Music Boxes*, 30; and Chapuis, *The History of the Musical Box and of Mechanical Music*, 178.
[45] Mosoriak, *The Curious History of Music Boxes*, 30.
[46] Buchner, *Mechanical Musical Instruments*, 52.
[47] Clark, *Musical Boxes*, 16.

cartel or *forte-piano* types.[48] It wasn't until the 1860s that interchangeable cylinders were successfully incorporated into music boxes, which made an investment in larger music boxes (which now could play far more tunes) more worthwhile, and mass production only began in the mid-1870s. Stephani's voice, then, would most likely have been heard in terms of the more common, smaller, and less resonant music boxes.

The specific components of the mechanized music box voice were fluid rather than static, but they nonetheless reinforced the diva's instrumentality. In 1852, an American woman in London described Henriette Sontag's voice as such:

> We managed to reach her Majesty's Theatre at the appointed time, and each of us was welcomed by Mr. Peabody with an exquisite bouquet! The opera was Auber's last, the 'Prodigal Son,' and I was all anxiety for Sontag's first note. She came, and mellifluous, honey-sweet indeed were the sounds I heard. The voice is exquisite, flexible, full, with haut-bois mellowness, but not the clarion ring of Grisi's superb organ or Jenny Lind's silver vibrating tones. She is stiff, or rather indifferent, stereotyped in movement, no longer very handsome, with pleasing expression and sweet dark eyes. She has no dramatic talent, no force, nothing of Grisi's strength and majesty of action; *her vocalization is exquisitely perfect as the finest musical box; but like that, it is a machine; she touched me not; she sings with no soul.* She cannot approach Lind, for she has not the genius which burns within and lights up the unrivalled Swede! There is nothing spiritual in Sontag; she is a bird, warbling and carolling, deliciously 'tis true, but very near the earth; while Jenny Lind, with the earnest dedication of her marvellous gift to the highest aims of art, carries us with her, as in her inspiration she soars towards heaven.[49]

The description of Sontag's voice, here, differs noticeably from the earlier description of Annetta Stephani's voice. While the transcendent, silvery, bell-like voices belonged to the idealized type, embodied by Jenny Lind and Giulia Grisi—timbrally closer to Stephani's high

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[48] This, of course, also depended on the box itself, which could be incredibly ornate and expensive on its own.

[49] "Further Extracts: From the Family Letters of an American Lady in Europe," *Daily National Intelligencer* (Washington, DC), August 7, 1852, my emphasis.

and clear flute-like tones—Sontag's mechanized voice instead had the mellowness of an oboe. More significantly, Sontag's music box voice was defined by her technically too-perfect vocal performance. The critic, later, remarked that Sontag's voice was more earth-bound than spiritual, emphasizing the purportedly soulless nature of her precise singing. The music box voice, in turn, also became the primary descriptor of the mechanized body. The relation between Sontag's voice and body was tautological: "it is a machine" could as easily have been "she is a machine," and her stiffness of movement served to exacerbate the mechanical qualities of her music box voice.[50]

More than other critiques of the music box voice, this review turned Sontag into an automaton. As the immediate technological precursor to the music box, automata were eighteenth century marvels of clockwork precision.[51] While some were programmed to play musical instruments, automata were essentially machinic bodies without voices; their mechanical successors, music boxes, were mechanized voices without bodies. Sontag, in part, became the living version of fictional singing automata like Hoffmann's Olimpia. Her mechanized voice had other ramifications, too, namely that it communicated a soulless body.

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[50] Lind, especially, was touted as the ideal in American newspapers; as Lowell Gallagher writes, despite her obvious technical facility her singing was defended as both natural and divinely inspired. But even as the positive exemplar of the ideal, she was conflated with her transcendent voice, that "the relation of the exemplary voice and the woman was tautological." Gallagher, "Jenny Lind and the Voice of America," 199. Gallagher refers to New York reviews of Lind's concerts that she gave while touring with P. T. Barnum in 1850; he also contextualizes her overwhelmingly positive reception with the current political strife that, among other things, led to the Civil War.

[51] Automata are mentioned in nearly every history of the music box, since both began as specialty items made by clockmakers. For a recent account of eighteenth-century automata, see Adelheid Voskuhl, *Androids in the Enlightenment: Mechanics, Artisans, and Cultures of the Self* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2013).

The uncanny, soulless voice also figured in contemporary phonographic literature such as Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, which I discuss in the third chapter.

The too-perfect voice was a longstanding issue for music critics. E. T. A. Hoffmann's Olimpia had an uncanny voice at least in part because of its technical perfection. And the above quote has similarities with a London reviewer's critique of the castrato "foreigner" Velluti in 1825: "if we could imagine an automaton as skilled in singing, as Roger Bacon's fabled clock-work head was in speaking, we can fancy that the effect would be similar; for the precision with which Velluti executes the most difficult passages, can only be compared with that of a piece of machinery."[52] The primary difference between this earlier review and Sontag is the nature of the technology being referred to. Velluti's voice, in 1825, was described in terms of a machine that existed primarily in the imaginary, harking back to the era of automata. By the 1852 review of Sontag, critics looked to technologies of their own time, and the music box was established enough as a technological commodity to become the new metaphor.

Like the music box of sentimental poetry, the music box voice could blend the mechanical with the natural. It is telling that the above female reviewer described the mechanized Sontag in terms of a bird, particularly since her foil, Lind, was also known as the Swedish Nightingale. As Jeni Williams has outlined, in Victorian-era poetry and literature the nightingale indexed poetry, sentimentality, and nature, all of which fit within the broader

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[52] John Scott and John Taylor, eds., "The Opera," *London Magazine and Review* 2 (August 1825): 518. Thanks to Bonnie Gordon for alerting me to this review.

evocation of femininity.[53] The nightingale's association with femininity, of course, goes all the way back to the mythological Philomela, who was turned into a nightingale in order to escape her rapist and would-be murderer, Tereus. But even when this reference was removed, the feminized nightingale remained. For Lind, the "Swedish Nightingale" moniker linked femininity with nature and "encouraged an identification between Lind's art and natural processes," in accordance with traditional symbolism; this, in turn, aligned with the reviewer's claim that she "soar[ed] towards heaven."[54] Sontag's voice did the opposite, and the mixed metaphor of bird and music box emphasized how she was both too close to earth and too far from nature.

Despite the additional incorporation of nature metaphors, the music box voice ultimately highlighted mechanized instrumentality over humanity. While the bird metaphor was loose enough that it could emphasize positive or negative qualities, the real-life existence of mechanical birds meant that it further exposed Sontag as having a music box voice. In 1883, the bird metaphor was coupled with the music box again, this time more explicitly:

> [O]n Wednesday evening Semiramide was sung at the Academy of Music, with Patti and Mme. Scalchi both in the cast. It was Scalchi's first appearance in America, and she is an artist about whom we have heard a great deal. For once there was some one on the stage to divide the honors with Patti. The prima donna felt it, and did her utmost to carry off all the laurels. For a wonder, she did not succeed. But how she sang! It was a match between a nightingale and a canary, and the nightingale won. Mme. Scalchi has a fine contralto voice, but it is not as beautiful as Miss [Annie Louise] Cary's at its best. She is, however, more of an artist than Miss Cary, and as an actress is wonderfully dramatic. She does not always sing in tune, but then Rubinstein, the greatest pianist who had ever been heard in this country, frequently

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[53] Jeni Williams, *Interpreting Nightingales: Gender, Class and Histories* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 142–48. For more of an overview of the nightingale as symbol in literature, see her Introduction (9–15).
[54] Gallagher, "Jenny Lind and the Voice of America," 194–95.

> struck false notes in the excitement of his playing. To tell the truth, I would almost rather hear an occasional false note than Patti's everlasting perfection. *It is too much like a music box*. Scalchi is more human.[55]

Like Sontag's voice thirty years prior, Patti's voice is described as less-than-human, and the music box metaphor here also emphasized the too-perfect nature of Patti's voice. But in this scenario, Adelina Patti, the mechanical singer, was the nightingale, while the "more human" Sofia Scalchi was described as a canary.[56] But the mechanical nightingale had its own legend via Hans Christian Andersen's 1843 story "The Nightingale," which may have been directly inspired by Jenny Lind's voice.[57] The exoticized tale was set in China, where the Emperor learned about and came to favor the nightingale's song. But when he receives a shiny, jewel-encrusted mechanical nightingale from Japan, he and his subjects ignore the living bird. Eventually, the mechanical bird ceases to function properly, and the Emperor experiences silence more than song. But when he is on his deathbed, the living nightingale returns, and through its song makes a deal with Death to let the Emperor live. The restorative power of the living nightingale's song was due to its direct connection with nature and freedom. The

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[55] "Musical Measures: Patti and Scalchi," *The Milwaukee Sentinel*, January 28, 1883, my emphasis.

[56] As metaphors for vocal prowess, the canary was considered lesser than the nightingale. As a reviewer stated in 1844: "Let us not be so foolish […] to refuse to sustain this attempt to establish a stage for fuller and richer enjoyment hereafter [simply] because we cannot at the first command all the talent the world affords. In the language of another, 'let us not kill our canary, because we cannot get a nightingale,'" Quoted in Preston, *Opera on the Road*, 125.

[57] Daniel Albright discusses Stravinsky's operatic treatment of this tale with *Le Rossignol*. Unlike the tale, which Albright describes as an updated version of stories on Art versus Nature, Stravinsky seems to privilege the mechanical nightingale over the living one, and of compositional, human-guided manipulation of sound over so-called natural sounds. Albright, *Stravinsky: The Music Box and the Nightingale* (New York: Gordon and Breach, 1989), 19–24.

"more human" singers, like Jenny Lind and Sofia Scalchi, fit that mold, while Adelina Patti was the mechanical nightingale.

The music box voice was a non-normative voice that endured in operatic criticism throughout the second half of the nineteenth century. Like the racialized voice, it simultaneously affirmed the pleasing qualities of a particular diva's voice while undercutting her humanity. Broadly defined, the music box voice superimposed sonic markers of the machine onto the diva's voice, although each critic deployed the metaphor in a slightly different way. Similar to sentimental poetic descriptions of the music box outlined in the first section of this chapter, the music box voice was often defined timbrally according to clarity and tone. But distinct to the reviews themselves, the diva's music box voice also pointed to an uncanny perfection, indicating a lack of emotion or soul. What the music box voice suggests, ultimately, is a critique of women's control over their voices and bodies.

Luigi's Song: Power and Racial Coding in *Norma*

Whereas concert reviews used the music box to highlight non-human vocal qualities of opera singers, in "Euphemia's Music-Box" the mechanized voice of the music box became more human. In the previous section, I emphasized how the metaphor of the music box voice critiqued women's control over their voices and bodies through an emphasis on instrumentality rather than humanity. But in "Euphemia's Music-Box," the music box evokes the voice and image of a man in the main character's imagination. This detail is distinctive to the story and relies on readers hearing the music box through Effie's ears. Just as critics fetishized the singer Anna Bishop, who was admired for her beautiful teeth and voice, so too

are the sounds of Effie's neighbor's music box heard in an erotic manner that focuses on the singer's body. Effie imagines not just Luigi's lips as he whistles, but also his hands and eyes as they touch and see her. Even as she dismisses the music box as "mere wood and workmanship," her erotic daydreaming of Luigi belies this dismissal.

Yet the othering of Luigi's voice remained. When Effie hears the music box melody associated with Luigi, it is not her own choice; rather, she is subjected to her neighbor's musical selection. Since the melody points to Effie's inner voice and desires as well as Luigi's voice, the question of *how* these voices are heard is crucial. Because the music box is within earshot but out of sight, and an automatic musical instrument, the music box itself is ascribed agency in this context. The invisibilization of the performer had long had its appeal; with the glass harmonica, as I outlined above, a listener could imagine its sound as free from human interference, resulting in its so-called transcendent quality. The music box exacerbated this effect as a fully automatic instrument while also blending "divine and human things," as Leigh Hunt heard via his poem. The mechanical music box, with its purported built-in humanity, incites Effie's imagination into hearing Luigi's voice.

Effie's desire for control of the tune is made evident in the story. Like the metaphor of Anna Bishop's voice as a music box, the title "Euphemia's Music-Box" comes to represent possession of voice as well as the musical machine. Until the very end of the story, Effie does not have access to a music box except for unintentionally hearing her neighbor's. But after realizing the error of his ways via Dr. Miller, Ralston surprises Effie with two gifts: a music box and Luigi. The pairing of these gifts, of music box and music teacher, forges a relationship between the two. Where, before, Effie could only experience the Neapolitan air

via her neighbor, with both gifts she can hear to the tune at will. And as the eldest daughter of an upper-class, white man, Effie's privilege cements her power over Luigi; when Ralston finally brings Luigi back to the house, Luigi's first words to Effie are: "I am given to you. Will you come and look at your property?"[58]

The music box tune emphasizes this power structure as well. Although neither Effie nor narrator ever explicitly says what "Neapolitan air" emanates from Luigi's lips, it is most likely "Hear Me, Norma" of Vincenzo Bellini's opera *Norma*, based on a conversation Mr. Ralston has with his daughters before buying Effie the music box:

> "I'll tell you what she [Effie] wants, papa," said Nan, the ever-ready. "A great big music-box like [her neighbor] Miss Bacon's. She said so yesterday. And it plays, 'Hear Me, Norma,' and—" "She shall have the largest music-box in New York, to play every tune from 'Yankee Doodle' to 'Old Hundred,'" emphatically declared Mr. Ralston, whose ideas, it is to be feared, were somewhat misty concerning the music-box capacity.[59]

"Hear Me, Norma"—a loose English translation of the act 2 duet "Mira, o Norma"—was perhaps the most famous selection from *Norma* by the time "Euphemia's Music-Box" was published, along with Norma's cavatina, "Casta Diva."[60] Tellingly, star sopranos have perpetuated both selections' popularity: "Casta Diva," like Mozart's Queen of the Night aria,

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[58] "Euphemia's Music-Box," 90.

[59] Ibid. While "Mira, o Norma" may not be considered Neapolitan in a traditional sense, Bellini did study in a Naples conservatory and was considered to compose in an older, eighteenth century Neapolitan style. For more on Bellini's compositional background, see David R. B. Kimbell, *Vincenzo Bellini, Norma* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 1–16.

[60] Charles Hamm writes of *Norma*'s popularity that "all eight songs first brought out by [Oliver] Ditson in 1838 were still in print in 1870, according to the *Complete Catalogue of Sheet Music and Musical Works*; one of them, 'Hear Me, Norma,' was still available through twelve of the twenty publishers represented in that catalog." Hamm, *Yesterdays*, 82.

is a brilliant display of technical virtuosity (although Bellini highlights the titular character rather than a secondary, villainous one); and "Mira, o Norma" features both Norma and the "second woman" mezzo-soprano, Adalgisa.[61] With the potential for two divas with star power singing simultaneously, "Mira, o Norma" could produce even greater acclaim than "Casta Diva." In an 1874 review of a German troupe's performance of the opera, for instance, the *Milwaukee Daily Sentinel* proclaimed: "The grand duet between Norma [Anna Jaeger] and Adalgisa [Sophie Dziuba] in the second act, ending with the familiar Hear Me Norma, was one of the great successes of the week. The two artists were called out twice, and compelled to repeat it."[62]

Opera scholars have also discussed the duet's sonic queerness since, much like Delibes's "Flower Duet" from *Lakmé*, it features two women singing their mutual admiration of each other.[63] While this piece indicates a heterosexual romance in "Euphemia's Music-Box," the forbidden nature of that love—the racial and class mixing of a young, white, upper class teenager with her Italian, presumably lower-class music teacher—does speak in some way to the unusual vocal pairing that comes to represent them. But the duet also references already-extant power structures; while Adalgisa and Norma are both Druid priestesses, the former is subservient to the latter. And in the duet, Adalgisa has to try to convince Norma not to kill herself, to think of her children. Effie, though unaware of the extent to which her

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[61] For more on the Second Woman in opera, see Naomi André, *Voicing Gender*.
[62] "Amusements: The Concluding Performance of the German Opera Troupe," *Milwaukee Daily Sentinel*, April 13, 1874.
[63] See, for instance, Corinne E. Blackmer and Patricia Juliana Smith, "Introduction," in *En Travesti*, 11; and Corinne E. Blackmer, "The Ecstasies of Saint Teresa," in ibid., 324–25.

own heartsickness is killing her, nonetheless needs the support of Luigi in order to survive. And when he returns to her, Luigi's first words in the story refer to himself as Effie's property.

The truncated form of the duet, though practical so the piece would fit on a music box cylinder or disc, also contributes to this power imbalance.[64] "Mira, o Norma" comprises the *cantabile* portion of the extended duet between Norma and Adalgisa, during which they exchange the following conversation:

> ADALGISA: See, o Norma, at your knees
> These dear, dear children.
> Let pity for them move you,
> If you feel no pity for yourself…
> NORMA: Ah, why do you try to weaken me
> With such soft feelings?
> Such illusions, such hopes
> Are not for one about to die…[65]

In the full version of the duet, Adalgisa sings her stanza first, then Norma responds (two A sections). In a brief B section, they sing simultaneously as they each riff on their first two lines of dialogue; then, in the final A section they continue to sing together but repeat their respective stanzas. In short, only at the beginning do we hear each character individually, and this helps place each character on equal footing, if only temporarily. Based on an extant cylinder music box rendition of the duet, one of the first A sections is cut out entirely, and the final A section removes the first phrase.[66] Formally speaking, since Norma's stanza leads

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[64] It is important to note that the truncating of musical form was not unique to music box renditions. In some sheet music editions, "Hear Me, Norma" came to represent both the *cantabile* and *cabaletta* portions of the scene.

[65] "Norma Libretto: English Translation," *Operas, Arias, Composers*, accessed August 24, 2017, http://www.opera-arias.com/bellini/norma/libretto/english/.

[66] Through YouTube, I found four different music box renditions of "Hear Me Norma." The one I refer to in text is, according to the user Tony Nicoultre, a "Sublime Harmonie"

into the B section, the music box rendition cuts out the first (Adalgisa's) stanza. Additionally, only the primary A section melody—sung first by Adalgisa, then Norma, in the original score—plays throughout, which means that Adalgisa's harmonization in the final A section is cut out until the descending triplets (Example 1.1). The resultant duet, as heard on the music box, privileges Norma's voice over Adalgisa's.[67]

The racial otherness of the tune, primarily indicated by its so-called Neapolitan character, is also defined against whiter-coded and American tunes. Nan, Effie's perceptive little sister, knows that Effie is interested in "Hear Me, Norma" because of its direct connection to Luigi and his Italianness. Mr. Ralston, however, makes no notice of this; instead, he references a range of more conventional, white-coded tunes such as "Yankee Doodle" and "Old Hundred" that Effie could potentially enjoy. As William Gibbons has outlined, "Yankee Doodle" connoted US Americanness in some form from the late eighteenth through the early twentieth centuries, and both by American and non-American

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cylinder music box made circa 1888. It has 102 total teeth but with two 51-tooth combs side by side for volume; it can play eight airs. While this particular machine post-dates the story, cylinder music boxes of this kind would have existed in 1872., "Antique Cylinder Music Box," YouTube video, 5:22–6:18, posted by Tony Nicoultre December 13, 2015, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y0Yrpcow8-Q. The other three versions of the duet were played on disc music boxes, which were not developed until the 1880s. Generally speaking, they allowed for a slightly longer playtime and a wider range.

[67] Although it was common to simplify Italian operatic forms when "Englishing" them, there was no established standard for "Mira, o Norma," and the original AABA form of the *cantabile* would have been sufficiently simple for most arrangers. For more on "Englished" Italian operas, see Hamm, *Yesterdays*, 62–88.

Norma
Adalgisa
Piano

Example 1.1: Excerpt of the final A section of Bellini, "Mira, o Norma." Norma has the primary melody, which both characters sing individually in the first A section. The music box rendition omits the first four measures, instead beginning on the quarter-note pickup to m. 5.

composers.[68] While this does not explicitly celebrate whiteness, the reality was that pieces like "Yankee Doodle"—which had early associations with the US military, and nationalism more broadly, until the Civil War—could only stand in for those who were considered citizens, which were white men. Similarly, "Old Hundred" (better known as "Old Hundredth") was a Protestant hymn that also indicated whiteness, although this time for religious reasons. Richard Crawford suggests that in the later nineteenth century, the "differences of language, religion, and culture" differentiated the immigrant populations from "the English-speaking, Protestant, native-born whites who had always dominated American political life."[69] In other words, Protestantism was generally defined against other religious beliefs; Roman Catholicism, the predominant religion of Italy, was perceived as less white/American than Protestantism.

"Euphemia's Music-Box" ends on an ambiguous note. Despite Mr. Ralston's change of heart, following the surprise reunion he exclaims, "And now for the music-box and 'Hail, Columbia,'" one of the unofficial US national anthems at the time, rather than Effie's preferred "Hear Me, Norma."[70] But the concluding tune remains unknown; as the narrator

[68] See William Gibbons, "'Yankee Doodle' and Nationalism, 1780–1920," *American Music* 26, no. 2 (2008): 246–74. During the Civil War period, "Yankee Doodle" more specifically aligned with the northern Union forces, while "Dixie" represented the southern Confederates. Although "Euphemia's Music-Box" does not indicate where the Ralston family is from, given the story's presumed contemporary setting in 1872 it is likely that they lived in a northern state.
[69] Richard Crawford, *America's Musical Life: A History* (New York: Norton, 2001), 530.
[70] "Hail Columbia," as Myron Gray outlines, was politically skewed toward the Federalist cause in the late eighteenth century, which maintained a xenophobic stance toward the French. It is unclear to what extent people were still aware of these origins by the 1870s. For more on the early politics of "Hail Columbia," see Gray, "A Partisan National Song:

confesses, "to this day I doubt if one of the party, unless it might be Nan the superior, has clearly known if it were 'Hail, Columbia,' or 'Hear Me, Norma,' with which Effie's music-box greeted them."[71] The apparent fact that it was narrowed down to those two—the former representing American patriotism and the latter the foreignness of Italian opera—demonstrates two sides of a racial divide that each piece comes to represent in the story. It is possible that Ralston or Effie chose one piece or the other, but the selection did not consciously play a role in either's reconciliation with Luigi. Or perhaps neither chose, which was why they could no longer remember. The music box, able to play both pieces, housed the ambivalent role music and machine played in the family's racial politics.

Conclusion

In a well-publicized 1850 campaign, P. T. Barnum offered the Swedish Nightingale, Jenny Lind, an impressive sum to tour the United States.[72] By this time notorious as "The Prince of Humbug," Barnum had made a name for himself as having a controlling stake in the freak show circuit, showcasing both authenticized performers as General Tom Thumb and (later) the Siamese Twins, and elaborate hoaxes like the Feejee Mermaid. One of his first exhibits was Joice Heth, an enslaved woman who, allegedly, was 161 years old and had nursed the future first president of the nation, George Washington. This blurring of the real and the

The Politics of 'Hail Columbia' Reconsidered," *Music & Politics* 11, no. 2 (Summer 2017): 1–20.

[71] "Euphemia's Music-Box," 90.

[72] For more on Barnum's marketing tactics promoting Jenny Lind, see Mark C. Samples, "The Humbug and the Nightingale: P. T. Barnum, Jenny Lind, and the Branding of a Star Singer for American Reception," *The Musical Quarterly* 99, nos. 3–4 (2016): 286–320.

fantastical, of freakery in various forms, was what Barnum thrived on. His marketing campaign for Lind incorporated many of the same tactics that he had perfected with his freak show exhibitions.

It is worth dwelling for a moment, then, on Lind's place among Barnum's overtly freakish exhibits. On the surface, Barnum's management of Lind's tour from 1850–51 seemed like a departure from his earlier travels with Tom Thumb or any exhibit displayed in his American Museum in New York. But as Barnum later reflected in his colorful autobiography, the Swedish Nightingale had her own freakish characteristics:

> I may as well state, that although I relied prominently upon Jenny Lind's reputation as a great musical *artiste*, I also took largely into my estimate of her success with all classes of the American public, her character for extraordinary benevolence and generosity. Without this peculiarity in her disposition, I never would have dared make the engagement which I did, as I felt sure that there were multitudes of individuals in America who would be prompted to attend her concerts by this feeling alone.[73]

Unlike the stereotypical image of the diva, which I outlined earlier in this chapter, Lind's "peculiar" combination of musicality and charity—not to mention chastity, which I will come back to—made her an anomaly and, thus, a worthwhile financial risk for Barnum. And Lind's tour was overwhelmingly successful; even though Lind and Barnum parted ways before the initially contracted 150 performances, Barnum still walked away with an impressive profit.

Lind's American tour became legendary almost immediately, yet even with the acclaim her voice could not escape critique. One of the most notable reviews in this regard

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[73] P. T. Barnum, *The Life of P. T. Barnum* (New York: Redfield, 1855), 307.

came from Walt Whitman in August 1851, who admired her technical precision but lamented its purported lack of soul:

> The Swedish Swan, with all her blandishments, never touched my heart in the least. I wondered at so much vocal dexterity; and indeed they were all very pretty, those leaps and double somersets. But even in the grandest religious airs, genuine masterpieces as they are, of the German composers, executed by this strangely overpraised woman in perfect scientific style, let critics say what they like, it was a failure; for there was a vacuum in the head of the performance. Beauty pervaded it no doubt, and that of a high order. It was the beauty of Adam before God breathed into his nostrils.[74]

Whitman takes a similar tone here to the 1852 review, mentioned above, that described Henriette Sontag's voice in similar terms; ironically, that latter review listed Lind as a positive exemplar. While not using explicit terminology, Whitman nonetheless ascribes to Lind a music box voice.

Lind suffered a further consequence, according to one newspaper, once she married pianist Otto Goldschmidt:

> When Jenny Lind was an angel, it might do very well to get up an enthusiasm, and to put concert tickets at prices varying from ten to two hundred dollars. But the angel who enraptured us under the management of Barnum, has since changed her condition, and become a plain, sensible, discreet, married woman, with a loving husband, and the prospect of a large family of nine young cherubs for the future generation.[75]

If Barnum's marketing had been able to take advantage of Lind as an icon of angelic chastity, Lind's marriage to Goldschmidt destroyed that image in the eyes of some. Put another way, Lind's extraordinary and peculiar characteristics disappeared once she became a married

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[74] Walt Whitman, *The Uncollected Poetry and Prose of Walt Whitman*, ed. Emory Holloway (New York: Doubleday, 1921), 1:257.
[75] "Jenny Lind," *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, April 24, 1852.

woman and mother; her loss of freakishness simultaneously made her less desirable as a performer.

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This chapter demonstrated that the sound of the music box came to represent voices racialized and gendered as other in nineteenth century US newspapers. In sentimental poetry, poets shifted from romantically portraying the machine in terms of natural and otherworldly voices to the music box being a metaphor for critiquing women's voices. With concert reviews of female opera singers, the metaphor of the music box voice indicated a deficiency that was not inherently rooted in the voice. Instead, and like the racialized voice of Italian opera, the music box voice pointed to essentialist opinions of the performers rather than the voices themselves. The problems posed by the racialized voice and music box voice converged in "Euphemia's Music-Box." Bellini's "Mira, o Norma," which became a musical stand-in for Luigi, went up against more white-coded patriotic tunes in the battle for racial acceptance in the Ralston household.

The music box did not just relate to the mechanization of voice. Just as Effie associated the music box playing "Hear Me, Norma" "wholly" with Luigi, so the music box aligned not simply with the voice but the body at large. As I expand upon in the next chapter, the music box also participated in contemporary discussions of racialized bodies as machines. In political debates on who counted as a citizen in the United States, laborers of color—from enslaved field workers to Chinese immigrants—were described as having machinic bodies, and this description became an argument in favor of their continued oppression. Operating alongside these debates was an increasing fascination with racial freakery, championed

especially by Barnum and his contemporaries from the mid-nineteenth century onward. As I have suggested with Jenny Lind, the tension between humanity and instrumentality, embodied in female opera singers, collided with notions of freakery; and this collision became more pronounced with racialized bodies. The music box, too, aligned with both fascination and anxiety towards the other, which factored into its shifting representation in popular media of the later nineteenth century.

CHAPTER TWO
Machinic Bodies: The Music Box and Racialized Freakery in "The Story of Agee Sang Long"

When the fictional Agee Sang Long brought her dying cat into the office of a man's struggling medical practice, she inadvertently provided the starting point for an unusual relationship. Told from the unnamed doctor's point of view, Anna Eichberg King's "The Story of Agee Sang Long" (1886) greatly details the tragic nature of Agee and her surroundings, documenting her ill treatment by society at large and the end of her difficult life. But Agee's music box, the doctor highlights, provides a source of comfort throughout. He notices the music box almost immediately upon arriving at Agee Sang Long's run-down home for the first time: while Agee mourned the loss of her pet cat, the music box "cheerfully and monotonously rattled out 'The Beautiful Blue Danube' waltz." The next time the narrator mentions the music box, it played as Agee sat with her newly adopted dog. The narrator expands on its significance for Agee:

> Beside them on a chair, so close that none of its delicious strains could be lost, the music-box ground out 'The Beautiful Blue Danube,' Agee listening reverently. This music-box was her joy. After years of toil she saved twenty dollars, and, not without deep reflection, she spent ten in a burial plot—for she longed to rest peacefully in death, she who in life had been so tossed about; the rest she invested in this precious music-box. It is unnecessary to say that she was cheated, for it is the privilege of civilization to get the better of heathens. However, she listened to 'The Beautiful Blue Danube' and 'Comin' Through the Rye' with profound joy, heathendom and Christendom battling in her breast sometimes when she yearned to consider the music-box as something divine. But Christendom conquered, for she was a Christian.[1]

[1] Anna Eichberg King, "The Story of Agee Sang Long," *Harper's Bazaar* 19, no. 15 (1886): 242.

This passage reveals three key points. First, the documentation of Agee's difficult life, and her seeking respite via the music box, reflected real-life biases against the Chinese in the United States that had been ongoing for several decades. Second, the doctor-narrator's apparent fascination with Agee's attachment to her music box echoed white people's general fascination with the behaviors of those marked as other, including their interactions with technology. Finally, the emphasis on Agee's reverence toward her music box implied an intimate connection between human and machine. Chinese laborers had been likened to machines, as reflected in contemporaneous slang and legal documents; and Agee's relationship to the music box itself accentuated this comparison.

In this chapter, I link the music box to conceptions of the machinic or automaton body, which was often additionally expressed as a racialized body. White authors and politicians described laborers of color, from enslaved field workers to Chinese immigrants, as having machinic bodies, and this description became an argument in favor of their continued oppression. But the music box did not just connote non-normativity; since the music box's inception, those marked as other also *interacted* with the machine. I show that the music box routinely emerged in the nineteenth century as a way for white authors to indicate racialized difference. And because of the prominent discourse of racialized bodies as machinic bodies, an additional phenomenon emerged where white authors were fascinated with people of color interacting with technologies like the music box. Analyzing British travel accounts, US newspapers, and legal documents, I demonstrate that the link between racialized body and music box was longstanding and widespread through most of

the nineteenth century. Ultimately, the music box's machinic qualities prevented white authors from seeing Agee and other marginalized individuals as fully human.

"The Story of Agee Sang Long" frames this chapter. First, I interrogate the role of the white narrator, who often forged relationships between machines, like the music box, and racialized bodies. In the second section, I consider how Agee Sang Long fit broader notions of racial freakery in the later nineteenth century. This coincided with the history of Chinese exclusion in the US, which also factored into Agee's marginalization. I then detail the role of the music box, as well as the musical selections it played, in the racialized characterization of Agee more specifically. I conclude with a brief outline of how the relationship between the music box and racialized bodies played out as a trope in later operas.

White Authors: The Music Box and Fascination with the Other

White authors used the music box in multiple ways to accentuate the supposed inferiority of racialized bodies. From early nineteenth century travel accounts of colonialist expeditions to later fiction like Eichberg King's "The Story of Agee Sang Long," these authors imbued the music box with an almost-magical power, similar to poetry that emerged at the same time. Colonialist explorers, while rejecting for themselves the music box's supposed power as an example of false idolatry, highlighted indigenous people's reactions to the music box to uphold white supremacy. Eichberg King's portrayal of Agee Sang Long aligned more with Jon Cruz's notion of *ethnosympathy*; while making her titular character one readers could sympathize with, Eichberg King nonetheless erased Agee's own experience in favor of the

narrator's assessment of her.[2] Regardless of what these marginalized listeners actually thought of the music box, writers nonetheless forged an interpretation that fit their understandings of racial hierarchies. As Elaine H. Kim asserts regarding white authors of Asian characters, "Anglo-American literature does not tell us about Asians. It tells us about Anglos' opinions of themselves, in relation to their opinions of Asians."[3] Thus, I argue for seeing a continuity of representation, in which the music box routinely emerged in the nineteenth century as a way for white authors to indicate racialized difference.

Anna Eichberg King was the daughter of the violinist and composer Julius Eichberg.[4] Born in Switzerland in 1856, she grew up and attended school in Boston, where her father worked at The Boston Conservatory. A society lady and short story writer, she was known in Boston literary circles with such contemporaries as writers Louise Chandler Moulton, Julia Ward Howe ("The Battle Hymn of the Republic"), and Harriet Prescott Spofford, composer Arthur Foote, and poet Celia Thaxter.[5] By the time she published "The Story of Agee Sang

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[2] Jon Cruz implements the term *ethnosympathy* to indicate contradictory shifts in the way white individuals heard and interpreted slave songs, specifically spirituals, between antebellum and postbellum periods. One notable shift occurred both away from modernity toward romanticism, and, somewhat paradoxically, in the later 1800s, toward something "more rationalistic, scientistic, and modern." While appreciating spirituals on some level, white curators also essentialized these songs based on rigid categories and, ultimately, erased the Black experience. Cruz, *Culture on the Margins: The Black Spiritual and the Rise of American Cultural Interpretation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), 4.
[3] Elaine H. Kim, *Asian American Literature: An Introduction to the Writings and Their Social Context* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1982), 20.
[4] Eichberg King has an entry as "Anna Eichberg King Lane" in Volume 9 of the *Encyclopedia Americana* (1904).
[5] There is little available information on Anna Eichberg, but some of these names come up in Louise Chandler Morton's biography. See Lilian Whiting, *Louise Chandler Moulton: Poet and Friend* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1910), 123–24. This text, with a blurb on Eichberg King Lane, is featured in University of Delaware Library's online exhibition, "London Bound:

Long," she had married the lawyer Tyler Batcheller King, who predeceased her. In 1898, she moved to London and married John Lane, an English publisher. As a writer, she was perhaps best known for penning "To Thee, O Country" (which her father set to music), *Brown's Retreat and Other Stories*, and *Kitwyk*, a collection of Dutch stories.

Published in *Harper's Bazaar* in 1886, Eichberg King's "The Story of Agee Sang Long" provided, for its time, a sympathetic portrayal of the titular female character, a working-class Chinese immigrant. Agee Sang Long, the owner of the music box in the story, becomes friends with the narrator, a doctor who has just begun his practice. She brings him his first "patient," a dying cat, and although the cat was beyond saving, the doctor's offer to check on it at her home is the starting point of their relationship. The tragedy of the tale stems at least in part from Agee's apparent loneliness; the death of her cat at the outset also signified the loss of one of her only friends. Later in the story, she adopts a dog and, after, a baby that was abandoned outside of her tenement. Her joy in having this newfound family is celebrated but also short-lived. The mother of the abandoned baby, an Irish immigrant, attacks Agee while reclaiming her child, and the doctor arrives with only enough time to comfort Agee before she dies.

While the doctor-narrator of "The Story of Agee Sang Long" was sympathetic to her plight, he also made a spectacle of Agee's reverence to her own music box. Returning to the excerpt at the beginning of the chapter, in which the narrator describes Agee listening to her

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American Writers in Britain, 1870–1916," http://www.lib.udel.edu/ud/spec/exhibits/londonbound/sect5.html. Celia Thaxter's letters include some to "Anna Eichberg." *Letters of Celia Thaxter*, ed. A. F. and R. L. (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1897).

music box, the narrator referenced Agee's tendency toward "heathendom" while she listened to it. Despite her conversion to Christianity, which implied a rejection of traditional Chinese customs in favor of more "civilized" (i.e. Western) ones, the music box became a potential vessel for divine worship, a momentary false idol to direct all her prayers toward. The music box, then, not only revealed Agee's already marginalized status as a Chinese immigrant, its sonorous appeal threatened, in the narrator's eyes, to de-civilize and thus marginalize her further.

The narrator's ethnosympathetic portrayal of Agee extended to the neighborhood in which both he and she lived. Throughout the story, the doctor-narrator's naïve-but-good-hearted nature showcased Agee's suffering, and by extension the suffering of low-class Chinese laborers. Yet even with his less-biased position, societal biases stemming from racial and class privilege emerged in his narration. Even before he first met Agee, the doctor-narrator's description of the neighborhood where his practice was located suggested the environment was not an ideal one:

> Fifty years ago the street was solidly respectable; to-day it is quite un-genteel. A few dying trees before the old houses displayed upon their sides cards proclaiming lodgings to let and table board at starvation prices. The bit of ground railed in before each house was fruitful now in broken bottles and bones. Here organ-grinders were welcome, and the inhabitants were generous to monkeys; itinerant street bands played here with redoubled vigor, for they were at home, and the garrets loved them. I settled in this modest location thinking that this indeed might be called the foot of the ladder.[6]

The neighborhood, to him, had lost its class status. While the trees and houses suggested a former splendor, all other elements, including sound, pointed to the current reality. It is

[6] Eichberg King, "The Story of Agee Sang Long," 242.

made clear that only lower-class neighborhoods allowed for organ grinders and street bands, aligning those musical machines and styles with lowbrow entertainment; indeed, for a moment the narrator gave the neighborhood agency, remarking that garrets—small, cramped attic rooms—loved the struggling artists who tended to inhabit them. As John M. Picker addressed in *Victorian Soundscapes*, organ grinders typically were Italian immigrants who became itinerant musicians to make a living, and were thus racialized as other.[7] Although the narrator did not specify the identities of would-be organ grinders, the musicians' profession alone would have marginalized them by class.

In addition to describing his surroundings, the narrator also indicated his position within them: that the neighborhood would provide him with the opportunity to get his medical practice properly started. In other words, he saw himself as able to improve the neighborhood as well as his career. This initial conceit, coupled with his ensuing observations concerning Agee Sang Long's behavior and environment, evoked travel accounts of imperialist explorers that were popular during the nineteenth century. Travel accounts were printed in newspapers to promote their publications, and many of them were reprinted for several years afterward. They forged a distinction between normative society—embodied by the explorers themselves—and the indigenous peoples they encountered on their journeys.

Three are particularly instructive for how they document indigenous tribes' interactions with the music box: William Edward Parry's and George Francis Lyon's

[7] See John M. Picker, *Victorian Soundscapes* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 41–81.

respective accounts of their expedition to locate a northwest passage, during which they interacted with Arctic tribes (whom they referred to as "Eskimaux" or "Esquimaux"), first published in 1824; and Dixon Denham's account of travels to northern and central Africa, first published in 1826. Parry, Lyon, and Denham provide an early historical account of a forged relationship between the music box and bodies marked as other. They also mark a potential origin point for a trope that emerged in later fiction, such as "The Story of Agee Sang Long," whereby the music box revealed marginalized characters. More significantly, these travel accounts made a spectacle of newer and novel music technologies, from Parry's barrel organ to Lyon's hand organ and music box to Denham's music box. Additionally, each author expressed preconceived notions as to how the people they encountered should react to technology, writing off those who expressed little to no interest as stupid. Even when indigenous people responded appropriately by their standards, these writers continued to marginalize them within the text and thus precluded them from joining the ranks of normative, idealized white audiences.

William Parry's journals provide an early insight into how musical instruments were part of colonializing efforts, which informed the relationship between the two characters of "The Story of Agee Sang Long." Parry, a British naval officer in the early nineteenth century, was well known for his efforts in locating a northwest passage and setting a new record for the northernmost point reached by ship (although he did not make it to the North Pole, his original goal). Parry also took with him a mechanical musical marvel of the time: a hand-cranked barrel organ that could play forty tunes. As Clive Holland and F. F. Hill have discussed, the barrel organ was one of a number of entertainments Parry employed to stave

off boredom among his subordinates, especially during the dark and isolating winter months. But the organ was also part of a larger effort to "civilize" the areas they explored, as well as the people who inhabited them.[8] Along with the presence of the barrel organ, the expedition also brought with them a printing press. As Erika Behrisch Elce has argued, shipboard periodicals "not only bent time but culture as well"; against the so-called alien environment of the Arctic, British men "domesticated" this environment through performances of normalcy.[9] With the shipboard periodical, the act of producing a weekly paper not only kept sailors' "minds and bodies active" but also "kept the men busy within a 'network of relations' that both maintained their social hierarchy and allowed the officers to continue to supervise their behavior."[10] Printing technology, in short, brought a familiar element of civilization onto the ship and reinforced the social strata of British society by proxy.

Parry's barrel organ, too, contributed to the civilizing activities of the ship and emphasized Parry's racial hierarchy of British explorers over the indigenous tribes he encountered. In addition to keeping the sailors in good spirits, such as accompanying exercise, hymns played during church services conducted on one of the ships; other tunes

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[8] The civilizing potential of musical instruments extends back at least as far as the Orpheus narrative, in which Orpheus's lyre tamed the so-called savage beasts of nature. For more on this, see Bonnie Gordon, "Orfeo's Machines," *The Opera Quarterly* 24, nos. 3–4 (2008): 200–22.

[9] Erika Behrisch Elce, "'One of the Bright Objects that Solace Us in These Regions': Labour, Leisure, and the Arctic Shipboard Periodical," *Victorian Periodicals Review* 46, no. 3 (Fall 2013): 344, 358.

[10] Ibid., 348.

accompanied evening entertainments, including dance parties and plays.[11] Holland and Hill indicate the types of tunes the barrel organ played, as well as its sonic capabilities:

> It was built between 1801 and 1816 by John Longman, who was in business at 131 Cheapside, London, in that period. It has five barrels set with eight tunes each, giving a delightful selection of dance tunes, jigs, and reels, some of them unique to this organ. One barrel is occupied entirely by hymn tunes, and, inevitably, the organ also plays *God Save the King*, though this particular rendering is rather unusual. It has a scale of 15 notes tuned diatonically from tenor E to the second C sharp above middle C, and there are seven stops: Stopped Diapason, Principal, Twelfth, Fifteenth, Bells, Tambourine, and Triangle.[12]

Barrel organs were not common personal items at the turn of the nineteenth century, and especially not on ships, so it is noteworthy that Parry brought his on four expeditions undertaken between 1818 and 1827.[13] The organ receives mention in two of his written accounts, but it features most prominently in his 1824 *Journal of a Second Voyage for the Discovery of a North-West Passage* that also contains the most sociological account of the indigenous tribes his crew encountered. The mention of the organ frequently involved how indigenous people related to the instrument; Parry noted, for instance, their fondness for music in all forms: "They […] derived great amusement from our organ, and from any thing in the shape of music, singing, or dancing, of all which they are remarkably fond."[14]

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[11] Sir William Edward Parry, *Journal of a Second Voyage for the Discovery of a North-West Passage from the Atlantic to the Pacific* […] (London: John Murray, 1824), 126.

[12] Clive Holland and F. F. Hill, "William Edward Parry's Barrel Organ," *Polar Record* 16, no. 102 (1972): 413.

[13] Holland and Hill mention "all four" expeditions; however, Parry documented five expeditions. It is unclear whether they omitted the first journey in 1818 or the final one in 1827, the latter which he unsuccessfully tried to reach the North Pole. Holland and Hill, "William Edward Parry's Barrel Organ," 413.

[14] Parry, *Journal of a Second Voyage*, 163.

Throughout his *Journal of a Second Voyage*, Parry frequently referred to one indigenous woman, Iligliuk (elsewhere spelled as Iligliak), singling out what he saw as her exceptional intelligence with respect to the rest of her tribe. Known as "the wise woman," Parry credited Iligliuk for her skills as an interpreter as well as her drawing of a map of the arctic region in which her tribe lived.[15] Through her exceptionalism, Parry also clarified both how he rated musical aptitude and his assumptions regarding appropriate responses by indigenous people to technological marvels, musical or otherwise. He first mentioned Iligliuk, in an entry dated February 7, 1822, in terms of her musical acuity:

> [Iligliuk] favoured us with a song, struck us as having a remarkably soft voice, an excellent ear, and a great fondness for singing, for there was scarcely any stopping her when she had once begun. We had, on their first visit to the ships, remarked this trait in Iligliuk's disposition, when she was listening for the first time to the sound of the organ, of which she seemed never to have enough; and almost every day she now began to display some symptom of that superiority of understanding for which she was so remarkably distinguished.[16]

Later on, Parry distinguished Iligliuk as one of only two who could match pitch with instruments, not simply other singers, although she apparently had some trouble singing "in time" along with the organ.[17] Regarding the organ itself, Iligliuk's fondness for it, and for music in general, was in keeping with other members of her community. But Parry also seemed to tacitly address her understanding of how the organ worked; he never mentioned whether she knew the English word for organ, but he did indicate that "it was enough [...]

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[15] Ibid., 219.
[16] Ibid., 165.
[17] *The Private Journal of Captain G. F. Lyon, of H. M. S. Hecla, during the Recent Voyage of Discovery under Captain Parry* (London: John Murray, 1824), 135. Singing along with instruments, such as the violin or flute, seemed to be the primary way Parry and Lyon were able to notate indigenous songs. Parry, *Journal of a Second Voyage*, 541.

with Iligliuk just to make the motion of turning the handle of the organ, [...] conveying to her mind the idea of music and merriment."[18] Parry evidently found Iligliuk's understanding that the organ functioned via human labor noteworthy enough to document it.

Compare this to how Lyon, captain of the *Hecla* that traveled with Parry's *Fury*, described Iligliuk's reaction to the music box:

> The coldness of the 14th, although it confined us to the ships, did not prevent the Eskimaux from coming down. Oko-Took, and his wife Iligliak, paid me a visit; and on my exhibiting, amongst the usual articles of show, a musical snuff-box, they took it for granted that it must be the child of my small hand-organ. While listening to its tunes, they frequently repeated, in a low tone, the word In-nŭa (a spirit), with great emphasis, and I have no doubt that they fancied some superior being was enshrined in the instrument.[19]

The hand organ, a smaller version of Parry's barrel organ, nonetheless still required the same hand-cranking motion to produce music. In contrast, the music box, once it was wound up, could play through a tune (or multiple) without further assistance. Because of the more automatic functioning of the music box, it elicited a response from Iligliuk and her husband in which they imagined a spirit within the machine. This, in itself, was not uncommon; British writer Leigh Hunt's 1816 poem "On Hearing a Little Musical Box" set a precedent for understanding the machine as having a sonic agency that continued in writings throughout the nineteenth century. In particular, the idea of a sprite or other being as responsible for the music box's sound had already existed in Hunt's poem, as well as later literary examples, yet Lyon made no mention of this in his journal. And despite the music box industry still being in its nascent stages in the early 1820s, when Lyon was writing, there

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[18] Parry, *Journal of a Second Voyage*, 168–69.
[19] *The Private Journal of Captain G. F. Lyon*, 139–40.

is no indication that Lyon saw Iligliuk's reaction to a piece of new technology as a typical one. Lyon, therefore, emphasized a contradiction: the supposedly magical sounds of the music box could be romantic for white listeners like Leigh Hunt, but when people of color, like Iligliuk, had similar reactions it became a point of racial difference.

Lyon did not document only Iligliuk's response to the music box. Earlier on in his journal, he recorded an indigenous man responding similarly to the hand organ and music box found in Lyon's cabin:

> An old man, whose appearance was much in his favour, accompanied me to my cabin, where he behaved with great decorum, and neither asked for nor expected a present. A small hand-organ afforded him a very great treat, and he listened to it with such an expression of pleasure on his countenance, as would be shown by a lover of music on hearing the performance of an orchestra; breathing gently, making no noise, and unconsciously opening his mouth. A musical snuff-box succeeded this instrument, and underwent a very strict examination; during which, my visitor repeatedly uttered a faint but highly expressive cry of pleasure.[20]

Lyon described the unnamed man's reaction as one of rapturous attention, and although he did not couch it in explicitly religious terms, this account is rather similar to the way the fictional doctor-narrator described Agee's response to her own music box, as cited at the beginning of this chapter. The doctor-narrator thought of Agee's relationship to the music box almost as one of divine worship, indicating that she listened "reverently" every evening. Lyon's anecdotes pointed to a similar interpretation on his part; Iligliuk overtly expressed that the music box sounded as if there were a spirit inside, while the indigenous man's reverence was conveyed through wordless sound. In doing so, Lyon communicated a

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[20] *The Private Journal of Captain G. F. Lyon*, 112–13.

standard human response while nonetheless drawing attention to indigenous listeners' seemingly misguided notion of ascribing power to the music box sound.

Lyon implicitly suggested—despite Hunt's poem and other writings—that Iligliuk and others reacted to the music box sound in a nonstandard manner, paying particular attention to their vocal utterances. With the unnamed indigenous man, Lyon placed additional emphasis on the man's relaxed, nearly silent breathing, further suggesting a stillness of all other bodily movements, like Agee, in order to focus on listening. Through these descriptions, then, Lyon highlighted ways in which the music box revealed and impacted the racialized bodies of indigenous people that interacted with it. One further anecdote made this bodily impact more explicit:

> Cure for the Lumbago.—Itkammuk came to me in great distress, in consequence of a severe fit of lumbago which afflicted him, and he earnestly requested that his wife might be permitted to wash his back with soap. This the lady performed under my instructions; and I gave further directions that he should undergo a good scrubbing every morning as long as the large piece of soap which I gave him should last. This, with the application of my musical snuff-box to his loins, a specific in all difficult cases, gave him great relief; and having offered me his wife's boots as a fee, he set off to comfort his old mother, who remained crying at home until his return.[21]

Although the specifics of how the therapy worked is unclear, the physical vibrations of the actively playing music box seemed to offer pain relief. The sound of the music box, by this account, had a material and physical impact on the indigenous individuals who heard it, not simply an emotional one.[22]

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[21] *The Private Journal of Captain G. F. Lyon*, 298.

[22] *The National Advocate* in London printed excerpts from Lyon's journal, although it only indicates that the region was "visited by Capt. Parry" and does not cite Lyon as the author. Nonetheless, "Cure for the Lumbago," the anecdote cited immediately above, was the first

Before he journeyed with Parry to locate a northwest passage, Lyon documented his travels in northern Africa. He made no mention of a music box in the account of his unsuccessful attempt to locate the Niger River's source. A few years later, though, in 1826, Dixon Denham brought a music box with him as he traveled through the same regions on the same quest. Among the Toubou ethnic group (who reside in modern-day Niger, Chad, Libya, and Sudan), Denham expressed disappointment that his "watch, compass, and musical snuff-box created but little astonishment; they looked at their own faces in the bright covers, and were most stupidly inattentive to what would have excited the wonder of almost any imagination, however savage."[23] He witnessed a completely different reaction, however, when he showed it to El Kanemy, the sheikh of Kouka (in present-day Chad):

> Doctor Oudney was still confined to his bed, and I received a summons from the sheikh, to whom a report had been made of a musical box of mine, which played or stopped merely by my holding up my finger. The messenger declared he was dying to see it, and I must make haste. The wild exclamations of wonder and screams of pleasure that this piece of mechanism drew from the generality of my visitors were curiously contrasted in the person of the intelligent sheikh: he at first was greatly astonished, and asked several questions, exclaiming "A *gieb! gieb!*" "Wonderful! wonderful!" but the sweetness of the Swiss Ranz-des-Vaches which it played, at last overcame every other feeling: he covered his face with his hand and listened in silence; and on one man near him breaking the charm by a loud exclamation, he struck him with a blow which made all his followers tremble. He instantly asked, "If one twice as large would not be better?" I said "Yes; but it would be twice as dear."—"By G—!" said he, "if one thousand dollars would purchase it, it would be cheap."

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excerpt printed in the column. "Extracts from a Journal Kept in the Northern Regions, Visited by Capt. Parry," *The National Advocate* (London, England), October 8, 1824.

[23] Dixon Denham, Hugh Clapperton, and Walter Oudney, *Narrative of Travels and Discoveries in Northern and Central Africa* [...], vol. 1 (London: John Murray, 1826), 25. Parry made a similar comment regarding the forge on board his ship *Fury*, remarking that "other Esquimaux looked stupidly on, without expressing the smallest curiosity or interest in the operation, except by desiring to have some spear-heads fashioned out by this means." Parry, *Journal of a Second Voyage*, 210.

Who will deny that nature has given us all a taste for luxuries?[24]

Denham knew Lyon's writings on Africa, and it is possible he acquainted himself with Lyon's later journal upon his return to England (both journals, as well as Parry's account, were published by John Murray). Regardless, there are notable similarities in their respective portrayals of the power of the music box. As with the older, unnamed man in Lyon's cabin, El Kanemy listened in reverent silence, to the point that he struck a man who disturbed the moment. He did not go so far as to proclaim a spirit, as Iligliuk did, and this may be because of the level of intelligence Denham accorded the sheikh. In contrast, the purportedly less intelligent "generality" who visited Denham were much more vocal in their enthusiasm.

All of these accounts demonstrate the extent to which Parry, Lyon, and Denham used the music box, as a modern technology, to highlight their superiority with respect to those they interacted with. Regardless of how indigenous people actually responded to the music box, these writers interpreted it as a mark of inferiority. With Denham specifically, he expressed frustration when African tribesmen expressed virtually no interest in the music box and other supposed technological marvels. Rather than question his own assumptions of the music box's power, Denham instead interpreted their disinterest as "stupidly inattentive." Even when listeners were delighted by the music box, as with the "generality" mentioned above, Denham still contrasted them with El Kanemy's more "intelligent" response. Yet while Denham certainly respected the sheikh more than others, the El Kanemy anecdote still contained an air of superiority; in particular, much of the story's appeal lay in

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[24] Denham, Clapperton, and Oudney, *Narrative of Travels and Discoveries in Northern and Central Africa*, 115–16.

the sheikh's surprisingly violent response when one of his followers made too much noise. In short, Denham and others promoted the power of the music box, even when listeners were skeptical of its appeal, and they used reactions to forge a racial hierarchy where they (as white men) alone remained superior.

Whether colonialist explorers showed the music box to so-called primitive societies or people of color invested in a music box of their own, lingering ideas about the machinic body emphasized white observers' fascination with documenting this relationship. As I demonstrate in the next section, stereotypes of the racialized, machinic body, such as the Chinese laboring body, pervaded US society in multiple ways; and by the publication of "The Story of Agee Sang Long," these ideas had been circulating for several decades. The story's implicit references to machinic bodies resonated with more extreme, overt anxieties expressed elsewhere, such as in US laws governing citizenship. The music box, when added to this mix, forged a relationship between the racialized body and the musical machine that complemented each other.

Racial Freakery and the Machinic Body

When the doctor-narrator of "The Story of Agee Sang Long" first encountered the titular character, her face was shrouded by the hood of a shawl; he initially assumed Agee was a child who happened to stumble into his office. Once Agee lowered her hood, the narrator instead found, to his surprise, a "tiny Chinese woman": "For a moment I could only stare at the queer yellow flat countenance, with its snub-nose and a mouth like a pale slit between a long upper lip and a short chin. Coarse black hair fell across her bright black eyes, full not

so much of intelligence as of a pathetic remonstrance."[25] The detail with which the narrator describes Agee's face emphasizes how unusual he finds her appearance. And although he comes to befriend Agee, through this first encounter the narrator sees her as a curiosity, a freak.

Freakery—a term I take from the eponymous 1996 essay collection edited by Rosemarie Garland Thomson—denotes an ambiguity toward bodies seen as non-normative. Clarifying such individuals not as freaks of nature but "freaks of culture," Garland Thomson defines the freak as "a historical figure ritually fabricated from the raw material of bodily variations and appropriated in the service of shifting social ideologies."[26] The freak on display in the nineteenth century elicited a combination of fascination and horror in their viewers. Elizabeth Grosz articulates the delicate line the exhibited freak balanced: "The freak is [...] neither unusually gifted nor unusually disadvantaged. He or she is not an object of *simple* admiration or pity, but is a being who is considered simultaneously and compulsively fascinating and repulsive, enticing and sickening."[27] The anomalous body simultaneously articulated the human while containing features that, to society at large, denied them their humanity.

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[25] Eichberg King, "The Story of Agee Sang Long," 242.

[26] Rosemarie Garland Thomson, "Preface and Acknowledgments," in *Freakery: Cultural Spectacles of the Extraordinary Body*, ed. Rosemarie Garland Thomson (New York: New York University Press, 1996), xviii.

[27] Elizabeth Grosz, "Intolerable Ambiguity: Freaks as/at the Limit," in *Freakery*, 56.

The racial freak was a subcategory of exhibited freaks that became especially popular in the United States by mid-century.[28] As Leonard Cassuto contends, "racial freaks were not physically anomalous within the context of their own culture—that is, there was nothing 'odd' about their bodies in the eyes of their own peers. Instead, it was their simple presence in the United States, among people who lived differently, that served as the basis for their display."[29] Coinciding with the rise of imperialism, including the fervor over "manifest destiny" in the US, public displays of racial freakery sought to affirm the superiority of normative white bodies who largely made up audiences. In doing so, proprietors of racial freaks concocted various methods of selling the racialized body as a freakish body, including dress and made-up background stories.

Travel accounts like Dixon Denham's, discussed in the first section, also appealed to interests in racial freakery, especially when they appeared in newspapers. Details like the sheikh El Kanemy's violent reaction to one of his subordinates provided a moment of shock in what might otherwise have been characterized as an unremarkable scene. Racial freakery also helps explain these stories' broader appeal in both UK and US newspapers, which sometimes printed anecdotes without context. In 1826, the year Denham's book was first

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[28] This, of course, was not unique to the US. As racial freakery related to the broader colonial project, the decontextualized display of anomalous bodies preceded even the rise of the modern museum at the turn of the nineteenth century. As Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett indicates, "people have been displayed as living rarities from as early as 1501." Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, "Objects of Ethnography," in *Exhibiting Cultures: The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display*, ed. Ivan Karp and Steven D. Lavine (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991), 402.

[29] Leonard Cassuto, "'What an object he would have made of me!': Tattooing and the Racial Freak in Melville's *Typee*," in *Freakery*, 241.

published, the *Aurora and Franklin Gazette*, a Philadelphia newspaper, printed only the El Kanemy story under the headline "The Power of Music." And that same year, one reviewer of *The Port Folio*, also based in Philadelphia, used that same excerpt to make the following claim:

> The men are well grown, but the mouth is large, the lips thick, and to a stranger the features appear ugly. Beauty of this description is all relative. Many of the people in the market, when they saw the white English faces, ran away from them "irresistibly affrighted." It would seem, however, that nature has constructed the organs of hearing in every order of the human race upon the same plan.[30]

In contrast to white and black men's respective physical features—the latter being "ugly" to the former and the former frightening to the latter—the music box theoretically provided an example of these two groups sharing a common trait, that of musical taste. Yet this point of commonality made news because of racial difference; the ambiguous response common to freakery latched onto both the extraordinary racialized body and the ordinary, even relatable ways in which they acted. This particular anecdote had a life far beyond Denham's published journals: in 1854, the music box anecdote reappeared in newspapers with no indication that the scene had taken place thirty years earlier.[31]

The music box also linked to a more extreme form of racial freakery, the contingent, machinic body. An early and extreme example of this was Joice Heth, an enslaved black woman purchased and exhibited by P. T. Barnum as one of his first major attractions in the

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[30] "Discoveries in Africa," *Port Folio*, September 1, 1826.

[31] "A Musical Box," *North American and United States Gazette* (Philadelphia, PA), April 18, 1854; and "A Musical Box," *The London Journal* 19, no. 478 (1854), 119. In the former, they reported that the excerpt came from London's *Musical Transcript*. Perhaps notably, in the *Gazette* the non-English words *sheikh* and *gieb* were misspelled, and G— [God] was replaced with *Allah*.

1830s. Gaby Wood tells a particularly tidy version of the tale, one that purportedly stemmed directly from Barnum's interaction with Johann Nepomuk Maelzel, at that point the current owner of the infamous chess-playing "Turk":

> Maelzel travelled around America for over ten years, and in Boston he met Phineas Taylor Barnum, who was just starting out with his first exhibit, Joice Heth, "the 161 year old woman," who was said to have been George Washington's nurse. Humbug, as he called it, was Barnum's business: Joice Heth was in her eighties. The question of whether she was truly as old as was claimed was part of what kept audiences coming. By the time Barnum and Heth arrived in Boston, however, ticket sales were tapering; meeting Maelzel gave Barnum an idea. He wrote an anonymous letter to a newspaper claiming that Joice Heth was a fake, that she was really a "curiously constructed automaton, made up of whalebone, India-rubber, and numberless springs." The crowds flooded back to see how they had been duped.[32]

The Turk, at that point already a well-known and racialized attraction, certainly exhibited some kind of influence on Barnum.[33] Designed by Wolfgang von Kempelen, an accomplished inventor who had also developed a speaking machine, the Turk was an illusion that had the external appearance of a sentient automaton but was actually controlled by a person hidden in the cabinet below the Turk's torso. Since the "automaton" often won chess matches, the appeal for audiences was in trying to figure out how such a feat was possible, whether the automaton was truly making its own decisions. Barnum employed the same tactic for Heth, except, of course, that he was trying to pass a human off as a machine, not

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[32] Gaby Wood, *Edison's Eve: A Magical History of the Quest for Mechanical Life* (New York: Knopf, 2002), 75–76. Benjamin Reiss addresses some of the disputed facts of this story, in *The Showman and the Slave: Race, Death, and Memory in Barnum's America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001), 114–17.

[33] Invented in 1769 by Kempelen, who was Hungarian, the Turk's appearance would have been a clear antagonist for the Hapsburg Monarchy; see Wood, *Edison's Eve*, 61–62. In addition to his race, the Turk's legitimacy, even as an automaton, was questioned through his apparent left-handedness. Edgar Allan Poe wrote an extensive essay in which left-handedness was one point of observation, as quoted in ibid., 78–80.

sell a supposedly autonomous machine secretly operated by humans.

Unlike automata of the time period, though, which did not have vocal capabilities, Heth could and would converse with audiences. As Louis Chude-Sokei argues, the obvious fact of Heth's speaking voice should have been sufficient proof against Barnum's claims that she was a machine.[34] Whether or not audiences actually bought into the humbug, they nonetheless went back to see Heth: why? One reason, as Benjamin Reiss outlines in his book *The Showman and the Slave*, was that Heth's alleged machinic body induced some of the same philosophical questions regarding humanity, power, and free will that had been asked about automata. Heth, who was enslaved, did not have free will in any legal sense; like automata, her body could function independently but was imposed upon by others in power. This connection was made explicit, as Reiss surmises, in "the creation of many automaton 'negroes' in the antebellum period, includ[ing] a singing black toy that was on display in [...] Peale's museum in New York around the time that Heth was in New Haven." He continues:

> Black people and apes were fitting forms for automata since they both posed—in different degrees—questions for white audiences about bodies that resembled dominant conceptions of the "human" but that may or may not have lacked fully human powers of intentionality or rational agency. [...] The "false automaton" story grafted onto the body of a black woman, then, amplified the usual play between free will and submission, between mechanical performance of labor and possession of human agency that accompanied most such exhibits, and linked those issues—in perhaps a preconscious way—with questions of race and slavery.[35]

The combination of Heth being an enslaved black woman and Barnum exhibiting her in

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[34] Gaby Wood claims that, with one of Maelzel's updates to the "automaton," the chess-playing Turk could actually "say" *échec* (check) through a set of bellows. Wood, *Edison's Eve*, 73.

[35] Benjamin Reiss, *The Showman and the Slave: Race, Death, and Memory in Barnum's America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001), 121–22.

similar venues that featured actual automata allowed for the potentiality of Heth herself being an automaton. Despite her voice, the machinic body became an integral component of Heth's already racialized body.

As suggested by the presence of the "singing black toy" and other automata, musical and theatrical entertainments further accentuated the linkage of machinic and racialized bodies. Although it is unclear what the singing black toy looked or sounded like, a black minstrel automaton—the figure appears to be dressed in Zip Coon attire and holds a banjo—did play music by means of a music box cylinder installed in the body.[36] Chude-Sokei makes this link between machinery and race more explicit by using the debate over Heth's body, along with blackface minstrelsy, as representative of a cultural moment where the ideals of nature and technology merged together. Through the minstrel show, which romanticized plantation slavery, white men could experience the "spectacle of escape from what was beginning to seem an all-encompassing deindividuating system, one that not only erased 'nature' but also robbed whites of their own 'organic' sense of agency and power in an increasingly regimented socioeconomic order."[37] While the minstrel show obscured the mechanized labor of the plantation, it nonetheless capitalized on the idea of enslaved black people as animated tools by caricaturizing and thus dehumanizing them on the minstrel stage. By enforcing the forged relationship between black bodies and plantation machinery,

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[36] This is based on the description of the automaton in Alexander Buchner, *Mechanical Musical Instruments*, trans. Iris Urwin (London: Batchworth Press, 1954?), plate 35.
[37] Louis Chude-Sokei, "The Uncanny History of Minstrels and Machines, 1835–1923," in *Burnt Cork: Traditions and Legacies of Blackface Minstrelsy*, ed. Stephen Johnson (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 2012), 115.

minstrelsy helped perpetuate the idea that black individuals, such as Joice Heth, functioned like automata.

As with the impact of blackface minstrelsy, negative portrayals of Chinese immigrants also emerged in music and theater, particularly from 1870 onward. As Krystyn R. Moon discusses in *Yellowface: Creating the Chinese in American Popular Music and Performance, 1850s–1920s*, western states' biases against the Chinese went national following Bret Harte's widely circulated poem about a white man and a Chinese man, both whom cheat at cards. Although the poem, initially published as "Plain Language of Truthful James" in 1870, intended to showcase white Americans and Chinese as more similar than different, it quickly became better known by the unofficial title "Heathen Chinee" and was incorporated into narratives of exclusion. Sound contributed to and exacerbated perceptions of the Chinese as marginalized. In two of the earliest musical settings of "Heathen Chinee," by F. Boote (1870) and Charles Towner (1870), both composers wrote their pieces "in minor keys, [...] which gave the lyrics a more ominous and eerie sound." Boote's version "even included diminished chords and a little syncopation, similar to devices found in Orientalist art music or blackface minstrelsy." Towner's version used open-sounding parallel fifths in the bass, as well as "a recommendation that performers use a gong and a trumpet during the introduction." These songs set a new standard by having the accompaniment, along with the lyrics, contribute to negative depictions of Chinese immigrants by using "orientalized sounds" to highlight difference.[38]

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[38] Krystyn R. Moon, *Yellowface: Creating the Chinese in American Popular Music and Performance, 1850s–1920s* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2005), 40.

While these pop cultural portrayals did not overtly emerge in "The Story of Agee Sang Long," elements of racial freakery and minstrelsy did seep into Agee's characterization. As cited at the beginning of this section, the doctor-narrator described Agee's physical appearance in terms that othered her as a racial freak. Eichberg King also wrote Agee's speech patterns in a distinct and often stereotyped dialect—what might be called "broken English" or pidgin in other contexts—similar to that which had been developed in and proliferated through minstrel shows. One of the main indicators of this dialect, specifically with Asian characters, was to add a long *e* syllable to words that did not typically have one, as demonstrated with *make* and *pay* in Agee's first lines of dialogue:

> "And what can I do for you, Agee Sang Long? Are you ill?"
>
> "I no ill, but he be. He a' my companee, my on'y friend, and he be so si'. I bring him to you, docto', fo' to makee well." Whereupon she softly undid the bundle and discovered, wrapped in a warm shawl, a melancholy specimen of a cat. "I hab monee, docto'; I can payee ri' off. You makee he well," she ventured, wistfully, as I took the poor beast in my arms.

The emphasis on the long *e* continues with the alternate spellings of *company* and *money*; in addition, the tail ends of words are cut off, particularly those that end with the letter *r*. While writers in the nineteenth century incorporated new techniques to capture the vernacular of different communities, in the context of "The Story of Agee Sang Long" Agee's manner of speech further accentuated her isolation from society.[39]

[39] Many scholars have criticized white authors' use of Chinese pidgin; for one example, see Moon, *Yellowface*, 42–43. Holger Kersten provides a counterargument with his interpretation of Charles G. Leland's *Pidgin-English Sing-Song* (1876). In benign or malevolent uses of pidgin, however, Kersten acknowledges that "the effort involved in deciphering the unusual linguistic form creates an impression of cultural distance." Kersten, "America's Multilingualism and the Problem of the Literary Representation of 'Pidgin English,'" *American Studies* 51, no. 1 (2006): 80.

Coinciding with the racialized and machinic black body, travel accounts and other writings had similarly marked laboring Asian bodies as freakish. For instance, in George Finlayson's *The Mission to Siam and Hue 1821–1822*, first published in 1826, he claimed that the Siamese in particular—but including the Chinese whom he considered "the prototype of the whole [Asian] race"—"would appear to be admirably calculated to execute and to undergo the more toilsome and laborious, but mechanical, operations which are the usual lot of the laboring classes of mankind. [...] The greater number of them are indeed more distinguished for mechanical skill, and patience under laborious occupations, than for brightness of imagination or mental capacity."[40] Evident in this quote was the idea that mechanical skills best suited Chinese laborers because they fit their so-called natural mode of being. A variation on this also emerged in the freak show performance of Afong Moy, who was exhibited for more than a decade as "The Chinese Lady" and was the first documented Chinese woman to enter the US.[41] Part of her performance included sitting motionless for long periods of time, a feat which was admired in newspapers yet otherwise prompted no further commentary.

In the eyes of white company owners, the alleged extreme bodily efficiency of Chinese workers made them the ideal laboring force. When Chinese laborers, mainly men, began

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[40] George Finlayson, *The Mission to Siam and Hue 1821–1822* (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1988), 227, 230.

[41] Moy was particularly famous for her bound feet, a bodily manifestation of her supposed freakishness; she also spoke and sang in Chinese as part of her performance. For more on Moy's life in the US, see Tao Zhang, "The Start of American Accommodation of the Chinese: Afong Moy's Experience from 1834 to 1850," *Journal of American Studies* 49, no. 3 (2015): 475–503.

immigrating to California in the 1850s in search of gold, white proprietors appreciated their purported machinic qualities for two reasons: it supposedly reflected the laborers' true nature; and, as a result, they could easily be exploited. From the initial years of the Gold Rush, white people quickly stereotyped Chinese men as clean and hardworking. As Mark Twain wrote, "A disorderly Chinaman is rare, and a lazy one does not exist."[42] But Twain's praises were others' anxieties, particularly in California where laws targeted Chinese immigrants from the early 1850s onward. This ambivalence did not stop railroad companies from hiring Chinese workers, assuming their labor was cheap and exploitable. In at least one instance, their industriousness reached legendary status: "In April 1869, the Central Pacific and Union Pacific [railroad companies] competed to see who could throw down track the fastest. [...] On the day of the contest, the Central Pacific had eight Irish workers unload materials while the Chinese spiked, gauged, and bolted the track, laying it down as fast as a man could walk. They broke the Union Pacific record by completing more than ten miles of track within twelve hours and forty-five minutes."[43]

In the 1880s, when "The Story of Agee Sang Long" was published, many Chinese labors worked at canneries in the Pacific Northwest; Chris Friday reports that "one highly talented Columbia River butcher could behead, defin, and eviscerate between seventeen hundred and two thousand fish a day—fifteen to eighteen tons."[44] When an actual machine

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[42] Twain, quoted in Iris Chang, *The Chinese in America: A Narrative History* (New York: Viking, 2003), 39.
[43] Chang, *The Chinese in America*, 63.
[44] Chris Friday, *Organizing Asian American Labor: The Pacific Coast Canned-Salmon Industry, 1870-1942* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994), 30. Friday also points out how stereotypes of race and gender made Chinese men ideal laborers: "Like many nineteenth-

was invented to do the same work, its informal name "Iron Chink" indicated the machinic bodies it was mostly replacing.[45] Traces of automatism lingered in the doctor's portrayal of Agee's work ethic as well, which he took note of on multiple occasions. When he first arrived at Agee's room, his description echoed Twain's observation of extreme orderliness in the Chinese: "Everything but two great wash-tubs was very diminutive, and, as I hastily noticed, scrupulously clean." Toward the end of the story, he detailed how Agee worked beyond even the point of pain:

> It was Christmas-time, and Agee Sang Long, being a person of family now, determined to celebrate the day. She worked harder than ever, supposing that were possible, and though the rheumatism was very bad, it could not subdue her. On Christmas Eve, after she had scrubbed and washed all day, she came home through the heavily falling snow, and proceeded to scrub her own floor until it shone. She washed the baby, and then she turned Mowa into a monument of soap-and-water wretchedness.[46]

Despite her ailments and age, the doctor-narrator marveled at Agee's near-impossible commitment to work. It is worth noting that, unlike the rest of the story, the narrator did not actually directly witness Agee's nonstop cleaning, since he mentioned his arrival at Agee's home a few hours afterward. His inclusion of this detail, then, served to highlight how much Agee conformed to the general stereotype of Chinese laborers' extreme work ethic, that she had a machinic body much like her real-life counterparts.

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and early twentieth-century industrialists, cannery owners believed that women performed fine, fast, and repetitious work [...] better than men. The slightly built southern Chinese immigrants they employed, though, were even better than women because, as one canner explained, they had 'hands as nimble as a woman's, and...the power in [their]...fingers and wrists of a man.'" Ibid., 34.

[45] For more on the "Iron Chink," see Friday, *Organizing Asian American Labor*, 83–85.

[46] Eichberg King, "The Story of Agee Sang Long," 243.

This tacit inclusion of the machinic body, despite Eichberg King's attempt to portray the Chinese immigrant laborer in a positive light, resonated with the real and negative legal ramifications for seeing the Chinese as machines. The passage of the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1882, the first legislation that explicitly prevented immigration based on race or nationality, occurred at least partly because congressmen denied Chinese immigrants their humanity; one way this manifested was by likening them to machines. On February 28, 1882, Senator John F. Miller, of California, in defending the Act, asserted that Chinese immigrants were not human but "machine-like…of obtuse nerve, but little affected by heat or cold, wiry, sinewy, with muscles of iron; they are automatic engines of flesh and blood; they are patient, stolid, unemotional…[and] herd together like beasts."[47] Most explicitly, white citizens like Miller saw the relationship between man and machine through the nature of laborers' jobs and their proximity to industrialization. This certainly built from rhetoric surrounding black enslaved laborers, discussed earlier in this section, which made the laboring body a commodity or object, rather than a subject.

By the time Senator Miller made his comments about Chinese laborers being machines, the above discourses had been perpetuated for decades. A few days later, John P. Jones, a Nevada senator, claimed that while "the Chinese are not an ignorant class of

[47] Quoted in Andrew Gyory, *Closing the Gate: Race, Politics, and the Chinese Exclusion Act* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 211. Miller's main opposition came from Sen. George Hoar of Massachusetts, who correctly noted that the Act was racist and unconstitutional. Although there was some legitimate concern for the wellbeing of Chinese imported contract labor (the "coolie trade"), the Act instead prevented all Chinese laborers from immigrating to the US, allowing only for a small number of immigrants from the more upper-class and educated elite to gain admittance to the country.

people," they were "imitators" rather than inventors. After an incredulous response by another senator, Jones expanded: "the very best authority denies to [the Chinese] the honor of those inventions [including the printing press, gunpowder, and the mariner's compass]. The Count de Gobineau, in his very able History of the Diversity of the Races, absolutely lays it down, and, I think, conclusively proves that they had nothing to do with those inventions, but stole them from stray Aryan Caucasian people who had wandered into their midst."[48] In promoting Gobineau's incorrect theories of white supremacy, Jones dismissed Chinese society of its historic achievements while also claiming that the Chinese could only perform what white races had taught them, as machines being input information.

Noteworthy, too, is that the title Jones cites points more closely to Henry Hotze's 1856 English translation, *The Moral and Intellectual Diversity of Races*, rather than Gobineau's *Essai sur l'inégalité des races humaines* (Essay on the Inequality of Human Races). Assuming Jones only read the English translation, his interpretation of Chinese abilities as rote mechanical may have also been influenced by Hotze's extensive introductory essay to Gobineau's text. As a Confederate propagandist, Hotze was certainly interested in affirming white supremacy. In justifying this standpoint, he also worked to undermine opposing arguments that proclaimed the unity of the human race, where everyone was equal in nature but rendered unequal by external factors. But in doing so, Hotze also revealed an anxiety surrounding the mechanization of human behavior:

> If we assume that the infinite intellectual diversities of individuals are owing solely to external influences, it is self-evident that the same diversities in nations, which are but aggregations of individuals, must result from the same causes. But are we

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[48] 13 Cong. Rec. S1582 (March 3, 1882).

> prepared to grant this first position—to assert that man is but an automaton, whose wheelwork is entirely without—the mere buffet and plaything of accident and circumstances? [...] A tablet of wax receives an impression which one of marble will not; on the former is easily effaced what the other forever retains. We do not deny that circumstances have a great influence in moulding both moral and intellectual character, but we do insist that there is a primary basis upon which the degree of that influence depends, and which is the work of God and not of man or chance.[49]

By defending racial inequality, Hotze thus rescued white men from what he saw as the mechanization of the body from outside influences. Without some form of creationism, in this case the work of God, all men were merely and equally automata. With racial hierarchies in place, Hotze then saw his proof (which John P. Jones echoed) that non-white races had less autonomy than whites.

White authors, lawmakers, and thinkers employed racial freakery in multiple ways to enforce racial hierarchies and enable white supremacy. While the sentiment expressed by Eichberg King in "The Story of Agee Sang Long" fundamentally disagreed with the thinking of Henry Hotze or Senator John P. Jones, she nonetheless included some of the same essentialized language that obscured Agee's humanity in favor of stereotypes. And while the story was a response to the Chinese Exclusion Act, Eichberg King's tacit inclusion of the machinic body made it a fundamental quality of the Chinese immigrant rather than something to be refuted. This, in turn, informed Agee's relationship to the music box, as I detail in the next section.

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[49] Henry Hotz[e], "Analytical Introduction," in Arthur Gobineau, *The Moral and Intellectual Diversity of Races*, trans. H. Hotz[e] (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1856), 19–20. For reasons that are unclear, Hotze's name appears as "Hotz" in the published volume.

The Marginalization of Agee Sang Long

From both a social and legal standpoint, the fictional Agee Sang Long was isolated from the community at large. As such, those she turned to for comfort fell outside the realm of human sociality. When she first encountered the doctor-narrator, she endeavored to save her cat, her "only friend." Following the cat, she took in a stray dog, then an abandoned baby. But threaded throughout the story is the music box, which provided routine comfort but otherwise functioned differently in Agee's life. Unlike the cat, dog, and infant, the music box was firmly a part of US society; in being so, it revealed Agee's fraught relationship with that society. Stories and advertisements marketed the music box as offering a sense of communal belonging, even among marginalized individuals, as well as access to a higher-brow musical culture. For Agee, however, she was unable to achieve either; thus, her music box, and the tunes it played, ultimately underscored the tragedy of her isolation.

Eichberg King's understanding of a working-class Chinese immigrant woman's struggles was most likely in keeping with other liberal-minded Boston residents, where she resided at the time.[50] And through the eyes of the liberal-minded but unaware narrator, "The Story of Agee Sang Long" aimed to educate readers on Chinese residents' oppressed status and refute dehumanizing narratives against them. Most immediately, the story responded to multiple anti-immigration acts against the Chinese exclusively, especially lower-class laborers. Although western states, particularly California, pushed for exclusion, anti-Chinese

[50] Although the Chinese Exclusion Act passed by a wide margin, only two out of thirteen Massachusetts congressmen voted for the bill: George Robinson (11th district) and William Russell (7th district).

sentiment was expressed nationwide. Chinese immigrants would not be able to become naturalized citizens until 1943, when the Magnuson Act repealed the Chinese Exclusion Act, with other restrictions removed following the Civil Rights Act of 1965. Proponents of the 1882 Act argued for maintaining the superiority of the white race; multiple senators suggested that the nation already had to deal with the "inferior race" of African Americans and were not eager to welcome another one.[51]

While the Chinese Exclusion Act marked the watershed moment that first explicitly banned Chinese immigration, Chinese women had been effectively barred from entering the country since the 1875 Page Act, which banned so-called undesirables, especially women presumed to be sex workers. Later laws, including an 1884 amendment to the Chinese Exclusion Act and the 1888 Scott Act, further restricted immigrants' movements between China and the United States. For the fictional Agee, who had lived on the east coast for forty years and lacked the means to travel back to China, many of these restrictions would not have necessarily impacted her. However, these laws did emphasize that she could never become a naturalized citizen; and as a representative of the laboring population at large, Agee's plight would have resonated with an audience that understood the race- and class-based discriminations in contemporaneous legislation.

The violence perpetuated against Agee in the story would have immediately registered as well. From the moment the narrator first met her, he became aware of the

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[51] James Z. George, quoted in Gyory, *Closing the Gate*, 215. Gyory argues for a top-down focus on how the Chinese Exclusion Act actually came to be passed, highlighting politicians' rhetoric from the 1870s until the Act's passing. For Gyory's take on previous scholarship, see chap. 1.

retaliatory acts against Agee. Although Agee first only reported the cat as sick, the doctor indicated to himself that "the poor thing was suffering from slow poison." When he later observed Agee walk down the street, his "blood boiled as some ragamuffins tore after her, shouting 'Rat! rat!'"[52] And when he checked on Agee and his feline patient the next day, he finally learned that vindictive neighbors had tried to poison Agee in addition to the cat. Violence and discrimination against the Chinese in America had been prevalent since the 1850s, especially in Gold Rush territories where white men felt threatened by Chinese men attempting to secure their own fortunes, but the years surrounding the Chinese Exclusion Act were especially harrowing. One of the deadliest moments occurred on September 2, 1885, seven months before "The Story of Agee Sang Long" was published, when the Rock Springs massacre claimed at least twenty-eight Chinese lives and became a national incident.

Against this social and legal backdrop, the music box made its way into increasingly more households. The music box, for most of the nineteenth century, was largely associated with the upper middle class and the so-called *nouveau riche*. In an 1884 newspaper, one salesman claimed that patrons, on average, spent between seventy-five and three hundred dollars on a music box, with more leaning toward the latter price. In the United States in 1884, three hundred dollars equaled almost seventy percent of the average employee's salary.[53] One could buy a music box for as little as fifty cents, but as the salesman explained: "Frequently people come in from some inland town with the intention of buying a music-

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[52] Eichberg King, "The Story of Agee Sang Long," 242.
[53] The yearly wages for an unskilled laborer, which would have been most people of color, was far below $300. This data came from *Historical Statistics of the United States Millennial Edition Online*.

box which will cost $50 or $100. When they listen to the different instruments, they are not satisfied with anything cheap, and invariably take one running up into the hundreds in price."[54] The music box was as much a work of art or piece of furniture as it was a musical instrument, and customers would sacrifice a higher capacity of tunes for finer materials or additional instrumental attachments. The above article, which discussed the recent craze for music boxes, credited opera star Adelina Patti's $20,000 instrument with igniting its popularity.[55] And until The Regina Music Box Company opened a music box factory in New Jersey in the early 1890s, all music boxes were imported, usually from Switzerland where the industry began.

At the same time, American stores did advertise cheap music boxes as well as pricier ones, which coincided with the mass production of music boxes beginning in the 1880s.[56] The Mermod & Jaccard Jewelry Company in St. Louis, "at Fourth and Locust streets" (about a half-mile from where the Gateway Arch currently stands), was just one location that advertised bargain prices in the later nineteenth century. An 1877 advertisement proclaimed that one could obtain a music box "at a very small cost" but failed to provide price options.[57]

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[54] "Automatic Music," *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, December 26, 1884.
[55] Using various inflation calculators available online, Patti's music box would cost about half a million dollars today. In 1891, *Rocky Mountain News* reported on Patti's orchestrion, referring to it as a "musical box"; it is unclear whether this is the same music box mentioned in the 1884 article. "Patti's Big Music Box," *Rocky Mountain News* (Denver, CO), February 8, 1891.
[56] Alexander Buchner and Arthur W. J. G. Ord-Hume indicate that the mass production of music boxes coincided with the invention and introduction of disc music boxes, which were less delicate than cylinders. See Buchner, *Mechanical Musical Instruments*, 54; and Ord-Hume, *Clockwork Music* (New York: Crown Publishers, 1973), 67, 103–12.
[57] "A MUSIC BOX is an attractive piece of household furniture," *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, November 23, 1877.

Similarly, in 1884 they advertised that music boxes "may be purchased in all sizes and prices, playing from one to a dozen popular melodies and selections from the operas of the best composers."[58] In 1885, they listed the range of music boxes from "85 cents to $5."[59] And in 1886, the year "The Story of Agee Sang Long" was published, they advertised the music box as providing a "Melody for the People":

> The music-box, which is a source of constant delight in a household, is an expensive luxury no longer, because the prices on these instruments have been ruthlessly cut by the Mermod & Jaccard Jewelry Company at Fourth and Locust streets for their unparalleled sacrifice sale. Large reductions have been made on every music-box in the entire collection, which is the largest and finest in the country, and now is the time for every one to purchase a box. Boxes which sold for $1 are now offered at 75 cents. Four-air music-boxes of rosewood or papier mache cases, richly inlaid, which sold for $15, may be obtained for $11.50. [...] These examples will serve to show the extent of the reductions and to establish the fact that never were such opportunities offered in this city to purchase elegant music-boxes at great bargains, and of which you should avail yourself at once before the choicest are selected.[60]

Whether or not a cheap music box was something the masses truly wanted—one counter-argument claimed the "absurdity of the proposition to substitute a machine which buzzes through the *Blue Danube Waltz* and *Nancy Lee* for the voice of Nilsson or Patti"—these advertisements offered upper-class culture in the home and luxury items at bargain prices.[61]

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[58] "Wouldn't Be without It," *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, January 20, 1884.
[59] "Lowest Ever Known," *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, March 12, 1885.
[60] "Melody for the People," *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, March 10, 1886. Mermod & Jaccard ran a slightly different version of this ad in 1884, which they titled "Music for the Masses." *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, February 23, 1884.
[61] "A Substitute for Opera," *The Milwaukee Sentinel*, March 1, 1884. The op-ed, responding to the Mermod & Jaccard advertisements, argued that the ads missed the real reason that most people go to the opera: because it demonstrates expensive taste. They continued, "The high price of opera tickets gives tone to the entertainment, and people who don't care anything about an incomprehensible Italian romance suffer the martyrdom of an evening at the opera because of the social tone there is in the thing. There are others who care somewhat for the music, but who care more to be able to say they were at the opera."

They offered access to both the latest in popular culture and higher-brow opera highlights. In short, for a woman like Agee who was illiterate and had little other opportunity to enjoy the pleasures of music, the music box promised unprecedented access.

However, this promise, as the narrator suggests, was sold to Agee at an inflated price. Considering one could purchase a four-tune music box made of rosewood for slightly more than Agee's that was made of "rude pine" and could only play two tunes, practically speaking she was overcharged. The narrator also factored Agee's supposed heathendom into his judgment. He takes on a pitying tone as he describes Agee as someone who converted to Christianity from a supposedly less civilized religious and cultural upbringing. An 1870 newspaper article broached a similar subject, but described those taking advantage of newly freed African Americans:

> A Georgia correspondent says that many of the negro laborers on plantations are made the victims of unprincipled storekeepers, especially those of the Hebrew race, who watch for the advent of the proprietor with his satchel full of greenbacks to pay off his hands, and then send out runners to meet the negroes—the latter invariably going to the village when in funds—and allure them into their shops. Here, in return for gaudy dresses, hoop skirts, feathered hats, resplendent shawls, gift candy, jewelry, banjos, &c., these sharpers become possessed of all the money.—Instances are noted where these negroes have paid forty dollars for a music box and ten dollars for a chignon.[62]

In the midst of Reconstruction in the South, northern newspapers were reporting on African Americans being victimized, though not by plantation owners but by Jewish merchants.[63] Of

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[62] "General Intelligence: How the Negroes' Money Goes," *Boston Investigator*, January 5, 1870.

[63] As Bertram Wallace Korn has indicated, American and immigrant Jews had a minor but significant presence in southern states, including as participants in the slave trade. In terms of business transactions, he suggests that Jewish merchants were more likely to engage with black consumers because "they displayed somewhat less reluctance to do business" with

particular concern for the author cited above was that instead of saving their money, African Americans were splurging for luxury items like fancy clothes and music boxes. Reporters made this worth publishing because of their assumptions that black individuals were less capable of their own wellbeing. Generally, however, Chinese laborers in the South were praised for their frugality; as such, despite laboring alongside African Americans they were not cited as victims in this article.[64] While the doctor-narrator thought of Agee as a victim of predatory advertisements, this was counter-balanced by her deep reflection as one who would ordinarily privilege frugality.

As the music box became less expensive and thus more widely available, newspapers focused on accounts of people spending inordinate sums of money on music boxes. Similar to Dixon Denham's comment regarding the sheikh's interest in his music box—"who will deny that nature has given us all a taste for luxuries?"—US news outlets were particularly taken with foreign dignitaries spending huge amounts on luxury items, music boxes included.[65] In 1877, months before Edison patented the phonograph, several newspapers reported on the "Largest Musical Box in the World," commissioned by the Khedive of Egypt,

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them. And he supports the contention by the Boston correspondent, writing that "there was probably some truth" to such assertions. Korn, "Jews and Negro Slavery in the Old South, 1789–1865," in *Jews in the South*, ed. Leonard Dinnerstein and Mary Dale Palsson (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1973), 104.

[64] See Lucy M. Cohen, *Chinese in the Post-Civil War South: A People without a History* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1984), 146, 151. This book, overall, provides a general account of the introduction of Chinese immigrants by missionaries in southern states in the 1840s and 1850s, and their continued participation in the manual labor force after the Civil War.

[65] Denham, Clapperton, and Oudney, *Narrative of Travels and Discoveries in Northern and Central Africa*, 116.

which could play "132 tunes, supplied by eleven cylinders."[66] More extreme language was used in reporting on "A Rajah's Musical Bed," first printed in 1883:

> The latest freak of a foreign visitor to Paris is without doubt the order for a musical bed. Such an article of domestic comfort was thought to be a myth, but an Indian rajah has just ordered one from the celebrated firm of Christopher Brothers. [...] The act of reclining upon this piece of beautiful work starts the musical box, which plays selections from Gounod, the "Funeral March of a Marionet" being the most attractive. The greatest piece of mechanism yet remains to be told. The spring that sets the musical box in motion connects also with each corner of the bedstead where four figures of women stand, carved life-size and painted to represent living creatures. On being started, they gently wave the plumed fans that are placed in their hands, and move their eyes so naturally that a casual observer might mistake them for animated beings. This is a somewhat strange bed, even for an Indian prince, but as the world grows to appreciate the sight of wealth more and more in everyday life, it is to be presumed that many innovations of this nature will find their way into the mansions of the wealthy.[67]

From the outset of the article, the author highlights the supposed freakishness of the rajah's commission. This is further accentuated by the strangeness of the request "even for an Indian prince," as well as the bed's near-mythological status. Wealth notwithstanding, and despite the bed's European origins, race and freakery were still intimately related. The music box was explicitly part of the freakery as well: the extravagance lay in the embedded technology, music and humanoid automata functioning together. The fact that the rajah requested this machinery—and included "Funeral March of a Marionette" as accompaniment—maintained the link between machinic bodies and racialized bodies.

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[66] "The Largest Musical-Box in the World," *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, June 2, 1877. This piece was reprinted in several newspapers across the country.
[67] "A Rajah's Musical Bed," *Daily Evening Bulletin* (San Francisco, CA), March 26, 1883. This story was reprinted as late as 1893 in the *Bismarck Daily Tribune*.

Agee Sang Long's music box, which played "Comin' thro' the Rye" and Johann Strauss's "The Beautiful Blue Danube," also made false promises through romanticized nostalgia. And as pieces inspired by two European rivers, the songs emphasized Agee's isolation from the community she otherwise lived in. "Comin' thro' the Rye," set to a poem written by Robert Burns, was considered a Scottish folk tune, the genre which was already closely aligned with nature and the pastoral by the end of the eighteenth century.[68] And despite its suggestive, sometimes outright bawdy lyrics, "Comin' thro' the Rye" has consistently been treated as a higher-brow, romantic song.[69] In mid-nineteenth century concert reviews, folk songs, which were musically simplistic compared to the typical operatic aria, also provided an opportunity to comment on a singer's artistry, namely through the use of rubato and other improvisatory gestures. When celebrated tenor John Templeton toured the US with his concert series "The Rose, the Shamrock, and the Thistle"—national songs from England, Ireland, and Scotland—one reviewer commended his artistic sensibilities:

> With perfect self-possession, and without affectation, Mr. Templeton comes to his work in a manly style, having confidence in himself to do what he undertakes, and never failing in the points he designs. In the coloring he gives to his music, he may sometimes appear too florid; but there are places where high coloring and profuse ornamentation are allowable. The difficulty is, to restrain them where they do not belong. [...] John Anderson was given with the most scrupulous simplicity—not an embellishment, not even a turn was discoverable. And there Mr. Templeton showed

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[68] See, for instance, Matthew Gelbart, *The Invention of "Folk Music" and "Art Music": Emerging Categories from Ossian to Wagner* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

[69] On the August 6, 1945 broadcast of *Bell Telephone Hour*, the radio announcer described "Comin' thro' the Rye" as "perpetuat[ing] the memory of that river" as well as "romantic." Danny's Radio, "BELL TELEPHONE HOUR 06 08 1945 with MARIAN ANDERSON," September 23, 2017, video, 14:25–14:35, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6MtgWMyFDjs.

> his power, as well as good taste. And it was a triumph. We have never heard it so well sung.[70]

Unlike the intricate, technical virtuosity cultivated by female opera singers at the same time, Templeton's "manly style" and artistry derived from his selective use of ornamentation. The apex of this, of course, was when he used no embellishment at all, and Scottish songs like "John Anderson, My Jo"—also based on a Burns poem—allowed for Templeton to employ what was considered a more musical and tasteful use of voice rather than a mechanical voice performing only rote technical facility.

Ironically, "Comin' thro' the Rye" as played on a music box was explicitly mechanical. As such, Agee's music box did not fulfill the promise that she would become a full member of society. To the above reviewers, the power offered by a live performance of folk songs such as "Comin' thro' the Rye" would have been lost in a mechanically reproduced music box rendition. Despite claims in advertisements that the music box could provide music for the masses, others did not necessarily see the music box as a replacement for live performance. The purportedly unmusical qualities of music box tunes had been complained about for decades in newspapers, especially through metaphor; to cite one example, in an 1883 review opera star Adelina Patti was criticized for having a technically perfect voice "too much like a music box."[71] Writers often used musicality to address performances that sounded human and soulful. An 1886 article offered suggestions "to help stimulate our local amateur musicians to increased efforts to break through the husk of music to find a soul

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[70] "Music," *The Boston Daily Atlas*, November 5, 1845.
[71] "Musical Measures: Patti and Scalchi," *The Milwaukee Sentinel*, January 28, 1883.

within." As they conclude, "if execution were all, then [amateurs] were hop[e]lessly distanced by the music-box."[72]

Additionally, Agee could not claim kinship with the imagined Scottish folk conveyed through the song.[73] This echoed with her isolation from the immigrant community at large, which in the story was predominantly Irish. Sometimes when she prayed at church, "a hard Irish face glared contemptuously at her." This was in keeping with the general sentiment that Irish and Chinese immigrants competed for jobs; as the narrator mentioned later, "The ladies of Irish extraction who took in washing and scrubbed persecuted [Agee] for daring to do the same."[74] Denis Kearney, an Irish immigrant in California, became well known as the leader of the Workingmen's Party in the 1870s that promoted anti-Chinese sentiment through terrorization. Their vigilante antics became known nationwide, with the national guard called in response to a particularly violent demonstration in San Francisco in 1877.[75] On the east coast, the Irish blamed the Chinese for undermining strike efforts for better working conditions. In 1870, for instance, when Irish workers in a North Adams, MA shoe factory went on strike, factory owners hired Chinese laborers as scabs.

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[72] "Musical Suggestions," *Daily Evening Bulletin* (San Francisco, CA), September 27, 1886.
[73] Krystyn R. Moon points out that some authors in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries did compare traditional Chinese music to Scottish folk music, "[breaking] down the suggestions that China was completely alien." Moon, *Yellowface*, 14.
[74] Eichberg King, "The Story of Agee Sang Long," 242.
[75] According to Iris Chang, the violence in San Francisco "left four dead and fourteen wounded." Earlier that year, on March 13, "a group of armed white men broke into a cabin in Chico, California, where they shot to death five Chinese farm workers, then poured oil over the bodies and set them ablaze. One of the killers later confessed that he had acted under orders from the Workingmen's Party." Chang, *The Chinese in America*, 127.

Johann Strauss's "The Beautiful Blue Danube" (An der schönen blauen Donau) also conjured romantic sentiments, but this happened at least partially through listeners' general impulse to waltz. As musicologist Steven Baur outlines, waltzes were enormously popular in the US in the latter half of the nineteenth century, and "The Beautiful Blue Danube," composed in 1866, quickly stood out in a crowded field. An 1872 New Hampshire newspaper indicated that Strauss's waltz was comprised of "witching strains" and "caused an almost irresistible desire to waltz to the music." Similarly, an 1883 review of Strauss's operetta *The Merry War* described one of its waltzes as possessing "much [of] the bewitching power of 'The Beautiful Blue Danube.'"[76] Despite the genre's popularity, many saw the waltz as "immodest"; as Baur asserts, "the most palpably revolutionary aspect of the waltz was the intimate coupling of dancers."[77] The alluring quality of the music fed into this notion, which, as with the music box, was viewed with skepticism. As noted above in the first section, explorers like Parry and Denham expected indigenous listeners to be lured by the music box sound while simultaneously thinking less of them for doing so. Although Agee never danced to the tune, the moral uncertainty of the waltz was partially reflected in her yearning "to consider the music-box as something divine" while nonetheless retaining her Christian ideals.

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[76] "Dramatic and Musical: The Thalia Comic Opera Troupe in 'The Merry War,'" *The North American* (Philadelphia, PA), May 15, 1883.

[77] Steven Baur, "'Waltz Me Around Again Willie': Gender, Ideology, and Dance in the Gilded Age," in *Musicological Identities: Essays in Honor of Susan McClary*, ed. Steven Baur, Raymond Knapp, and Jacqueline Warwick (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2008), 49.

While people often heard waltzes as immodest in the context of dance halls, in the concert venue reviewers treated them more favorably, if still as lighter musical fare than so-called masterworks. Here, in particular, "The Beautiful Blue Danube," and Strauss more generally, stood out: as one 1880 article claimed, "Even [Theodore] Thomas [music director of the New York Philharmonic], whose ambition has always been to interpret, with his famous orchestra, the best works of the greatest masters, has never been able to resist that popular demand which requires a Strauss waltz on all of his programmes, except those of the few severely classical symphony concerts."[78] The popularity of "The Beautiful Blue Danube" carried over into the parlor as well, with arrangers even adding lyrics. In 1872, G. D. Wilson arranged and released the waltz as "Greeting to Spring: Four Part Song for Ladies Voices," and in 1890 an arranger only credited as J. C. M. published "Night of Joy," also as a four-part song for ladies' voices with piano accompaniment. Even without formal dancing, "The Beautiful Blue Danube" still offered some form of physical engagement with the piece.

Agee, as an elderly, working-class Chinese immigrant, would not have been present in dance halls, concert venues, or ladies' parlors. Instead, her relationship to "The Beautiful Blue Danube," listening to it on her music box after a long day of work, would have aligned more closely with the following sentiment made in 1877: "It is an undoubted fact that even the free and independent maid-of-all-work cannot satisfy her cravings after the infinite, or compose her mind sufficiently to stoop to the groveling labor of making beds or sweeping oft the front steps without her daily allowance of 'The Beautiful Blue Danube' or 'The March

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[78] "Dance-Music," *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, May 20, 1880.

of the Mulligan Guards.'"[79] The article, considering the future possibilities of the telephone, imagined a context in which anyone could listen to music, even maids who might want music to accompany their work. The listed examples, though, did not include symphonic or operatic works but a Strauss waltz and a comic song.[80] Agee's music box, too, included songs that were popularly appreciated but did not necessarily embody the standards of high art. Combined with musical taste was Agee's choice to keep and listen to her music box at home. Just as the concert or dance hall could shift the audience that enjoyed the waltz, the music box shaped and was shaped by the environment in which Agee lived.

While the music box, including the tunes it played, marginalized Agee in some regard, at the same time the doctor-narrator's sympathy toward her placed her in greater esteem than the Irish immigrants who persecuted her. This is particularly demonstrated with the tragic conclusion to the story. The abandoned baby Agee took in as her own had been left by its Irish mother; but the mother, subsequently horrified at the thought of her child being raised by a Chinese woman, pushed Agee to the floor in an effort to reclaim her baby. When the doctor finally discovered Agee in her injured state, he chastised the mother: "Behave yourself, or leave the room, [...] for you are in the presence of death." Agee, however, forgave the woman before dying, demonstrating, from the narrator's stance, a true Christian's capacity for forgiveness as opposed to the Irishwoman's vindictiveness and

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[79] "The Music of the Future," *Inter Ocean* (Chicago, IL), February 27, 1877.
[80] This aligns with Baur's assertion that the waltz became increasingly associated with the lower class. Baur, "Gender, Ideology, and Dance in the Gilded Age," 59–60.

racism. Indeed, as he concluded, "she fell asleep, to awaken in a land where men are equal before God."[81]

The music box, in the context of "The Story of Agee Sang Long," worked to reveal Agee's inability, in life, to be seen and treated as fully human. As travel accounts had used technologies, including the music box, to indicate indigenous people's relative inferiority, so too did the doctor-narrator highlight Agee's nearly un-Christian devotion to her music box. At the same time, the narrator's sympathetic portrayal of Agee separated her from the Irish immigrants who treated her poorly; similarly, travel accounts had privileged certain reactions to the music box over others. This hierarchy was not only racial but, as I showed in this section, based on musical taste. If the repetitive nature of the music box and its lower-brow tunes placed Agee's musical taste with populist standards rather than high art, her reverence toward her music box also contrasted with her Irish neighbors' inability to appreciate art at all.

Conclusion

This chapter demonstrated that the music box was intimately connected with racialized bodies. By the time of "The Story of Agee Sang Long" in 1886, media had long established the music box as catalyzing racial freakery. In 1820s travel journals, explorers used the novel features of the music box—its automated capabilities coupled with its tinkling metallic sound—to accentuate difference based on how people reacted to it. These stories of the Other

[81] Eichberg King, "The Story of Agee Sang Long," 243.

interacting with the music box were popularized in later newspapers and magazines. Literary fiction capitalized on this relationship, combining the music box's association with racial freakery and romanticism to create sympathetic portrayals of marginalized characters. This was certainly the case with Agee Sang Long; despite this, the music box continued to highlight racialized bodies in essentialist ways.

The connection between the music box and racialized bodies resonated in later operas, particular Giacomo Puccini's. Much musicological scholarship engaging with the music box has centered on Puccini's Asia-centered operas, since he was known to have borrowed key melodies from music boxes for both *Turandot* (1926) and *Madame Butterfly* (1904).[82] Importantly, too, these melodies are associated with Asian characters in the operas: the Chinese Ministers Ping, Pang, and Pong in *Turandot*; and Cio-Cio San in Japan-set *Madame Butterfly*. The Ministers were designed to be mechanical characters, especially in contrast to the princess Turandot herself, and singing a music box tune only heightened their machinic bodies.[83] Arman Schwartz has further referred to the Ministers as

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[82] See Alexandra Wilson, "Modernism and the Machine Woman in Puccini's 'Turandot,'" *Music & Letters* 86, no. 3 (2005): 432–51; and Arman Schwartz, "Mechanism and Tradition in Puccini's *Turandot*," *The Opera Quarterly* 25, nos. 1–2 (2009): 28–50. Both articles built off Harold Powers and William Ashbrook, *Puccini's Turandot: The End of the Great Tradition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991). W. Anthony Sheppard, more recently, has also linked some melodies from *Madame Butterfly* to another music box, known as the "Guinness" box housed in the Morris Museum in New Jersey. Sheppard, "Puccini and the Music Boxes," *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* 140, no. 1 (2015): 41–92.

[83] See Alexandra Wilson, "Modernism and the Machine Woman in Puccini's 'Turandot,'" 438. Wilson links Puccini's use of the mechanical aesthetic to the Italian Futurist movement, which gained traction from Marinetti's 1909 manifesto onward. Arman Schwartz also discusses the more general use of *chinoiserie* as a "screen for the mechanical": "think of wind-up characters like the Chinese teacup in Ravel's *L'enfant et les sortilèges*, and the Chinese conjurer in Satie's *Parade*, as well as the imperial Chinese courtiers in

"effeminate" and "impotent," the latter predominantly characterized through distortions of traditionally virtuosic forms.[84] While the music box did not directly represent femininity/effeminacy, its mechanically sonic presence did forge associations that functioned in much the same way.

A stronger case for Puccini's musical evocation of the machinic body is found in *Madame Butterfly*. W. Anthony Sheppard's detailed account of the music box references in this opera offer two major contributions: Puccini incorporated Chinese melodies, as heard on a music box, for a Japan-centered opera; and his orchestrations, generally, tended to connote the music box timbre rather than any particular East Asian musical style. Sheppard indicates that two music box tunes were used as key themes in the opera, one as the so-called "Butterfly" theme and the other as the "Patrimony" theme, both directly associated with Cio-Cio San.[85] And he describes Cio-Cio San's operatic entrance in ways similar to other examples of women's voices as interacting with technology:

> Butterfly's entrance in the opera, befitting an exotic heroine in any orientalist opera, is other-worldly. We hear her friends singing bell-like 'ah's and her voice floating above from afar as they gradually enter from offstage. [...] These disembodied voices and the floating pulse enhance the mystery and appeal of this exotic woman both for

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Stravinsky's *Le rossignol*, who are entranced by the sound of a nightingale machine." Schwartz, "Mechanism and Tradition in Puccini's *Turandot*," 37.

[84] Schwartz, "Mechanism and Tradition in Puccini's *Turandot*," 41. Patricia Juliana Smith seems to go against this claim, remarking that the ministers are "both unquestionably heterosexual *and* misogynistic"; however, she refrains from both music analysis and an overt discussion of race. Smith, "*Gli Enigmi Sono Tre*: The [D]evolution of Turandot, Lesbian Monster," in Corinne E. Blackmer and Patricia Juliana Smith, eds., *En Travesti: Women, Gender Subversion, Opera* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), 264.

[85] The "Butterfly" theme is derived from an erotic Chinese song, known as "Shiba Mo" or "The Eighteen Touches." For more on this, see Sheppard, "Puccini and the Music Boxes," 61–64. The "Patrimony" motif actually figures in two of the music box tunes; see ibid., 68–69.

> Pinkerton and for Puccini's intended audience. [...] In Puccini's orchestration of this moment – featuring staccato flute, piccolo, glockenspiel and octave grace notes in the harp – the orchestra itself sounds somewhat like a music box.[86]

In short, Puccini's implementation of music box tunes and timbres provided an aural, mechanistic accompaniment to his exoticized and feminized characters. And these operatic treatments were explicitly feminized versions of the machinic Asian immigrant laborer that politicians like California senator John F. Miller fought to exclude.

The timbral descriptors of voice that Sheppard employs—the bell-like, disembodied voices of Cio-Cio San's friends, coupled with the protagonist's own otherworldly voice—also speak to the continuing phenomenon of the music box sound. By the end of the nineteenth century, the phonograph began to formally emerge as a competitor to—and soon became a replacement for—the music box. While its ability to capture the human voice altered the future of technology in a profound way, those who wrote about it continued to incorporate similar metaphors and tropes that surrounded the music box. As I show in the next chapter, the mechanized voices and machinic bodies embedded in the music box sound re-emerged in the phonograph sound at the turn of the twentieth century.

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[86] Sheppard, "Puccini and the Music Boxes," 53, 56.

CHAPTER THREE
Uncanny Voices: The Phonographic Voice in Nineteenth Century Fiction

Ernest Howard Crosby's short story "The Professor's Daughter" (1891) features an unnamed male painter-protagonist who unknowingly falls in love with a phonographic voice. While on a walk in the south of France, the mysterious, disembodied voice stops him in his tracks:

> I had not been seated many minutes before there struck my ears a strain of marvellous music. At first I scarcely knew what it was. I felt a delicious, intoxicating, inspiriting sensation, that was all, and for some time I was so completely carried away that I did not attempt to define the nature and cause of my feelings. I have no idea how long I listened, but at last silence ensued, and I awoke as from an enchantment. I sat for a time perplexed, trying to recall my experience. It was evidently a voice, but such a voice! That of a woman, too, unless indeed it proceeded from some supernatural being. It was song, or something transcending song, and unlike anything I had ever imagined.[1]

The protagonist's enchantment with the mysterious voice echoes Leigh Hunt's poetic response to the music box in 1816, as described in the first chapter of this dissertation, in that he can barely process the unusual sounds he hears. Because the mysterious voice is unlike anything he had heard before, the protagonist feels captivated by the vocal performance and loses his senses until the voice stops singing. He describes the singing voice in transcendent terms, but he nonetheless assumes the mysterious voice comes from a corporeal, female person, whom he dubs "Sirena"; it is not until he searches for her that he discovers her voice, in fact, only emanates from a phonographic recording.

The protagonist's specific response to a voice also evokes a more famous 1816 tale, E. T. A. Hoffmann's "The Sandman." Hoffmann's story portrays a university student,

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[1] Ernest Howard Crosby, "The Professor's Daughter," *Cosmopolitan* 10, no. 4 (1891): 477–78. Future citations are placed in text.

Nathanael, falling deeply in love with the automaton-doll Olimpia, firmly believing in her humanness despite several signs to the contrary. After several nights of observing her from a distance, he finally gets to see Olimpia in person when she gives a music recital:

> Olimpia played the piano with great skill and likewise performed a bravura aria in a clear, almost shrill voice, like a glass bell. Nathanael was enraptured; standing in the back row, he was unable to make out Olimpia's features clearly in the dazzling light of the candles. Without anybody noticing, he therefore took out Coppola's spyglass and looked through it at the fair Olimpia. Ah! then he perceived that she was gazing at him yearningly, and that every note she uttered found its full expression in the amorous look that pierced his heart and set it afire. The artificial roulades seemed to Nathanael to be the heavenly jubilation of a heart transfigured by love, and when the cadenza was at last followed by a long trill which rang and resounded through the room, he felt as though red-hot arms had suddenly seized him; unable to restrain himself, he shrieked out in agony and rapture: "Olimpia!"[2]

With evocative, romanticized language, the narrator conveys Nathanael's growing obsession with Olimpia's voice and appearance. Nathanael employs inorganic and otherworldly terms to describe both the style of singing and the timbre of Olimpia's voice, noting the *artificial* roulades and sounds akin to both glass bells and heavenly jubilations.[3] Though he does not

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[2] E. T. A. Hoffmann, "The Sandman," in *The Golden Pot and Other Tales*, trans. Ritchie Robertson (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 108–109. Future citations are placed in text.

[3] The bell-like voice is itself a trope with its own literary history. See, for instance, Felicia Miller Frank, *The Mechanical Song: Women, Voice, and the Artificial in Nineteenth-Century French Narrative* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995), 76-83. Emily Dolan also mentions the bell-like voice of the female lover in another Hoffmann tale, "Automata." Emily Dolan, "E. T. A. Hoffman and the Ethereal Technologies of 'Nature Music,'" *Eighteenth-Century Music* 5, no. 1 (2008): 8. Dolan also cites "glass" as a human vocal quality, e.g. the glass harmonica as sounding like the human voice (ibid., 14). For more on artificial singing styles, specifically Olimpia's role in Offenbach's *Tales of Hoffmann*, see Heather Hadlock, *Mad Loves: Women and Music in Offenbach's Les Contes d'Hoffmann* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 79–81. See also Carolyn Abbate's analysis of the "Queen of the Night" aria from *The Magic Flute*, in *In Search of Opera* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 92–94.

know that Olimpia is an automaton, Nathanael hears her voice as unconventional. And by the end of the performance, the voice *does* something to him: he feels captured, "as though red-hot arms had suddenly seized him."

With these stories as a point of departure, this chapter demonstrates the emergence of mechanized voices and machinic bodies in nineteenth century literary fiction featuring the phonograph. I argue that the phonograph, a paradigm-shifting technology that enabled the "capturing" of sound, helped codify these tropes in popular media by accentuating the anxieties surrounding mechanization. To historicize and theorize these anxieties, I turn to Ernst Jentsch's conception of the uncanny, first published in 1906. Drawing upon Jentsch's formulation, which did not discuss sound, I use the uncanny as a way, first, to expose the feminization of the phonographic voice; and, second, to show how this impacted women's voices and their sense of agency—in short, their humanness. Hoffmann's "The Sandman" appears in this chapter as one of Jentsch's (and Freud after him) prototypical examples of the uncanny; however, I accord more attention to Olimpia's sound. I then demonstrate how "The Professor's Daughter" is an explicit example of the mechanized voice. Finally, I discuss Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897) to highlight the vampire as a metaphor for the machinic body; each of Dracula's victims, in turn, acquire the phonographic voice with their vampiric abilities.

For me, the term *phonographic voice* distinguishes these mechanized voices from the music box voice, as I defined in the first chapter.[4] Most obviously, the phonographic voice

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[4] Phonograph, in this context, indicates record- and cylinder-playing machines more generally, which had various names depending on the brand/company. In the late

concerns the human voice as it is filtered through phonographic technology.[5] Like the music box, the phonographic voice was tied to feminization and otherness through timbre, its impact on others, and the people with whom it was associated. But the novelty of the phonograph, following its formal debut in 1877, was that people could record their voices and hear machines "talk" to them for the first time.[6] Although the novelty of this was relatively short-lived, the potentials and fears of the phonograph's future lived on in literary fiction.[7] The latent power of the phonographic voice lay in the uncertainty of the voice's origins—specifically, whether it emanated from a human body or machine. Even when listeners, like Nathanael or "The Professor's Daughter" protagonist, revered the

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nineteenth century, machines that could both record and play back sound were most likely one of Edison's Phonographs.

[5] "Phonographic voice" is not a well-established term. Serge Lacasse and Richard Middleton make substantive use of the term, although their definitions do not line up with my own. Lacasse uses "phonographic voice" to mean recorded voices of pop singers. Middleton theorizes the term a bit more, writing that it operates in a "zone of indeterminacy" between, for instance, man and machine. However, he still indicates that the phonographic voice is a singing voice. See Serge Lacasse, "The Phonographic Voice: Paralinguistic Features and Phonographic Staging in Popular Music Singing," in *Recorded Music: Performance, Culture and Technology*, ed. Amanda Bayley (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 225–51; and Richard Middleton, "Faith, Hope, and the Hope of Love: On the Fidelity of the Phonographic Voice," in *Music, Sound and Space: Transformations of Public and Private Experience*, ed. Georgina Born (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 292–311.

[6] The phonograph's presumed agency was already caught up in its early mythology. When Edison demonstrated the new machine at the *Scientific American* offices, one person recounted that "the machine inquired as to our health, asked how we liked the phonograph, informed us that *it* was very well, and bid us a cordial good night." Quoted in Roland Gelatt, *The Fabulous Phonograph 1877–1977* (New York: Macmillan, 1977), 25.

[7] Roland Gelatt outlines the phonograph industry as being in flux through the 1890s, with Edison facing bankruptcy, the rise of Berliner's Gramophone, and various lawsuits splintering the business and also helping launch Victor Records. See Gelatt, *The Fabulous Phonograph*, chaps. 3–6.

phonographic voice, they could only describe it in abstract and otherworldly terms. When they did learn of Olimpia's and Sirena's mechanical origins, facing the mismatch of human qualities with machine parts proved damaging. This inability to reconcile the sound of the voice with its masked yet attendant body makes the phonographic voice.

Olimpia as "Uncanny Woman" and the Phonographic Voice

Ernst Jentsch, a German psychiatrist and contemporary of Freud, was the first to establish a working definition of the uncanny as it related to psychological behaviors. In his 1906 essay "On the Psychology of the Uncanny," Jentsch articulated the uncanny as both manifesting in people who experienced the uncanny as well as those who became marked as such. While the uncanny impacted both men and women, it did so differently. Men, such as Nathanael in "The Sandman," were frequently impacted by uncanny women, revealing their non-normative, fragile masculinity; Freud, in particular, provided a close reading of "The Sandman" to explain this phenomenon. However, I accord more attention to Jentsch's definition of the uncanny, which was broader in scope and less psychoanalytic than Freud's.[8] In particular, Jentsch did not rely, as Freud did, on the castration complex, a phenomenon that is less useful for the study of women's voices. Jentsch, who made the automaton a canonical example of the uncanny, carved a space, however problematic, for Olimpia's

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[8] This is not a unique claim; see, for instance, Michiel Sharpé, "A Trail of Disorientation: Blurred Boundaries in Der Sandmann," *Image & Narrative: Online Magazine of the Visual Narrative* no. 5 (January 2003), http://www.imageandnarrative.be/inarchive/uncanny/michielscharpe.htm.

significance, as well as other women. I center on Olimpia as an "uncanny woman," listening particularly to the distinctive qualities of her phonographic voice.[9]

Through Jentsch's definition of the uncanny, I show that Nathanael's and Olimpia's mechanized voices marked them as feminized. Olimpia, as the clearer example, was a femme-presenting automaton whose voice operated mechanically. But Nathanael, like Olimpia, was prone to repeating key phrases, and he frequently lost bodily autonomy. While the haunting figure of Coppola/Coppelius triggered Nathanael's mental health crises, Nathanael's resultant speech and movements reflected his encounters with Olimpia. Timbre also played a role in recognizing the uncanny mechanized voice, with Olimpia's shrill and bell-like tones both conveying power over Nathanael and rendering others, like his friend Siegmund, uncomfortable. This echoed in the descriptions of operatic women accused of having music box voices, as addressed in the first chapter; but it also factored into later texts featuring the phonograph, as I discuss in later sections. Instrumentalized voices were rendered non-ideal, even when they contained positive traits.

In the space between human and machine, the feminized uncanny made its mark. Although both Jentsch and Freud feminized the uncanny through their respective writings, the former outlined multiple ways in which the uncanny could exist. For Jentsch, the effect of the feminized uncanny was twofold: to criticize certain groups of people—such as women and children—who were seen as more prone to experiencing the uncanny; and to expose uncanny people and things. Freud only considered the first category, with Nathanael as his

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[9] Philip McCaffrey, "Olimpia as Uncanny Woman," in *Reading Freud's Reading*, ed. Sander Gilman et al. (New York: New York University Press, 1994), 91–108.

primary example. But uncanny voices, like Hoffmann's Olimpia and Crosby's Sirena, tended to fall into the latter category. Addressing both categories, I demonstrate the full impact of the uncanny phonographic voice, which did not factor into Jentsch's or Freud's work.[10] Olimpia and Sirena, as feminized machines, *made* sound in particular ways, but their uncanny voices also rendered their listeners vulnerable. Their voices contribute to the discourse of feminized and feminizing sound that surrounded the phonograph.

At its essence, Jentsch understood the uncanny as a "*lack of orientation*" that "is bound up with the impression of the uncanniness of a thing or incident," which stems from someone feeling ill at ease, or "not quite 'at home'" with a person, thing or situation.[11] Although the uncanny can be experienced by anyone, not everyone will necessarily experience the uncanny nor under the same circumstances. This feeling of uneasiness, which always has negative connotations and is frequently expressed as arousing horror, is thus difficult to articulate with concrete examples. Nevertheless, Jentsch proposed the closest example of a universally uncanny experience, the automaton:

> Among all the psychic uncertainties that can become a cause for the uncanny feeling to arise, there is one in particular that is able to develop a fairly regular, powerful and very general effect: namely, *doubt as to whether an apparently living being really is animate and, conversely, doubt as to whether a lifeless object may not in fact be animate*…—and more

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[10] Although Jentsch does not discuss sound in "On the Psychology of the Uncanny," he did address the role of music on the nerves in *Musik und Nerven*, published in two volumes in 1904 and 1911. See James Kennaway, *Bad Vibrations: The History of the Idea of Music as a Cause of Disease* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012), 95. See also Richard Cohn, "Uncanny Resemblances: Tonal Signification in the Freudian Age," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 57, no. 2 (2004): 285–323.

[11] Ernst Jentsch, "On the Psychology of the Uncanny," trans. Roy Sellars, *Angelaki: Journal of the Theoretical Humanities* 2, no. 1 (1995): 8. References to "orientation" and a feeling of being "at home" is bound up in the definition of the uncanny's antonym in German, *heimlich*.

> precisely, when this doubt only makes itself felt obscurely in one's consciousness. The mood lasts until these doubts are resolved and then usually makes way for another kind of feeling.[12]

For Jentsch, the uncanniness of the automaton stemmed from its mechanical attributes becoming masked by a human façade. The difference between the two only concerned how an observer initially perceived the subject: as human or machine.[13]

But as Jentsch made clear, the uncanny could just as easily apply to people who *acted* like automata, who fit neither standard models of human appearance nor behavior. As implied from Jentsch's discussion of automata and other anthropomorphized things, the uncanny concerned distortions of that which was otherwise familiar—in this case, the human body. Among the many possible deviations from so-called normal bodies and functions, Jentsch isolated epilepsy as an example: "It is not unjustly that epilepsy is therefore spoken of as the *morbus sacer* ['sacred disease'], as an illness deriving not from the human world but from foreign and enigmatic spheres."[14] With epilepsy and other little-known diseases of the time, Jentsch claimed that the resultant uncanniness felt in observers stemmed from "the presence of a certain urge to associate—that is, a mechanism—appears in man which, standing

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[12] Ibid., 11. Emphasis in text.

[13] The machine-that-seems-human has particularly resonated throughout the later twentieth century, morphing into the pop-psychological phenomenon the *uncanny valley*, which notes a sharp decrease in familiarity (as observed by humans) of an automaton or other humanoid object as it approaches—but does not yet reach—complete human likeness. Masahari Mori is credited with coining the term "uncanny valley" in 1970, and he discusses the uncanniness of both appearance and movement. Masahiro Mori, "The Uncanny Valley," trans. Karl F. MacDorman and Norri Kageki, *IEEE Robotics & Automation Magazine* 19, no. 2 (2012): 98–100. Since Mori's use of the term, the uncanny valley has been the subject of dozens of articles.

[14] Jentsch, "On the Psychology of the Uncanny," 14.

in contradiction to the usual view of psychical freedom, begins to undermine one's hasty and careless conviction of the animate state of the individual."[15] If the humanness of appearance emphasized the familiar, the unfamiliar aspects related to their *actions*; with certain diseases, some people seemed to behave mechanically, like automata.

While Jentsch invoked "human," "machine," and "uncanny" as neutral terms, in practice he feminized the uncanny from the start. For instance, he suggested that the uncanny tends to be experienced by those, such as women and children, with so-called weaker constitutions:

> [T]he effect of the uncanny can easily be achieved when one undertakes to reinterpret some kind of lifeless thing as part of an organic creature, especially in anthropomorphic terms, in a poetic or fantastic way.... Fantasy, which is indeed always a poet, is able now and then to conjure up the most detailed terrifying visions out of the most harmless and indifferent phenomena; and this is done all the more substantially, the weaker the critical sense that is present and the more the prevailing psychical background is affectively tinged. This is why *women, children and dreamers are also particularly subject to the stirrings of the uncanny* and the danger of seeing spirits and ghosts.[16]

Women and children experienced the uncanny more frequently because of their presumed emotionally driven psychology. This accorded with feminine-coded psychological ailments, such as hysteria, that were gaining traction in psychological academe in the nineteenth century.[17] The category of "dreamers" further allowed for men who were poets and/or with nervous temperaments, like Hoffmann's Nathanael, to become psychologically feminized.

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[15] Ibid., 15.
[16] Jentsch, "On the Psychology of the Uncanny," 13. My emphasis.
[17] Many scholars have discussed hysteria as an historically feminine illness. For more on the history of hysteria and its subsequent ties to operatic and literary women of the nineteenth century, see Hadlock, *Mad Loves*, chap. 3.

Freud's later and more famous essay "The Uncanny" tacitly endorsed Jentsch's feminized uncanny and further tied it to primitivism, which was defined against the rationality of so-called intellectual thinking:

> We—or our primitive forefathers—once believed that these possibilities [omnipotence of thoughts, wish fulfillments, etc.] were realities, and were convinced that they actually happened. Nowadays we no longer believe in them, we have *surmounted* these modes of thought; but we do not feel quite sure of our new beliefs, and the old ones still exist within us ready to seize upon any confirmation. As soon as something *actually happens* in our lives which seems to confirm the old, discarded beliefs we get a feeling of the uncanny…. Conversely, anyone who has completely and finally rid himself of animistic beliefs will be insensible to this type of the uncanny.[18]

Fully *surmounting* primitive fears meant no longer experiencing the uncanny. Combining this with Jentsch, primitive people with weaker constitutions were most likely to experience the uncanny. But these same individuals, like Nathanael, were also most likely to be marked as uncanny, as automata.

Freud's essay is also well known for its psychoanalysis of Nathanael, using the castration complex as a prototypical manifestation of masculine anxiety involving repressions that *recur*.[19] "The Sandman" begins with three letters, and it is in the first, written by the Nathanael to his friend Lothar, that Nathanael revealed two related events that continue to haunt him. As a young child, he learned the legend of the Sandman, who ripped out the

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[18] Sigmund Freud, "The 'Uncanny,'" trans. James Strachey, *New Literary History* 7, no. 3 (Spring 1976): 639.

[19] "[I]f psychoanalytic theory is correct in maintaining that every affect belonging to an emotional impulse, whatever its kind, is transformed, if it is repressed, into anxiety, then among instances of frightening things there must be one class in which the frightening element can be shown to be something repressed which *recurs*. This class of frightening things would then constitute the uncanny; and it must be a matter of indifference whether what is uncanny was itself originally frightening or whether it carried some *other* affect." Freud, "The 'Uncanny,'" 634.

eyes of children who refused to go to bed. Although he recognized that the Sandman was simply part of a myth, Nathanael nevertheless superimposed the Sandman image onto the real-life figure of Coppelius, who sometimes worked with Nathanael's father and frightened Nathanael and his siblings. In the second traumatic incident, Coppelius potentially murdered Nathanael's father by causing an explosion. What prompted Nathanael, as an adult, to reveal all of this to Lothar was his encounter with a person whom he initially took to be Coppelius; falling into a blind rage, Nathanael attacked the man and was briefly hospitalized. This new person, significantly named Coppola, thus became a familiar element of Nathanael's uncanny experiences. In addition to the Coppola/Coppelius figure, Nathanael's sensitivity to the loss of eyes—derived from the Sandman legend—further linked the uncanny to the castration complex, according to Freud.[20] When Nathanael saw Coppola again, he started at Coppola's offer of "eyes" for this reason, although he quickly realized that "eyes" were a colloquialism for spyglasses. Later, when Coppola stole Olimpia away from her creator, Professor Spalanzani, leaving behind only her eyes, Nathanael again lost mental and emotional control.

While Freud's close reading of "The Sandman" is a significant early twentieth century interpretation of the tale, it also ignored critical parts of the story in order to place as much emphasis as possible on the castration complex. The castration complex was just one way the

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[20] Freud sees loss of limbs and body parts, generally, as metaphors for castration, although it is unclear why this would necessarily be true. In this specific example, the loss of eyes also relates to the loss of the father figure (this happens twice to Nathanael, first with his biological father, and then with Professor Spalanzani). See Freud, "The 'Uncanny,'" 627–28.

feminized uncanny revealed itself, and in focusing on Nathanael's *experience* of the uncanny as recurring repressions, Olimpia barely factored into Freud's analysis. As Phillip McCaffrey has argued, outright dismissing Olimpia's importance to the story eliminates her significance as an "uncanny woman" and, as such, her impact on Nathanael's behavior.[21] What the castration complex obscured was how people and things *became* uncanny, which Jentsch tried to articulate. Olimpia, as a human-like automaton, demonstrated a classic example of the uncanny; through her influence, Nathanael himself became uncanny by the end of the tale.

Following Jentsch's claim that the uncanny was especially felt in those with weaker constitutions, Nathanael's experience of the uncanny directly relates to his worsening mental health. He is not a bastion of normative masculinity at any point in the tale.[22] And as Freud indicated, Nathanael's madness was predominantly governed by childhood trauma, which combined his fear of the Sandman and the grisly death of his father into the singular figure of Coppola/Coppelius. Nathanael's multiple interactions with the uncanny Olimpia only exacerbated his ailment. This first happened when he saw her through his bedroom window, as described in his first letter to Lothar:

> Inside the room a tall, very slim woman, beautifully proportioned and magnificently dressed, was sitting in front of a small table on which she was leaning, with her hands folded. She was facing the door, so that I had a full view of her angelic face. She

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[21] McCaffrey, "Freud's Uncanny Woman," 92.

[22] Some scholars have linked Nathanael's non-normative masculinity to homosexuality, for instance. See Hélène Cixous, "Fiction and its Phantoms: A Reading of Freud's *Das Unheimliche* ("The uncanny"), trans. Robert Dennomé, *New Literary History* 7, no. 3 (Spring 1976): 537–38. Fragile masculinity, and its ties to evildoing, comes up in other literary examples as well, e.g. the Baron Rodolphe de Gortz in Verne's *Castle of the Carpathians*, who suffers from melancholia. For more on this novel, see John M. Picker, *Victorian Soundscapes* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 131–33; and Miller Frank, *The Mechanical Song*, 166–67.

> seemed not to notice me, and indeed there was something lifeless about her eyes, as though they lacked the power of sight; she seemed to be asleep with her eyes open. I had a rather uncanny feeling, and crept softly into the lecture-hall next door. Afterwards I learnt that the figure I had seen was [Professor] Spalanzani's daughter Olimpia, whom, strangely and reprehensibly, he keeps locked up, so that nobody at all is allowed near her. There must be something peculiar about her; perhaps she is feeble-minded, for example (96-97).

Given his previous account of his childhood trauma and, notably, his fears stemming from the Sandman legend, it is altogether unsurprising that Nathanael had an uncanny feeling upon seeing Olimpia's seemingly lifeless eyes. But Nathanael quickly dispelled with this feeling, and it is worth noting that he did so by diagnosing Olimpia as intellectually inferior.

Nathanael does not experience a form of the uncanny again until he interacts with Olimpia in person, after the recital that was described in the opening of this chapter:

> The concert was over; the ball began. "To dance with her—with *her*!"—that was now the goal of all Nathanael's wishes and desires; but how was he to find the courage to ask her, the queen of the ball, for a dance? And yet, he himself could not tell how it came about that when the dance had already begun he found himself standing close to Olimpia, who had not yet been asked for a dance, and, scarcely able to stammer out a few words, he seized her hand. Olimpia's hand was ice-cold: a shudder went through him like a hideous, deadly frost. He stared into Olimpia's eyes, which beamed at him full of love and yearning, and at that moment a pulse seemed to begin beating in her cold hand and her life's blood to flow in a glowing stream (109).

Although, in the above excerpt, Hoffmann did not specifically use the term *unheimlich*, Nathanael's dread-filled reaction to Olimpia's cold hand is another clear example of the uncanny. But, as he did when seeing her eyes, Nathanael rationalized away the feeling and, indeed, imagined life into Olimpia's figure. Already by this point, Nathanael no longer saw lifeless eyes but, rather, eyes that "beamed at him full of love and yearning." When, later, Nathanael moved to kiss Olimpia on the lips, again he was horrified to discover they, too, were ice-cold: "Just as he had done on touching Olimpia's cold hand, he felt himself gripped

by inward horror, and the legend of the dead bride suddenly flashed through his mind; but Olimpia was clasping him tightly, and his kiss seemed to bring warmth and life to her lips" (110). And, once again, he dismissed the uncanny as quickly as he felt it.

Nathanael's varied reactions to Olimpia tend to center on sensations of sight and touch. Yet when he talked with his university friend Siegmund, the latter noted some of Olimpia's other peculiar qualities, including her musical sensibilities:

> "It's odd, though…that many of us share the same opinion of Olimpia. We thought her…strangely stiff and lacking in animation. Her figure is regular, certainly, and so is her face. She would be beautiful, but that her eyes seem to have no ray of life; they almost seem to lack the power of sight. Her gait is curiously measured, as though her every movement were produced by some mechanism like clockwork. She plays and sings with the disagreeably perfect, soulless timing of a machine, and she dances similarly. Olimpia gave us a very weird [*unheimlich*] feeling; we wanted nothing to do with her; we felt that she was only pretending to be a living being, and that there was something very strange about her" (111).

Before this moment, and before the ball where Nathanael danced with her, Olimpia demonstrated her singing and piano-playing abilities in a recital; in other words, she made *sound*. In describing her singing voice as "clear" and "almost shrill…like a glass bell" (108), Nathanael idealized Olimpia's singing voice in transcendent, inhuman terms, and he remained mostly unconcerned that she spoke very little, if at all.[23] In contrast, Siegmund thought of Olimpia's mechanistic movements and "disagreeably perfect" performances as off-putting and uncanny. The feminized sonic descriptors—e.g. her shrill and bell-like vocal tones—characterized Olimpia in seemingly opposing ways depending on those who listened

[23] Olimpia only has a couple of catchphrases, including "Oh! Oh!" and "Good night, my dear friend!" While the narrator indicates that "Nathanael did have moments of lucidity and common sense," the protagonist was otherwise completely infatuated with Olimpia. Hoffmann, "The Sandman," 112–13.

to her, as both a feminine ideal and as a disagreeably perfect automaton. This tension was commensurate with the problem of describing women's voices in instrumentalized terms, as I outlined with operatic women in the first chapter; the negative result, based on Siegmund's testimony, was that women only pretended at being human. While Siegmund's concerns could be taken at face value, because Olimpia *was* an automaton, they also had consequences for actual human women, as I discuss later in the chapter.

Despite also being the subject of Freud's castration complex claims, in some contexts Nathanael seemed to endorse Jentsch's and Freud's feminization and dismissal of uncanny experiences. Other than in the letter he wrote Lothar at the beginning of the story, Nathanael did not admit any of the uncanny feelings he had to others. And despite having the same initial reaction to Olimpia's eyes, when Siegmund expressed concern about their lifelessness, Nathanael accused his friend of being "prosaic" for making such observations (111). He remained in denial about Olimpia's automaton status, which was why he never really questioned her mechanistic actions (as Siegmund and others did) nor how her phonographic voice worked.[24] He also remained unaware of his own increasingly uncanny, mechanistic behaviors, and his denial factored into his psychological downfall. When Coppola exposed Olimpia as an automaton, and Spalanzani threw her glass eyes at Nathanael, Nathanael could not reconcile Olimpia's lifelessness with all that he previously understood about her. He lost his "psychical freedom" and became an automaton: "Madness seized him with its red-hot claws and entered his heart, tearing his mind to pieces. 'Hey, hey, hey! Fiery circle, Fiery

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[24] Heather Hadlock mentions the inconsistent narrator common to Hoffmann's evocation of the *fantastique*. See Hadlock, *Mad Loves*, 18.

circle! Spin, spin, fiery circle! Come on! Spin, wooden dolly, hey, spin, pretty wooden dolly…' and with these words he flung himself on the Professor and clutched him by the throat" (114). The red-hot arms of madness only seized him one other time: when he heard Olimpia's bell-like singing voice. In that moment, he could not control shouting her name; similarly, his madness at seeing her destruction determined his words and actions. And with his brief, nonsensical phrases, he acquired Olimpia's uncanny, phonographic voice.

Nathanael's subsequent institutionalization only helped him temporarily, and in the final scene of "The Sandman" he died an automaton. When Clara commented on a moving "gray bush," Nathanael "reached *mechanically* into his side-pocket" and found "Coppola's spyglass"; looking through it, he saw Coppelius and, for the final time, fell into a frenzy (117, emphasis mine). He abbreviated his earlier chants at Spalanzani: crying "Spin, wooden dolly," he attempted to fling Clara over the tower's parapet, where they were standing. After cycling through two more phrases—"Fiery, circle, spin!" and "Beautiful eyes-a!"—Nathanael leapt to his death (117–18). While Freud's castration complex could apply to this scene, most of what Nathanael *said* corresponded to his earlier reaction to Olimpia. Even "Beautiful eyes-a!"—a phrase taken from Coppola—related to when Nathanael first bought the spyglass, so he could more effectively observe Olimpia through his window (105–106). Thus, via Olimpia, he both experienced the uncanny and became so, his feminizing journey encompassing both of Jentsch's categories.

The Professor's Uncanny Daughter

Seventy-five years later, in Ernest Howard Crosby's 1891 story "The Professor's Daughter," Sirena's phonographic voice provided a more explicit example of the sonic uncanny. Unlike Olimpia, whose voice was not technologically feasible in 1816, Sirena's voice could be, and was, explained in scientific terms, although—like other contemporary tales featuring the phonograph, such as Villiers de l'Isle-Adam's *Tomorrow's Eve* (1886) and Jules Verne's *Castle of the Carpathians* (1892/3)—Crosby's story exceeded the boundaries of what the phonograph could actually do, particularly in the realm of sound fidelity.[25] But this also meant that, as with Olimpia, the uncanny voice could easily straddle the line between human and machine. As Jentsch claimed, "The finer the mechanism and the truer to nature the formal reproduction, the more strongly will the [uncanny] special effect also make its appearance."[26] In the case of "The Professor's Daughter" and other speculative stories of the time, authors made the phonograph able to reproduce the voice with such fidelity that the result was indistinguishable from "real" (i.e. live) voices. And this meant that each author could explore some version of the same question: what happens when a man confuses a machine for a woman?[27]

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[25] John M. Picker and Felicia Miller Frank discuss *Castle of the Carpathians* in greater detail, as cited above (10n22). For a discussion of *Tomorrow's Eve*, see Miller Frank, *The Mechanical Song*, chap. 6. For more on the realities of sound fidelity regarding the phonograph, see Emily Thompson, "Machines, Music, and the Quest for Fidelity: Marketing the Edison Phonograph in America, 1877–1925," *The Musical Quarterly* 79, no. 1 (Spring 1995): 131–71.

[26] Jentsch, "On the Psychology of the Uncanny," 10.

[27] I could have made this sentence gender-neutral, but all the examples I've found concern men trying to find out if women are real. This question also relates to the gendered

"The Professor's Daughter"—the title of which resonates with Hoffmann, as Olimpia was Professor Spalanzani's "daughter"—is set in the present day, shortly after the 1889 Paris Exposition that prominently featured the phonograph. The protagonist, an American man and painter, was vacationing in the south of France to get away from the hubbub of Paris. While on a walk, he heard a woman's singing voice and immediately fell in love with the person presumably embodying it: "It was evidently a voice, but such a voice! That of a woman, too, unless indeed it proceeded from some supernatural being. It was a song, or something transcending song, and unlike anything I had ever imagined" (478). Even as he assumed the presence of a woman behind the voice, he also ascribed non-human qualities to the sound because of how strongly it affected him.[28]

Inquiring about this voice, he learned that a professor and his daughter had recently settled in the town, although no one had seen the daughter, and both mostly kept to themselves. The protagonist made several unsuccessful attempts to appeal to the professor, who remained overly protective of his daughter. While trying to get into the professor's good graces, the protagonist continually yearned to hear the daughter's voice: "The song I had heard was ever hovering near, but just beyond the reach of my memory. I could not recall it, but its effect was still upon me and I longed to enjoy it again" (478). His obsession with the

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problem of the original Turing test, as discussed in Miller Frank, *The Mechanical Song*, 160–61.

[28] The powerful qualities of the disembodied singing voice have been articulated elsewhere. As Carolyn Abbate has stated: "Disembodied voice…is a voice originating from an unseen locus of energy and thought, and it has distinct powers, especially as represented in opera and film." Abbate, *In Search of Opera*, 6.

voice grew until the moment where he envisioned the woman's face and struggled to capture it on canvas:

> One day as I was recovering from the delirium of the morning hour a sudden vision of the face of the daughter of the professor came into my mind and seemed to float before my eyes. Before it vanished I had grasped my brush and begun to paint under the inspiration. Thereafter my pleasure was double, alternating between the passive delight of receiving ever fresh revelations of musical beauty, and the invigorating effort to arrest in color, however faintly, the echo of what I had heard. My idol thus became a real person to me, and I was sure that I knew her form and expression. I felt then the necessity of giving her a name. "The daughter of the professor" would not do…. I thought of "Cecilia," but there was nothing of the Christian saint in the voice I had heard. At last I chose "Sirena," not that it suited exactly, but there was a kind of self-sufficient energy in her song that reminded me of the ancient tempters of Ulysses (480).

The effect of the painting process is doubly noteworthy: first, the protagonist engaged in a "capturing" of his own, to render the music he hears permanently to canvas. Despite the transcendent, ethereal nature of the mysterious voice, the painter attempted to create a physical, corporeal form that corresponded with what he heard. Second, he felt the need to personalize the sonic experience and give the voice a name. He was unsatisfied by the thought of naming her after the patron saint of musicians, and instead settled on an homage to the Greek temptresses, whose voices proved detrimental to their male sailor-listeners.

Overcome with desire and concerned about the daughter's potential entrapment, the protagonist eventually gave up on his attempts to sway the professor and decided to break into their home to find her himself. After much exploring, the protagonist discovered the voice, alas, was only a phonographic recording:

> In turning from the window my eyes fell again on the oaken box and I noticed a large opening in the side toward me, with the end of a trumpet protruding from it. I quickly raised the lid of the box and the truth at once flashed upon me. I had seen the phonograph at the Exposition and here was a similar instrument, only instead of

> the appliances for the ears the trumpet opening had been substituted. [...] For a long time I thought the matter over and came at length to the conclusion that the professor was engaged in some secret experiments for perfecting the phonograph so that it might produce sounds with their original or a greater volume; but this did not interest me. The fact of importance was that he had obtained the impressions of some marvellous voice, whether his daughter's or someone's else. And now I must find the woman, as my happiness in life depended on it (482).

This confusing of the live voice with the recorded one is not unique to this story and moreso reflected fantasies of the phonograph's capabilities rather than the realities of sonic fidelity. But although the phonograph was still a relatively novel machine circa 1891, the protagonist was unconcerned that it produced a *recording* of an actual voice or, as figures like Adorno have claimed, that he took issue with the female voice being separated from its source.[29] Particularly since seeing and hearing the phonograph operate at the Paris Exposition, he understood that there was still a (presumably beautiful) woman attached to the voice somewhere in space.

The professor, after discovering the trespasser, invokes a villain-esque monologue to describe how he has both developed an amplification system for the phonograph and learned to manipulate the tin foil to forge the perfect voice. And this is where the story builds to an uncanny climax:

> "Do you mean to say, professor," said I, "that this music of yours is nothing but the voice of your ladyfriend improved by you? I should like to know her, for she must sing superbly."
>
> "Aha! I thought people would say that and give some of the credit to the original singer; so now I only use my own voice."

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[29] Theodor W. Adorno, "The Curves of the Needle," trans. Thomas Y. Levin, *October* 55 (Winter 1990): 48–55. For more on the related idea of women's voices on talk radio, see Christine Ehrick, "'Savage Dissonance': Gender, Voice, and Women's Radio Speech in Argentina, 1930–1945," in *Sound in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*, ed. David Suisman and Susan Strasser (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010), 69–91.

> I was horror-struck at the thought.
>
> "But the voice I have heard surely sounds like a woman's," I ventured.
>
> "Yes, it is true, and that is the reason I call it my daughter, for it is my own daughter. My voice is rather high, and then I have altogether changed it with my instruments. Perhaps a woman's voice is the nearest to perfect tone, and that accounts for it; for my daughter's is perfect, or soon will be. I have no other [tinfoil] strips but my own with me here" (484).

In order to take sole credit for his work, the professor decided to manipulate his own falsetto voice into the perfect voice, with women's voices cited as sounding closest to the ideal. And the protagonist's realization that he fell for a male voice, because it sounded like a woman to him, resulted in an uncanny feeling stemming from his inability to reconcile the two. Endorsing the Jentschean conception of intellectual uncertainty, the protagonist was not at all concerned about the recorded voice until he realized that there was no beautiful woman behind it but, rather, an old man.

The horror of accidentally falling in love with a man's voice compromised the protagonist's heteronormative masculinity. Even after learning the mechanics behind Sirena's phonographic voice, he remained deeply affected by it. As he ran away from the house, the protagonist felt the full effect of the voice's Sirenic pull: "I rushed away, actually fearing to hear the sound again, but from the distance it was borne to my ears, the French national anthem [La Marseillaise], sung as never before, and I felt indeed, like Ulysses, bound to the mast" (485).[30] Although he did not react as strongly as Nathanael, the voice

[30] There is an interesting point to be made here about the beauty of the voice transcending the banality of the music it sings. In a contemporaneous example, *Trilby*, the narrator indicates that Svengali's self-professed genius at least partially rides on his ability to turn light musical fare into works of art. Svengali, in his head, could make "unheard heavenly melody of the cheapest, trivialest tunes—tunes of the café concert, tunes of the nursery, the shop-parlour, the guard-room, the schoolroom, the pothouse, the slum. There was nothing

nonetheless impacted his body. He further allowed its hold on him through his painting:

> I have altered it much since I showed it to the professor, and it is not yet quite finished, for I dread to give it the last touches and thus, as it were, bid it "farewell." I have thrown all the intensity of my passion into it. You can see the face there and the throat and mouth, but all vague, color rather than outline. But why should I endeavor vainly to put the picture into words, when you may see it if you wish at the next Salon? You will not appreciate it at first, but go back to it again and again, and at last I am sure that you will hear a wondrous strain of melody and you will understand why I have called it "Song Triumphant" and written under it, "Vox et præterea nihil [A voice and nothing more]" (486).

The protagonist's project is a series of contradictions. He cannot let go of the voice's effect on him, nor does he want to, but he also evades the task of accurately capturing the voice on canvas. He paints the figure of a woman, but with vague color rather than clear outline. Perhaps he knew if he used too much definition, he would accidentally reveal the voice's uncanny origins. The subtitle, "a voice and nothing more," like Plutarch's nightingale, is also ironic and contradictory.[31] In the protagonist's conception, Sirena comprised not just a voice but a *feminized* voice, of a beautiful, if vaguely defined, woman. And he perpetuated the voice's effect on him by retaining its Sirenic pull on viewers, although not as immediate or profound. He still wanted his audience to *experience* the sound of the voice, even through the bastardized medium of painting, since he stopped himself from filtering the voice's effect

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so humble, so base even, but what his magic could transform it into the rarest beauty without altering a note. This seems impossible, I know. But if it didn't, where would the magic come in?" With Trilby as La Svengali, he could demonstrate this form of musical genius to the world. George du Maurier, *Trilby* (London: Osgood, McIlvaine & Co., 1894), 89–90.

[31] "A man plucked a nightingale and finding almost no meat, said, 'It's all voice ye are, and nought else.'" Plutarch, "Sayings of Spartans," in *Moralia*, vol. 3, trans. Frank Cole Babbitt (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1961), 399.

further through description. He failed to temper the voice as merely "a voice and nothing more," because he could not lessen its hold on him.

The protagonist remained deeply affected by Sirena's voice, yet its uncanniness ultimately exposed the voice as non-ideal. While Freud and Jentsch both delegitimized the uncanny—the former rendering it a primitive feeling and the latter as mere fantasy—in the above stories the men's uncanny feelings toward Olimpia and Sirena were quite legitimate, given that both were machines. Both "The Sandman" and "The Professor's Daughter" speculated the ability to forge an idealized female form and voice while also bypassing the human body. But these experiments ultimately failed in key ways, with the uncanny helping to expose them as such. When Olimpia's and Sirena's mechanisms were exposed, they also exposed their creators—Spalanzani and Coppola; and the Professor, respectively—in the process. Rather than showcasing an idealized femininity, they revealed the inability to successfully undertake such a project.

Hoffmann and Crosby, through their protagonists, highlighted what happened to men when they confused the uncanny, mechanized voice for a woman, but there were also negative repercussions for the human women subjected to men's idealizations of them. In the penultimate scene of "The Sandman," after Coppola removes Olimpia's eyes and steals her from Spalanzani, the doll is exposed as such and Spalanzani flees for the "fraud" of passing off Olimpia as human. The rest of the (male) university community deals with the aftermath:

> Legal scholars described it as a subtle fraud which deserved a condign punishment inasmuch as it had been practiced upon the public, and so adroitly conducted that nobody (except for the sharpest students) had observed it, although everyone was

> now trying to display sagacity by referring to all kinds of suspicious-looking details.... But many esteemed gentlemen were not so easily reassured: the story of the automaton had made a deep impression on their minds, and a detestable distrust of human figures became prevalent. In order to make quite sure that they were not in love with wooden dolls, several lovers demanded that their beloved should fail to keep time in singing and dancing, and that, when being read aloud to, she should sew, knit, or play with her pug-dog; above all, the beloved was required not merely to listen, but also, from time to time, to speak in a manner that revealed genuine thought and feeling (115).

Rather than embrace the ideal woman as silently acquiescing, the new ideal was to force her to perform *genuine* imperfection, to do something that the automaton-woman could not do. By demanding their (female) lovers to act human as they envisioned female humanness to be, they still neglected the possibility for women to act in ways they chose, to be human in multiple and inconsistent ways. Indeed, if women did not perform the new ideal correctly, relationships "quietly dissolved" (115).

But this shift in the status quo—which allowed for imperfections—also carved a space for women to succeed against attempts to dehumanize them. In the case of Clara, Nathanael's fiancée in "The Sandman," she resisted Nathanael in ways Olimpia did not. After Nathanael accidentally addresses Lothar's letter to her (in which he divulges his traumatic past), Clara responds to him sensitively but also with the intent to present his fantasies as such, in order to drive him out of his downward spiral. Nathanael does not respond to her but, instead, writes again to her brother, Lothar:

> I am very annoyed that Clara should have opened and read my recent letter to you, although admittedly the mistake was due to my own absent-mindedness. She has written me a most profound philosophical letter in which she demonstrates at great length that Coppelius and Coppola exist only in my mind and are phantoms emanating from myself which will crumble to dust the moment I acknowledge them as such. Really, who would have thought that the spirit which shines from such clear, gracious, smiling, child-like eyes, like a sweet and lovely dream, could draw such

> intellectual distinctions, worthy of a university graduate? She appeals to your opinion. You and she have talked about me. I suppose you have given her lectures on logic to teach her how to sift and search all problems with due subtlety. Well, stop it at once! (96)

Nathanael infantilized Clara and credited Lothar with her intellectual insights. And whether meant as a joke or not, his final exclamation tapped into a concern about women speaking too much. This letter preceded his calling Clara an automaton and his multiple encounters with Olimpia, as I outlined above. But after surviving near-murder at the hands of Nathanael, the narrator reports, Clara's achievement of domestic bliss several years later: "Clara was seen sitting hand in hand with an affectionate husband outside the door of a handsome country dwelling, with two merry boys playing in front of her" (118). In early nineteenth century conceptions of happy endings for women, Clara got to live with a man who loved and appreciated her more than Nathanael did.[32]

Clara's struggles with Nathanael foregrounded the problem of women who resisted. Unlike Olimpia, who said nothing disagreeable, Clara had opinions, read letters addressed to others, was seen as both loving and cold, and had a flawed beauty—in short, she was utterly human. But because she did not validate Nathanael when he wanted her to, he accused her of being a "lifeless automaton" (103). The phonograph, both physically and metaphorically,

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[32] One could also read this as a gendered twist on the tragic trope of the Fallen Woman; Nathanael is not appropriately masculine enough to be a good husband or father, and as such he dies. This also fits with Darwinian ideas of sexual selection, which were supported by some nineteenth century feminists. See Angelique Richardson, *Love and Eugenics in the Late Nineteenth Century: Rational Reproduction and the New Woman* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 9–13.

was also caught up in this problem.[33] As I address in the next section, *speaking* women, like Clara, were treated with ambivalence rather than as an ideal; in Jentschean terms, they were treated as suspect because of their purported mechanized voices.

The Phonographic Voice as Metaphor in *Dracula*

Using Bram Stoker's 1897 novel *Dracula* as a case study, I show how the metaphorical phonographic voice manifested in the late nineteenth century through Mina Harker's acquisition of the *vampiric voice*. Mina, who was otherwise heard and respected by her male colleagues, lost vocal and bodily agency as the last of Dracula's victims. The vampire, which had a machinic, automaton body, manufactured new vampires by infecting the bloodstream. I outline the vampiric voice's alignment with the novel's female vampiric characters and relate it to the phonograph's narrative function, which preceded and helped define Mina's vampiric voice. When Mina first interacted with the phonograph, her hearing of the recorded voice as attached to a soul informed her later vampiric connection with Dracula. The vampiric voice restricted her vocal agency but also allowed her remote access to Dracula's

[33] George E. Lewis is perhaps the key figure of this discourse, and he has given multiple talks relating slavery, automata, and the resistances of improvising computers; for instance, Lewis, "Why Do We Want Our Machines to Improvise?" (keynote lecture, Tufts University, Medford, MA, April 4, 2014). Resisting technologies have factored into fiction, as well. Ambrose Bierce's "Moxon's Master" concerns a chess-playing automaton that kills its owner after losing a chess match; in E. R. Punshon's "The Avenging Phonograph" (1907), the phonograph's owner ascribes power to it because of a recorded confession he made on its cylinder. Ambrose Bierce, "Moxon's Master," in *Can Such Things Be* (New York: Jonathan Cape and Harrison Smith, 1909), 62–77; and E. R. Punshon, "The Avenging Phonograph," in *The Ash-Tree Press Annual Macabre* (Ashcroft, B.C.: Ash-Tree Press, 2000), 49–57.

ears. Since she was the only one who could hear what he heard, her "replaying" of the sounds to the others turned her, momentarily, into a phonographic tool. In this manner, resistance became an option, and, as I show, Mina particularly took advantage of it.

In a sense, the uncanny figured in Gothic literature more broadly, of which *Dracula* and "The Sandman" were part, in that it combined both romance and horror themes. True to the genre, the uncanny is a key characteristic of Stoker's vampire, who is a foreign, sentient automaton of mystical origins rather than mechanical construction.[34] Stoker's vampire was not uniquely non-normative; as Heide Crawford has written, the vampire was a mystical being with roots in Eastern Europe since at least the eighteenth century.[35] While *Dracula* was far from the first portrayal of the vampire, Stoker's version is undoubtedly the most popular and widely discussed. As such, *Dracula* is a particularly rich resource for analyzing the uncanny vampire. Ken Gelder, for instance, addresses Dracula's connection to deviance along both racial and sexual lines, detailing Stoker's use of anti-Semitic tropes to describe Dracula and accounting for the titular vampire's homoerotic tendencies.[36] Scholars of

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[34] John M. Picker also describes Dracula as uncanny, although he does not expand on his use of the term. Picker, *Victorian Soundscapes*, 126. Jill Galvan also cites Dracula as a "greater facility" with "automatism," which she defines as a "state of unconsciousness" that is associated with women. Galvan, *The Sympathetic Medium: Feminine Channeling, the Occult and Communication Technologies, 1859–1919* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2010), 12–17, 78.

[35] See Heide Crawford, *The Origins of the Literary Vampire* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2016). For more on the uncanny in the eighteenth century, see Terry Castle, *The Female Thermometer: Eighteenth-Century Culture and the Invention of the Uncanny* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995).

[36] For more on the vampire as a figure of anti-Semitism, see Ken Gelder, *Reading the Vampire* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 13–17. For Gelder's analysis of Dracula's (and other vampires') deviant sexuality, see ibid., 65–85.

Dracula, though, have given virtually no attention to the vampiric voice, which is the primary focus of my analysis.

Dracula, the titular vampiric figure, was powered by the night and moon; during key daylight hours, he was immobile and unconscious, and without the human freedom to move about if he chose. He was also adaptive, reliant on trial and error: as Professor Van Helsing remarked about Dracula, "[i]n some faculties of mind he has been, and is, only a child; but he is growing, and some things that were childish at the first are now of man's stature."[37] And while he could appear human, his uncanny, undead status revealed itself in subtle ways. Jonathan Harker, whose diary provided the start of the narrative, recalled his first encounter with Dracula: "The instant, however, that I had stepped over the threshold, he moved impulsively forward, and holding out his hand grasped mine with a strength which made me wince, an effect which was not lessened by the fact that it seemed as cold as ice—more like the hand of a dead than a living man" (17).[38] Like Nathanael's first encounter with Olimpia, Jonathan's uncanny reaction to Dracula stemmed from touching his ice-cold hand, a tactile experience more akin to interacting with the dead rather than the living.

Through both the uncanny and its almost-exclusive association with female vampires, the vampiric voice was an explicitly feminized one.[39] And although the vampiric voice

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[37] Bram Stoker, *Dracula* (New York: Modern Library, 1897), 333–34. Future citations are placed in text.

[38] The ice-cold hands were also a part of vampiric lore; Hoffmann himself references them in his vampire story, "Vampirismus." For more on this story, see Crawford, *The Origins of the Literary Vampire*, 80–86.

[39] As Jennifer Wicke has additionally claimed, the vampire is linked to the feminine through mass culture; "Dracula consumes but thereby turns his victims into consumers." Wicke, "Vampiric Typewriting: *Dracula* and Its Media," *ELH* 59, no. 2 (1992): 479. The

impacted both women and men, along heteronormative lines the latter group tended to feel more captivated hearing it. Jonathan Harker was the first person in the novel who heard and recorded his experience of the vampiric voice. Like the other phonographic voices mentioned in this chapter, he described it in supernatural, Sirenic terms, and was rendered vulnerable in a similar manner. Jonathan, who met with Dracula at the latter's estate in Transylvania, helped arrange the vampire's purchase of an old castle in England. When Jonathan realized Dracula imprisoned him within the estate, he searched for potential escape routes. In doing so, he encountered three mysterious women in the castle:

> There was something about them that made me uneasy, some longing and at the same time some deadly fear. I felt in my heart a wicked, burning desire that they would kiss me with those red lips. It is not good to note this down; lest some day it should meet Mina's eyes and cause her pain; but it is the truth. They whispered together, and then they all three laughed—such a silvery, musical laugh, but as hard as though the sound never could have come through the softness of human lips. It was like the intolerable, tingling sweetness of water-glasses when played on by a cunning hand. The fair girl shook her head coquettishly, and the other two urged her on (41).

Leading with an uncanny reaction to the women—he felt uneasy even as he desired them—the vampiric voice cemented Jonathan's ultimate captivation by the vampires. Like Olimpia's "glass bell"-like voice to Nathanael, Jonathan described the vampiric women's laughter in inorganic terms, and he specifically articulated the sound as unable to come from human

notion of mass culture as feminine, of course, derives from Andreas Huyssen's influential work on the subject. See Huyssen, "Mass Culture as Woman: Modernism's Other," in *After the Great Divide: Modernism, Mass Culture, Postmodernism* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1986), 44–62.

lips.[40] And with their vocal lure, he was rendered completely vulnerable; the only thing that kept him from being bitten was Dracula's last-minute interference.

Although the majority of the novel is taken up with two of Dracula's female victims, Lucy Westenra and Mina Harker née Murray (who married Jonathan in the course of the novel), Jonathan's case demonstrated how Dracula, and the uncanny vampire figure more broadly, threatened normative masculinity. Given the increasingly weird things he saw and heard combined with the fact that he was being held prisoner in Dracula's castle, by the time Jonathan escaped the castle he immediately became ill with a brain fever. Even when Mina was with him, Jonathan refused to discuss what may or may not have happened to him until Mina confirmed that everything he had written of his Transylvanian experience was true. Recording in his diary for the first time since he escaped Dracula's clutches, he reflected upon this newfound knowledge: "[Mina] showed me in the doctor's letter that all I wrote down was true. It seems to have made a new man of me. It was the doubt as to the reality of the whole thing that knocked me over. I felt impotent, and in the dark, and distrustful. But, now that I *know*, I am not afraid, even of the Count" (205–206, emphasis in text). The uncanny figure of Dracula made Jonathan feel impotent; validation and reconciliation of his experience restored his feeling like a man.

Stoker, via *Dracula*, reinforced aspects of the phonographic voice from "The Sandman" and "The Professor's Daughter," as described above, but ultimately provided important complications of those tales. In particular, thinking women were both heard and

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[40] At one point, Jonathan describes Dracula's voice as a "harsh, metallic whisper." Stoker, *Dracula*, 50.

respected. As an epistolary novel, in which the entire narrative is constructed from a series of documents, *Dracula* is comprised almost exclusively of character testimony, primarily through the keeping of letters and diaries. Through their writings, these characters' innermost thoughts were presumed to be unmediated and authentic to their voices, and Stoker, in his Prefatory Note, vouched for the accuracy of their testimonies: "There is throughout no statement of past things wherein memory may err, for all the records chosen are exactly contemporary, given from the standpoints and within the range of knowledge of those who made them" (vi). Lucy and Mina each wrote documents that were significant to the narrative, and characters themselves explained their seemingly impossible gifts of memory. For instance, Mina prefaced a conversation she has with Van Helsing: "I used to think I would like to practice interviewing; Jonathan's friend on 'The Exeter News' told him that memory was everything in such work—that you must be able to put down exactly almost every word spoken, even if you had to refine some of it afterwards. Here was a rare interview; I shall try to record it *verbatim*" (199). In short, the validity and authenticity of the story's multiple narrative voices were accepted and defended, including Lucy's and Mina's.

At the same time, narrative voices themselves became compromised through various factors; for Lucy and Mina, this happened when Dracula attacked them and infected their blood with his vampirism. Lucy, as Dracula's first victim upon his arrival in England, temporarily operated in a liminal space between human and vampire as she struggled to survive his multiple attacks on her. As such, she experienced both sides of the vampiric voice, first as a human victim captivated by Dracula and, later, as a Sirenic vampire whose phonographic voice lured others. The first experience emerged as she recounted a dream to

her childhood friend, Mina, who wrote it all down:

> Then I had a vague memory of something long and dark with red eyes, just as we saw in the sunset, and something very sweet and very bitter all around me at once; and then I seemed sinking into deep green water, and there was a singing in my ears, as I have heard there is to drowning men; and then everything seemed passing away from me; my soul seemed to go out from my body and float about the air (108).

Although she did not specify a gendered quality to the mysterious voice (implicitly, readers understand Dracula as the source), Lucy very clearly described the lure of a Siren. And when she fully became a vampire, she in turn acquired all the Sirenic qualities of the vampiric voice. After her transformation, Dr. John Seward described Lucy's vocal hold over everyone in her vicinity, but especially her fiancé, Arthur: "There was something diabolically sweet in her tones—something of the tingling of glass when struck—which rang through the brains even of us who heard the words addressed to another. As for Arthur, he seemed under a spell; moving his hands from his face, he opened wide his arms" (232). Lucy's vampiric voice captivated with inorganic timbres previously heard via Olimpia and Sirena. Even before Lucy fully acquired the vampiric voice, Mina indicated a timbral change; when Lucy laughed after telling her dream, Mina described the sound as "uncanny" (109), echoing Jonathan's description of the women vampires in Dracula's Transylvanian estate.

For Mina specifically, as the brains of the campaign to take down Dracula, the second victim of Dracula's (after Lucy) and the only one to survive, her vocal transformation was especially noticeable and transparent. Dr. Seward, talking with Van Helsing after Dracula's attack on Mina, expressed concern about how Mina's affliction was affecting her ability to speak freely and honestly:

> I see only immediate difficulty, I know it by instinct rather than reason: we shall all have to speak frankly; and yet I fear that in some mysterious way poor Mrs. Harker's tongue is tied. I *know* that she forms conclusions of her own, and from all that has been I can guess how brilliant and how true they must be; but she will not, or cannot, give them utterance.... One thing I know: that if my instinct be true regarding poor Mrs. Harker's silences, then there is a terrible difficulty—an unknown danger—in the work before us. The same power that compels her silence may compel her speech (356).

Unlike Nathanael with Clara, Seward distrusted Mina's voice because he could not reconcile her *silences* with how helpful she had been, before Dracula's attack on her, in discussing the vampire's whereabouts. Her tongue was tied, but not by her own doing, which called into question her level of control over everything she said and did. And while Seward expressed these concerns as a matter of instinct rather than reason, a visual marker accompanied Mina's acquisition of the vampiric voice. Van Helsing, when placing a communion wafer on her forehead as means of protection, instead burned the cross onto her skin. The cross remained until Dracula was killed.

Yet Mina's active role throughout the narrative ensured that her victimization did not condemn her to mere passivity or a lack of agency. While others articulated her ambiguous femininity along stereotypical gender lines, they also did not diminish her importance.[41] Although she was not quite a "New Woman"—she made light of this characterization at one point (98)—she was nonetheless described by Van Helsing as having

[41] Mina's characterization, in some ways, is akin to Jennifer Fleeger's conception of the mismatched woman. However, Fleeger posits that mismatched women "could establish no 'natural' lineage" through motherhood; Mina, instead, gets to live and be a mother at the end of *Dracula*. Fleeger, *Mismatched Women: The Siren's Song through the Machine* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 39.

a "man's brain [...] and a woman's heart" (258).[42] She was not just a secretary but also a planner, and it was through her deductions that the team could find Dracula. This masculinized femininity, usually articulated through her intelligence and spirit, also placed her as a foil to Dracula's feminized masculinity, expressed by Van Helsing as having only a "child-brain" in some capacities (334). As a further endorsement of her femininity, though, Mina was also praised for her mothering qualities. In one notable example of this, Mina recounted Arthur's grief at Lucy's death:

> I could hear the tears in his voice. Mr. Morris, with instinctive delicacy, just laid a hand for a moment on his shoulder, and then walked quietly out of the room. I suppose there is something in woman's nature that makes a man free to break down before her and express his feelings on the tender or emotional side without feeling it derogatory to his manhood; for when Lord [Arthur] Godalming found himself alone with me he sat down on the sofa and gave way utterly and openly (252).

Mina was akin to a therapist, but she described it as having a natural mother's instinct, passively listening without accompanying analysis or interpretation. In short, her significance stemmed from her ability to operate in multiple spaces, straddling the gender line as it was fixed in the novel.

The phonograph's presence and function in the narrative affirmed its link with the vampiric voice. It pervaded throughout the novel, namely through Seward's recorded testimony, but remained mostly invisible since Seward was already accustomed to the new technology. Indeed, he only discussed the process of record-keeping when it annoyed him: when he was forced to keep a handwritten journal toward the end of the novel, he

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[42] The New Woman, attributed to Sarah Grand's 1894 essay, "The New Aspect of the Woman Question," was a contemporary term for Bram Stoker.

complained that it felt "irksome" (371). But when Mina saw his phonograph for the first time, she immediately took note: "At the door I paused a moment, for I thought I heard him talking with some one.... To my intense surprise, there was no one with him. He was quite alone, and on the table opposite him was what I knew at once from the description to be a phonograph. I had never seen one, and was much interested" (241–42). As a record-keeping tool, she marveled at its possibilities and proclaimed it better than shorthand. But only when she asked to see it in action did Seward realize the phonograph's limitations. Aware of the amount of sensitive information on his cylinders, he nonetheless could not isolate any one moment on a given cylinder. Mina then became the playback mechanism: she transcribed all of his cylinders on her typewriter, so his testimony could be made more accessible.

While the act of record-keeping itself was a phonographic process, as John M. Picker has indicated, Mina emphasized the unique sonic abilities of the phonograph, namely that the so-called unfiltered voice could carry more emotional power than when filtered through the medium of writing.[43] As Seward's testimony had revealed earlier in the novel, he was in love with Lucy but ultimately rejected in favor of Arthur. Seward also detailed the trials of helping Lucy recover from the multiple vampire attacks, as well as his personal mourning of her death. Mina heard all of this in his words, with his voice, and commented on the experience: "That is a wonderful machine, but it is cruelly true. It told me, in its very tones,

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[43] John M. Picker has discussed the role of phonography in *Dracula*, including Jonathan Harker's process of shorthand *as* phonography (which Mina also employs). Picker also indicates Mina becoming a phonographic tool later in the novel; however, he does not accord as much attention to timbre, nor does he discuss any previous iterations of the vampiric voice beyond a brief mention of Dracula. See Picker, *Victorian Soundscapes*, 130–37.

the anguish of your heart. It was like a soul crying out to Almighty God. No one must hear them spoken ever again! See, I have tried to be useful. I have copied out the words on my typewriter, and none other need now hear your heart beat, as I did" (244). From this, she revealed both that the voice connected immediately to a person's soul, and, from a metanarrative perspective, that the entire novel only existed because Mina typeset every person's written testimonies. Her need to mitigate the immediate effects of the voice mirrored the "The Professor's Daughter" protagonist, who needed to temper Sirena's captivating voice through painting.

The latent power of the phonographic voice, able to connect with a soul, informed Mina's later role as a metaphorical phonograph when she acquired vampiric powers. Because she had little control over what she could communicate about Dracula, Mina requested that Van Helsing employ his mesmeric skills on her. This phenomenon related to the trope of likening women to instruments more generally. As Heather Hadlock has illuminated, contextualizing another Hoffmann tale, "Councilor Krespel": "In addition to using sound to act upon women's bodies, the mesmerist or magnetizer also claimed the ability to conjure up sounds from them, a dramatic process that lent itself irresistibly to the theatrical stage as well as to the clinic and the medical lecture hall. The magnetized body was not only presented as an object that music could manipulate; it was also imagined as a channel through which mysterious and magical sounds could be directed."[44] Antonia, of "Councilor Krespel," was mysteriously yet clearly connected to each violin her father made; each time her father played

[44] Hadlock, *Mad Loves*, 57.

one, she exclaimed, "Why, that's me!"[45] In an operatic context, like *Tales of Hoffmann*, orchestral instruments could "speak" for the women on stage.[46]

The primary distinction with Mina, though, was that she engaged the phonographic process more specifically. Because of her unique vampiric connection with Dracula, due to the infection in her blood, she had a direct link to Dracula that no one else in her party could experience. Through mesmerism, Mina's role was akin to a medium, but she never communicated directly with Dracula. Instead, Mina heard and produced a record of Dracula's personal *soundscape*, relaying the information so her comrades could hear.[47] While she technically had access to Dracula's other senses, because he was usually inert in his coffin she could never see anything. Her most significant reporting, then, came from her access to the Count's ears:

> [Van Helsing:] "Where are you now?" The answer came dreamily, but with intention; it were as though she were interpreting something. I [Jonathan] have heard her use the same tone when reading her shorthand notes.
>
> [Mina:] "I do not know. It is all strange to me!"
>
> "What do you see?"
>
> "I can see nothing; it is all dark."
>
> "What do you hear?" I could detect the strain in the Professor's patient voice.
>
> "The lapping of water. It is gurgling by, and little waves leap. I can hear them on the outside."
>
> "Then you are on a ship?" We all looked at each other, trying to glean something each from the other. We were afraid to think. The answer came quick:—
>
> "Oh, yes!"
>
> "What else do you hear?"

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[45] Quoted in ibid., 44.

[46] See Hadlock, *Mad Loves*, 60–64.

[47] Jennifer Fleeger, in discussing Trilby, also likens the singer to a phonograph. However, due to the ways in which Trilby's voice is manipulated (Svengali hypnotizes her so he can train her voice to singing perfection), I argue this represents the more general woman-as-instrument rather than suggesting a specifically phonographic process. See Fleeger, *Mismatched Women*, chap. 1.

> "The sound of men stamping overhead as they run about. There is the creaking of a chain, and the loud tinkle as the check of the capstan falls into the rachet."
>
> "What are you doing?"
>
> "I'm still—oh, so still. It is like death!" The voice faded away into a deep breath as of one sleeping, and the open eyes closed again (345).

Mina's phonographic voice was not merely passive: from the outset, Jonathan Harker—in whose diary this exchange was written—noticed that Mina was discerning in her relaying of information. She was an active listener, interpreting what she alone could hear in order to accurately convey her sonic experience to the others. At the same time, Mina could not maintain this channel for long and faltered easily. Van Helsing had to ask multiple direct questions in order to retrieve relevant information. And after a short while, the full effects of the vampiric voice took over and Mina was impelled to silence.

Although Mina's characterization is more progressive, her tale, like Clara's, is an ambivalent one. The vampiric voice impeded her own, but it also forced her into a position she deeply understood, as her decision to become a phonographic tool echoed the secretarial transcription work she had already completed.[48] The epilogue of *Dracula* further reinforced the tension between Mina's stereotypically masculine and feminine traits. Sitting with her and Jonathan's newborn son, Mina achieved the Victorian feminine apex of motherhood. But Van Helsing also commented on her heroism, noting that her son "will some day know

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[48] Henry Horwood, in a 1909 essay, directly linked the secretary to the phonograph: "His brain is a plastic facsimile of his chief's; indeed, like a piece of wax that has been molded to another form, it is so shaped as to think exactly as the chief thinks…he is, in other words, a sort of mental phonograph that never plays its own tune, that never originates but copies perfectly, that furnishes the chief with another extra brain." Quoted in Galvan, *The Sympathetic Medium*, 28n14.

what a brave and gallant woman his mother is" (418), even if no one outside the vampire-hunting team believed the story. As Jill Galvan writes, Van Helsing's statements

> [seem] not to make us choose between reading Mina either as a lady defended by a legion of knights or as a knight herself, but rather to reinforce the taxonomical challenge of her character: her chimerical combination…of a "man's brain" with a "woman's heart." To the extent that Jonathan does mean to offer the narrative documents as "proofs," perhaps, then, the "wild story" they force the reader to consider is the story of not just the vampire, but along with him another supposed freak of nature, Mina's "man's brain." After all, it is this brain that has been principally responsible for devising the narrative itself—a narrative, moreover, that recounts her large part in finally tracking down and defeating the one male who ever managed to control her mind.[49]

The improbability of *Dracula*'s plot derived just as much from Mina's active role in it as the existence of vampires. And Mina's "freak of nature" femininity explained both why Dracula failed to control her and why others, like Lucy, could never succeed in the same way. The ambivalence of Mina's success was that she was the exception, not the rule. And her ability to speak with the phonographic voice, and use it to her benefit, meant that, unlike with other women, men listened to her.

Conclusion

This chapter demonstrated that the mechanized voice and machinic body perpetuated in later nineteenth century fiction featuring the phonograph. Through Ernst Jentsch's definition of the uncanny, the phonographic voice both was a non-normative voice and marked others as such. More specifically, the uncanny, as a gendered term, tied non-normativity to feminization. In "The Sandman," Olimpia was feminized not only because of

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[49] Galvan, *The Sympathetic Medium*, 84–85.

her appearance but also through her explicitly mechanical body and voice. Moreover, she impacted Nathanael's voice and movements, turning him more and more into an automaton until his death. "The Professor's Daughter," too, revealed the literal phonographic voice and its uncanny impact on others. Sirena's voice, deceptively perfect because of its manipulated timbre, induced anxiety in the protagonist because its origins raised questions about his sexuality. Finally, the vampire figure in *Dracula* metaphorically represented a sentient automaton with a phonographic voice. Although the vampires in the novel tended to be women (with Dracula as an obvious exception), the vampiric voice rendered men vulnerable to its power.

As I indicated with Clara in "The Sandman" and Mina in *Dracula*, however, the phonographic voice did not merely create passive victims. If one of the main fears of the phonograph was the machine's ability to assert vocal agency and control over others, those ascribed phonographic voices could reclaim that same power, even if in a more limited manner. The phonographic voice, like the music box voice, exposed non-normativity, but its portrayal was not solely negative. This more ambivalent stance regarding the power and promise of mechanical technologies, such as the music box and phonograph, carried over into the twentieth century and into new media formats, particularly sound film. The music box especially, similar to Effie's yearning for Luigi through her hearing of "Hear Me, Norma" (from the first chapter) or Agee Sang Long's search for spiritual guidance through "The Beautiful Blue Danube" or "Comin' Thro' the Rye" (from the second chapter), offered the promise of wish fulfillment while raising questions as to its ability to do so. Films featuring

the music box, as I discuss in the next chapter, maintained this tension, giving sound to the inner voices of women and other marginalized individuals.

CHAPTER FOUR

Memory and Erasure: The Re-Codification of the Music Box Trope in Film

When I first conceived of this dissertation project, I began by thinking about the music box as a cultural trope in films. *TVTropes.org* was instructive as a starting point, as it is a crowdsourced Wiki page devoted to tropes and trends that people detect in several forms of popular media, including film. For the music box, there are two entries, one pertaining to romanticized nostalgia and the other to the "Ominous Music Box," which points to the music box as unsettling, even uncanny. In both cases, the opening/playing of the music box releases something—emotions, knowledge, spirits—that directly impacts the listener. For instance, in the animated film *Anastasia* (1997), set in an alternate reality where the youngest Romanov daughter survived the 1917 February Revolution, a music box restores the amnesiac Anastasia's memories. As a gift from her grandmother, who fled to Paris, the music box represented not only their relationship but all of Anastasia's memories prior to the Revolution and her subsequent head injury. In *Silence of the Lambs* (1991), which won five Academy Awards including Best Picture, Clarice Starling (Jodie Foster) opens a murder victim's music box and finds hidden photographs inside; while it still plays, Starling finds more evidence that leads to a breakthrough in the investigation. These contemporary examples, just two of many, show the music box as not only a depository of memories but also having the power to bestow knowledge to those who seek it.

Where did this idea of the music box begin? At what point did listeners assume the machine's agency and power to store and reveal lost memories? In the course of my research, I traced these trends back to the beginnings of the music box industry, when Leigh Hunt

wrote, in 1816, that the music box seemed to house a sprite and that "there must be in [the music box] some humanity."[1] If there were indeed a sprite within or the music box had humanity, as Hunt poetically suggested, then perhaps the music box had agency. This rhetoric continued in narratives surrounding the music box, perpetuating ideas surrounding automation more broadly, from earlier clockwork automata to the industrialized labor force. Later nineteenth century poetic accounts touted the music box as helping them recall the past, further ascribing it power.

But I also uncovered a richer and more complex history of the music box, one that, perhaps, was given its own humanity but also became complicit in the denial of others'. I discovered a trend whereby reviewers invoked the music box mechanism and sound as metaphors to critique women's singing voices. And more perniciously, I found that rhetoric surrounding the music box linked to a broader racialized discourse condemning certain marginalized groups as more machine-like and thus less human than others. These tropes were not exclusive to the music box, and when the phonograph emerged in popular culture writers incorporated them in their discussions of the latest technology. Yet by the time the music box reappeared in film, several years after its decline as a commodity, many of these more problematic racialized and gendered associations were largely forgotten. While otherness still played a role in how the music box factored into film plots, this association became more obscured. Instead, films capitalized on the music box as a romantic and

[1] Leigh Hunt, "On Hearing a Little Musical Box," Poets Corner, *Maryland Gazette and Political Intelligencer*, August 1, 1816.

fantastical machine, rather than a racialized one, and promoted it as having agency and power.

In this chapter, I explore how the sonic tropes discussed in previous chapters were re-codified in early twentieth century films featuring the music box. I argue that while the music box was still associated with those marked as other, it was also re-framed as a transcendent vessel with no direct associations to its techno-historical development. As such, the power characters ascribed to the music box, which usually involved some form of wish fulfillment, became re-contextualized within more normative structures. Instead of emanating from within the music box's machinery, which had longstanding associations with mechanization writ large, the music box's power originated in something otherworldly and/or patriarchal. I start this chapter by outlining the decline of the music box in the silent film era, a period which marked a transitional moment between earlier nineteenth century accounts of the music box and later filmic representations. I then focus on four mainstream films of the early 1940s—*The Shop Around the Corner* (1940); *Kathleen* (1941); *Since You Went Away* (1944); and *Going My Way* (1944)—that demonstrate how the music box trope re-emerged in sound cinema. Through an analysis of the tunes they play, the characters they are associated with, and their narrative functions, I show how these components helped to re-codify the music box trope in film as still linked to otherness but privileging the machine's affective power. I end the chapter by considering the ramifications of the forgotten history of the music box for popular media today.

The Music Box in Decline

As the phonograph grew in popularity at the turn of the twentieth century, the US music box industry declined and then ceased by 1920. Coinciding with this, contemporary writers described the music box, in both its machinery and sound, as distinctly outmoded. In their view, the music box sound was an unwelcome view of the past, which, tellingly, was still linked to both gendered and racialized otherness. This decline laid the groundwork for how the music box trope re-emerged in film, in that the demise of the music box industry informed the music box's later status as fantastical and otherworldly rather than a commodity. With an unknown or mysterious past, the music box in film became imbued with the power to make dreams come true or bring separated individuals back together.

As multiple music box scholars have indicated, the overwhelming popularity of the phonograph by the first decades of the twentieth century was a major factor in the decline of the music box industry. For instance, Helen and John Hoke, in their 1957 book *Music Boxes: Their Lore and Lure*, mentioned that the phonograph had initially been a novelty instrument; but with improved fidelity, the phonograph ultimately became the preferred instrument while the music box became the novelty.[2] One obvious problem was that the music box could not escape its own distinctive timbre, whereas the phonograph could reproduce any sound it recorded. While speculative literature imagined the phonograph as a faithful replicator of the human voice at the end of the nineteenth century, the realities were much less ideal. But with continued improvements—as well as companies like RCA

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[2] See Helen Hoke and John Hoke, *Music Boxes: Their Lore and Lure* (New York: Hawthorn Books, 1957), 81.

Victor signing Enrico Caruso and other famous singers to exclusive recording contracts—the phonograph appealed more and more to home listeners.

The music box industry, to its credit, did try to adjust to the changing times. The Regina Music Box Company, the primary US producer of disc music boxes, changed their name to The Regina Company and began making their own version of the phonograph—combined with a music box—that they dubbed the Reginaphone. Based on two *Ladies' Home Journal* advertisements, Regina made the shift sometime between June and October 1904.[3] In several issues of *Talking Machine World* in 1908, The Regina Company took out full-page ads promoting their Reginaphone as well as automatic "Reginapianos." In one notable ad, from February 1908, they reminded instrument dealers that they did, in fact, sell more than just music boxes:

> FUNNY thing happened few days ago—Dealer in small town in middle West wrote us saying he had couple of customers for player pianos. Didn't know much about players himself, although he had sold regular pianos for years. Thought we might know something about them, and having confidence in us, wanted us to recommend several different makes which we considered good. We recommended ONE and that dealer is now an enthusiastic Reginapiano Agent. The funny part of it is that the dealer DIDN'T KNOW that we made Player Pianos although we have been advertising them extensively for almost three years.
>
> Well, that's the way it goes. No matter how much you advertise you can't expect the Public to know as much about your business as you know about it yourself—Some dealers don't know even now, that we are in the talking machine business.[4]

By 1910, however, Regina ads were barely present in *Talking Machine World*. Just one full-page ad appeared in time for the Christmas season, in November 1910, and it, in comparison

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[3] For these advertisements, see *Ladies' Home Journal* 21, no. 7 (June 1904), 31; and *Ladies' Home Journal* 21, no. 11 (October 1904), 29.
[4] "FUNNY Thing Happened," *Talking Machine World* 4, no. 2 (February 15, 1908), 14.

with the ads from 1908, featured no images of or made mention of their complete instrument line. Instead, it focused on the music box as an "ideal" Christmas gift and mentioned a new catalogue that was available. By 1912, there were no Regina Company advertisements in *Talking Machine World* at all, preceding their eventual switch from the manufacture of automated musical instruments to vacuum cleaners.

The music box lost favor in other ways as well, especially through its oft-imitated sound. Beginning in the 1840s, music box imitation pieces were being published primarily for piano, which typically involved fast-paced runs in upper registers.[5] While many of these pieces were lighter fare intended as parlor entertainment, musicians performed music box imitations in public performances as well. One notable instance of this was the enslaved (until 1865) pianist Thomas "Blind Tom" Wiggins, who was well known for his ability to mimic a wide range of sounds at the piano, including the music box, that he heard throughout his lifetime.[6] But by the early twentieth century, theater critics has clearly grown tired of piano imitations. In a 1909 *Variety* review of a traveling circus, the reviewer "Sime" remarks of a "bare stage" act: "[Bert] Howard plays the manager, and the piano, doing several

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[5] For a discussion of John Barnett's "The Musical Box" (1840), one of the earliest examples of a music box imitation piece, see Chapter 1.

[6] There is an established body of literature on Thomas (Bethune) Wiggins, particularly within music and disability studies. See, for instance, Eileen Southern, "Thomas Greene Bethune (1849–1908)," *The Black Perspective in Music* 4, no. 2 (1976): 177–83; Geneva H. Southall, *Blind Tom*, 3 vols. (Minneapolis: Challenge Productions, 1979–1999); Stephanie Jensen-Moulton, "Finding Autism in the Compositions of a 19th-Century Prodigy: Reconsidering 'Blind Tom' Wiggins," in *Sounding Off: Theorizing Disability in Music*, ed. Neil Lerner and Joseph Straus (New York: Routledge, 2006), 199–215; and Whitney Womack Smith, "'Blind Tom' Abroad: Race, Disability, and Transatlantic Representations of Thomas Wiggins," *Journal of Transatlantic Studies* 14, no. 2 (2016): 164–75.

imitations, one among them being of a music box, ever old and ever new, apparently."[7] In July 1911, a "Dash" positively reviewed the musical performers John Romano and Maude Earle but also lamented: "so well was the playing received it was a pity to spoil it with the imitation of a music box."[8] And in November, the same reviewer gave a harsher critique of a young female pianist:

> Myrtle Rutler is wrong. Myrtle is a young girl. The experience she is now getting may do her more good than all the advice that could be dished out. The girl has personality and a pleasing delivery, but her material is very poor. Music-box imitations on the piano are considered obsolete now, and in fact any trick playing by a girl after the many men working the piano is a little more than useless. Myrtle will have to stay on the small time for a while. She should try and secure songs of the Willa Holt Wakefield variety. It would not be a bad idea to ask permission from Miss Wakefield to use some of her old material to use in the developing process.[9]

Especially notable in this review is the contention that a young woman performing a musical "trick" that men had already done was "useless" and derivative. Whether it was because these imitation pieces had left the confines of the parlor or because they were often associated with performers gendered and racialized as other, it was clear that by 1911—coinciding with the decrease of Regina Company ads in *Talking Machine World*—emulating the music box sound was no longer in vogue.

Imitation frequently carried a negative connotation, and white men often applied the term to uphold marginalized groups' continued oppression. This particularly applied to racialized, machinic bodies; to name one example, naturalist George Finlayson claimed

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[7] Sime, "Circus News: Fifth Avenue," *Variety* 15, no. 5 (July 10, 1909), 17.
[8] Dash, "New Acts Next Week: Initial Presentation, First Appearance or Reappearance in or around New York," *Variety* 23, no. 7 (July 22, 1911), 25.
[9] Dash, "New Acts in 'Pop' Houses," *Variety* 24, no. 11 (November 18, 1911), 21.

Asians were a so-called lesser race because they were allegedly better suited to mechanical, repetitive tasks than those requiring creativity or imagination.[10] Imitation pieces, which often fell under the category of lighter musical fare, were no different.[11] Feelings about so-called lighter works, including waltzes, may be summed up by an 1887 article inquiring as to the supposed lack of women composers:

> What is woman's place in the musical world? We mean as composers or creators. That women are highly musical goes for the saying. Their fine organization and emotional temperament argue that. […] But why is it that we have no great female composer? Of course there are nice bits of composition by women, creditable as far as they go, songs, waltzes and other small things, but these are not great works. They bear about the same relation to a great composition that a clever bit of newspaper poetry or parlor verse does to a poem.[12]

"Nice bits of composition," such as "songs, waltzes and other small things" like imitation pieces, did not, according to this piece, count as appropriate output for a true composer. As such, these pieces also did not count as true works of art, like dramatic operas or symphonies. They may have been appreciated on some level, as was Thomas Wiggins's virtuosic attention to sonic details, but for certain critics, imitation pieces also fell under the category of lower-brow entertainment.

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[10] George Finlayson, *The Mission to Siam and Hue 1821–1822* (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1988), 227, 230.

[11] For more on perceptions of the waltz, see Chapter 2.

[12] "Women as Composers," *North's Philadelphia Musical Journal* 2, no. 9 (September 1887), 27.

The Music Box Trope in Silent Film: Comparing *An Alpine Echo* and *On the Stroke of Five*

The music box's function also shifted in silent film, as similar views reverberated in the film industry. One of the biggest indicators of this shift was that, although the music box industry was long interested in maximizing the number of musical selections a listener could enjoy on one instrument, in filmic media the music box only ever played one tune. As such, the music box more frequently and explicitly connoted memory and nostalgia through the particular tune it played. Based on searches through the early film trade press—including *Motography*, *Moving Picture World*, *The Nickelodeon*, and *Phonoscope*—there were only two examples of films featuring a music box, *An Alpine Echo* (Vitagraph, 1909) and *On the Stroke of Five* (Thanhouser, 1912). While the sample size is not large enough to comment on a large-scale trend, these two films do help to bracket the years between as a pivotal moment whereby popular perceptions of the music box shifted. *An Alpine Echo* continued to promote the music box as a powerful instrument of memory and nostalgia; set in Switzerland, where the industry began, the film also maintained ties to the music box industry's origins. In *On the Stroke of Five*, however, the music box's meaning was darker; it contained a hidden weapon that threatened to destroy an innocent family. A single copy of *An Alpine Echo* is located in the British Film Institute's (BFI) film archive, and there seems to be no extant copy of *On the Stroke of Five*. In both cases, I rely upon print resources for my analyses, as studios often provided in film press of the early 1900s complete, detailed summaries of films that were showing in the coming weeks.

Paraphrasing from Vitagraph's description, *An Alpine Echo* involved a drawn-out love story told over multiple decades. In the beginning, the would-be lovers Lena and Antoine, who are Swiss, grow up under the same roof after Lena's parents tragically perish in an avalanche. Their patriarch is Antoine's grandfather, a woodworker who (significantly, it turns out) made a music box as a personal keepsake. When the children grow older, Antoine falls in love with an American tourist who, in the studio's words, leads him on. He follows her to America, and it is only then that she explicitly rebuffs his advances. The grandfather, now dying, requests that Lena go abroad to find Antoine, and she brings the music box with her. It is the music box that aids their reunion; when Lena initially fails in her quest and is forced to sell the music box, Antoine is working in the shop and hears the box's melody from the back room. They get married, and the shop owner gifts them the music box he had purchased from Lena.

Although the trade press did not discuss the live music that accompanied the film, it is reasonable to assume that performers would have played a representative tune at the beginning of the film, when the music box first emerged on screen, as well as at the end when Antoine heard the box from another room. In doing so, the audience would have heard the same musical cue that Antoine did, and thus would have been sonically invited into the character's headspace as the music box triggered a flashback sequence.[13] As Charlie Keil has discussed, in the "transitional era" of early narrative film from 1907-1913

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[13] A sentence from the official Vitagraph summary implied that there was a flashback sequence: "At the sound of the song he knows so well Antoine sees visions of his Alpine home with which the melody is so intimately associated." *Moving Picture World* 5, no. 12 (September 18, 1909), 389.

filmmakers and producers experimented with different ways of visually communicating character development, setting, and plot. The flashback sequence, in particular, became an important means of accessing a "character's thoughts and feelings"; without it, "the viewer was bound to find films emotionally uninvolving."[14] Objects were often used to trigger flashback or memory sequences, "supposedly ensuring the viewer would understand the increased depth of subjective knowledge."[15] In the case of *An Alpine Echo*, the music box was critical for bringing forth Antoine's repressed nostalgia for Switzerland and his long-lost love, Lena.

While, in one sense, the use of the music box was part of a broader filmmaking pattern, the music box also had a longstanding association with memory and nostalgia. One representative example, Hannah Flagg Gould's 1831 poem "The Musical Box," was addressed to her "little friend" the music box that provided comfort on a stormy day. And in the final stanza, she made a direct relationship between the music box sound and memory:

> And while I feel his powerful hand
> O'er the chords of Memory sweeping,
> To waken, and bring from a spirit-land
> The things that had else been sleeping,
> It lifts my thoughts to a world to come,
> Where the parted here shall meet,
> Secure from the storms of life, at home,
> And sing that home is sweet![16]

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[14] Charlie Keil, *American Cinema in Transition: Story, Style, and Filmmaking, 1907–1913* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2001), 69.
[15] Ibid., 70.
[16] [Hannah Flagg Gould], "The Musical Box," *New-England Magazine* 1, no. 3 (September 1831), 209–10. Gould's poem was not credited to her in this particular issue. For more on poems pertaining to music boxes, see Chapter 1.

In these lines, the music box sound is likened to playing the "chords of Memory." And the power of the instrument is such that simply the sound of it brings forth long-forgotten memories. While this experience could be a painful one, in this context the music box's power has positive connotations; in the final lines, the narrator's tone is hopeful, thinking forward to a time when she may be reunited with those she has lost. *An Alpine Echo* makes literal this hope for reunion by having the music box's melody restore Antoine and Lena to each other. This was an important precedent for films in the 1940s, as I discuss below.

If *An Alpine Echo* reinforced positive associations with the music box, Thanhouser's *On the Stroke of Five* portrayed the potential consequences for uncritically appreciating the instrument. Initially, in the film, two men vie for a woman's affections. She chooses the "more worthy" one who "loved her fondly"; the other, later, violently beats his foreman and goes to prison for eight years. When the convict is released, he sets out to find the woman, who is still married to her worthier suitor and now has a daughter. But the convict also finds out that the husband was paralyzed from a work-related accident and can neither move nor speak. He then attempts to woo the wife; however, "she rejected his advances with scorn, and his love turned to hate." In revenge, he places a bomb inside a music box and offers it as a gift to the daughter. To add insult to injury, he tells the paralyzed husband of the weapon before departing. Miraculously, the husband is able to communicate the dastardly plan to his daughter via her spelling blocks. The woman then "hurled the bomb from the window in time, and it rolled down the steep hill to the feet of the ex-convict, who was waiting there

for the explosion that meant the death of three innocent people. He had no time to escape, and the fate he had meant for others became the frightful death that Providence dealt him."[17]

From this synopsis, it is clear that, compared to *An Alpine Echo*, the music box served a very different function, and sound would have contributed to this. Since the music box clearly factored in the beginning and end of *An Alpine Echo*, the repetition of the music box's tune would have resonated with audiences, sounding Antoine's feelings of nostalgia. In *On the Stroke of Five*, however, the music box did not appear in the film until at least partway through. In addition, the music box in the later film represented a duality: on the surface, it emitted pleasing tones, more akin to the romantic stylings of earlier decades. But the film's sonic accompaniment also needed to communicate the music box's threat to the family's life, since it contained a bomb within its machinery. To this end, musicians would have had one of two options: either combine the sound of the music box with suspenseful musical cues; or, perhaps more likely, eschew the sound of the music box in favor of the suspenseful plot. In either case, the music box sound would not have been as prominent, echoing its diminished importance in US society.

Reframing Romanticism: The Ambivalent Return of the Music Box in *The Shop Around the Corner*

By 1912, the music box's popularity had waned in various forms of visual media, from variety theater to early silent film. In filmic media especially, it disappeared entirely for twenty years.

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[17] "Manufacturers' Synopses of Films," *Moving Picture News* 5, no. 19 (May 11, 1912), 33–34.

According to *The American Film Institute Catalog of Motion Pictures Produced in the United States*, the music box reappeared in 1932 with the western film *The Golden West*. But it was not until Ernst Lubitsch's 1940 film *The Shop Around the Corner* that the music box formally returned to the mainstream. In this film, the music box retained its romantic status, as established by *An Alpine Echo*, but also represented the music box as a problem, more akin to *On the Stroke of Five*.

In this section, I focus on the reappearance of the music box in the filmic mainstream with the 1940 film *The Shop Around the Corner*. Although the titular shop stocked the music box as if it had the same appeal as in the nineteenth century, no customer valued the machine for its romantic associations, and it ultimately went unsold. The music box had a subdued romantic function but ultimately served as a punchline, maintaining its status as passé. Nonetheless, the film is important for showing how the music trope shifted at this time, particularly since *The Shop Around the Corner* had institutionally recognized star power. For instance, James Stewart and Margaret Sullavan, the two romantic leads, had each already been nominated for an Academy Award, and director Ernst Lubitsch had been nominated twice for Best Director. In addition, Lubitsch's previous film, the MGM-produced *Ninotchka* (1939), was nominated for Best Picture. *The Shop Around the Corner*, also an MGM production, was thus a major follow-up for all three of these figures.

The Shop Around the Corner was adapted from the 1937 play *Parfumerie* by Hungarian playwright Miklós (Nikolaus) László.[18] The basic romantic premise—which also served as the basis for later films *In the Good Old Summertime* (1949) and *You've Got Mail* (1998)—centers on a romantic couple who love each other as anonymous pen pals but seemingly hate each other in person. *The Shop Around the Corner* follows the plot of *Parfumerie* closely; both are set in Budapest, Hungary. The film also incorporates the secondary plot from the play: the owner of the shop, where both romantic leads work, falsely accuses the man of having an affair with his wife (it turns out to be another employee). This factors into the main plot because the accusation initially leaves the man without a job; distraught at his uncertain future, he decides he cannot face the woman in person, thus delaying the ultimate reveal until the end of the narrative.

One major distinction between play and film is that the play is set in a drug store, while the film's shop is a small-scale department store. As such, there is no music box in the play at all, while in the film it is an item the store is selling. The music box also relates to the largest plot deviation between film and play; the film adds an exposition where the woman, Klara Novak, is looking for a job at the shop where the man, Alfred Kralik, currently works. Although the shop is not currently hiring, Klara spontaneously and successfully sells one of

[18] I base my description of the play on the 2009 English translation by E. P. Dowdall. Miklós László, *Parfumerie: A Comedy*, trans. Edward P. Dowdall (New York: Playscripts, 2009).

the music boxes to a customer, both proving her worth as a clerk and setting up the in-person work conflict that ensues between Klara and Alfred.[19]

The music box mainly serves as a punchline in the film, highlighting the instrument as largely undesirable and passé. When the shop owner, Matuschek, expresses interest in selling musical cigarette boxes, he has trouble getting enthusiastic support from his employees. One clerk attempts to offer support, remarking "I think it'll make music lovers out of cigarette smokers and cigarette smokers out of music lovers," but it is clear from the context that he is only trying to appease his superior. Alfred, not afraid to be honest with Matuschek, is most outspoken against the music box. When Matuschek exclaims that "it plays [Russian popular song] *Ochi Tchornya*," Alfred quips, "Even if it played Beethoven's ninth symphony, I'd still say no."[20] Later, when pressed, Alfred expands on his negative assessment of the music box:

> Let's say that a man smokes twenty cigarettes a day. That means that twenty times a day he has to open this box, and twenty times a day he has to listen to *Ochi Tchornya*. It's a perfectly terrible idea. And besides, it's imitation leather, the glue's no good, in two weeks the whole thing will fall apart, and all you'll have left is *Ochi Tchornya*.

By this assessment, the music serves as a barrier to the hypothetical man's enjoyment of a cigarette rather than adding to it. Not only does the repetition of the song serve as a deterrent, the consumer is also unable to control how or when the song plays. And while Matuschek is clearly a fan of *Ochi Tchornya*, there are no other song options for those

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[19] This is also a plot point of *In the Good Old Summertime*; but although the film is set in a music store in early twentieth-century Chicago, the music box does not appear at all. Instead, the woman (played by Judy Garland) sells a harp to secure her employment.
[20] I use this particular transliteration because of how it is spelled in both the film and film's subtitles.

preferring a different musical number. Despite nearly a century of technological developments, which made the music box a staple of musical reproduction before the phonograph, in this film the music box is merely a musical novelty.

Klara is the only other person besides Matuschek who openly and genuinely enjoys the music box. Her first reaction—"I think it's romantic!"—harks back to some of the very first responses to the music box, such as Leigh Hunt's 1816 poem "On Hearing a Little Musical Box," as well as *An Alpine Echo*. But when Alfred, a bit cynically, inquires as to what precisely makes it romantic, Klara struggles to articulate her feelings: "Well, cigarettes and music… I don't know, it makes me think of moonlight and… cigarettes and music!" This moment is played up as humorous, but it also reveals that only certain ears can hear the music box sound as romantic and transcendent. This selectivity of appeal is exacerbated when Klara appeals to the music box's displeasing qualities in order to sell it. When a female customer asks about the music box, the customer grows concerned, as Alfred claimed would happen, about hearing the same tune again and again. But Klara, pretending the cigarette box is a candy box, asserts that the repetitive musical mechanism helps dissuade people from eating too much candy.

The romantic idea of the music box neither had universal appeal nor wound up being a useful selling point. The music box sale helps Klara get a job, but it also convinces Matuschek to start regularly selling the music boxes. Alfred, however, has the last laugh; in the next scene, set six months later, the cigarette boxes are seen in the display window on clearance, below wholesale cost. Although Klara was able to use the music box's unappealing qualities in order to sell one, this tactic was not sufficient to make the music box widely

marketable. One sale proved the exception, not the norm; the music box no longer had value as a commodity, much less a luxury item.

True to Klara's feelings about the music box, the instrument—or, rather, the tune it plays—does carry some romantic connotations throughout the film. *Ochi Tchornya* ("Dark Eyes") is a nineteenth-century, Russian-language, romantic popular song that comes to represent Klara and Alfred's relationship.[21] This is made clear in the film's musical prelude; the opening motive, which plays twice before launching into another musical theme, is made up of the first few notes of *Ochi Tchornya* (Example 4.1). The music box tune thus links to the central relationship from the outset. In the context of the film's narrative, after the music box highlights Alfred and Klara's differences, *Ochi Tchornya* factors again in their budding relationship. When Alfred discovers that Klara is his pen pal (he peeks into the café where they are to have their first date), he walks in to talk with her while avoiding mentioning that he is her pen pal. He points to the café band when they begin playing *Ochi Tchornya*:

> ALFRED: Do you know what that tune reminds me of?
> KLARA: Yes, thank you. Two dozen unsold cigarette boxes.
> ALFRED: No, no, wrong again. It reminds me of a girl out of a job. A very nice girl, too, I thought.

While Klara responds as if expecting Alfred to ridicule her part in Matuschek's folly, Alfred instead thinks of the tune as a reminder of when they first met. And knowing the identity of

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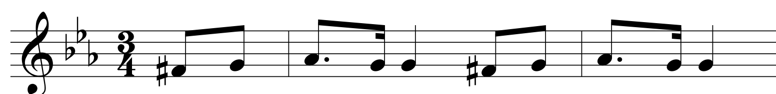
[21] While the song is based on a nineteenth century poem by Yevhen Hrebinka, the melody heard in the film is credited to Adalgiso Ferrraris, who first copyrighted the tune in 1910. By the time *The Shop Around the Corner* was released, *Ochi Tchornya* had already appeared in multiple films and had been recorded by some well-known jazz figures, including Tommy Dorsey.



Example 4.1: Ferraris, *Ochi Tchornya*, opening motive (as heard on the music box)

his pen pal, Alfred slips in a mention of the tune into his next love letter to Klara, writing that she reminds him of a "gypsy song."

If *Ochi Tchornya* was redeemed somewhat by these romantic connotations, it was not enough to spare the music box as well. As Christmas approaches, Klara declares to Alfred that she wants to give her "dear friend" a music box as a gift. Given their clear differences of opinion on the music box's appeal, this serves as another humorous moment at the expense of the music box. Alfred tries to persuade Klara to buy the friend (him) a nice wallet instead, but she remains unconvinced. Alfred then enlists another employee to dissuade her, who makes up a story about wanting to give the music box she bought—the last working one—to his least favorite uncle. Through this story, the employee conveys a popular understanding of the music box as annoying, further implying that Klara is in the minority by liking the music box at all. It is Klara's horror at her supposed lack of musical taste that finally convinces her to buy the wallet.

Because Klara and Matuschek are the only two characters with an explicit affinity for the music box, the machine further becomes the link between their otherness, particularly via their psychology. Psychology has long been established as a scientific means to address behaviors perceived as abnormal. In addition, so-called aberrant behaviors also have had a

feminizing impact, as was the case with Nathanael in E. T. A. Hoffmann's "The Sandman," both because they were more often attributed to women and because they undercut societal perceptions of masculinity.[22] As I discussed with rhetoric surrounding the phonograph, Jentsch and Freud conveyed that perceiving the uncanny was a feminizing process, and thus it was more normative not to experience the uncanny at all. Similarly, in the context of *The Shop Around the Corner*, it is telling that Klara and Matuschek are the only two members of the shop who—aberrantly?—hear the music box as romantic. As such, the music box underscores their respective psychological afflictions that feminize them and mark them as other.

Throughout the film, Klara is not portrayed as an average woman but, instead, a thoroughly independent one. She puts an ad in the paper for a pen pal in order to have intellectual conversations; it is only because of Klara and Alfred's written kinship that their letters turn romantic. Her unusual personality is also suggested by her work history. When asking for a job at Matuschek's store, she mentions that she has worked at and voluntarily left several other places. Although she is not explicit why, it is implied that she felt disrespected and/or violated by her (presumably male) coworkers. Klara's non-traditional femininity is exacerbated by her multiple instances of "psychological confusion." She calls out of work after believing her pen pal stood her up; when Alfred goes to visit her, she confirms that her ailment is psychological rather than physical. Later, Klara confesses to Alfred that she initially felt attracted to him and was psychologically confused because of it.

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[22] For more on "The Sandman" and non-normative masculinities, see Chapter 3.

When she finally discovers that Alfred is her "dear friend," she repeats her feelings of psychological confusion. The music box is the thread between all of these disparate moments, the object that helps Klara get a job and the potential Christmas present Alfred dissuades her from giving.

The music box also reveals Matuschek as prone to erratic decision-making, especially compared to Alfred. In their initial exchange about whether the store should start selling music boxes, Matuschek derisively remarks that Alfred makes decisions much more confidently than he does. And given the store's inability to liquidate the remaining music boxes (other than the one Klara sells), carrying the music boxes is revealed to be an impulsive decision driven by Matuschek's personal affinity rather than Alfred's methodical and practical sense of reason. Matuschek's questionable choice regarding the music boxes also informs the later plot, when a private detective confirms his wife has been having an affair. When the detective leaves, Matuschek, thinking he is alone, goes into his office and attempts suicide. He is only saved because the store's delivery boy walks in and intervenes; Matuschek is subsequently hospitalized, leaving Alfred temporarily in charge of the store. The music box thus links Matuschek and Klara's respective otherness. Klara, an independent, working woman, nonetheless felt melancholic when her romantic pursuits seemed unrequited. Matuschek, more extremely, attempted self-harm when he found himself romantically isolated. While the music box did not directly contribute to these feelings and decisions, these characters' mapping of romance onto the music box both forged a connection between the two and set them apart from the other characters in the narrative.

As with earlier reviews of music box imitation pieces, the music box in *The Shop Around the Corner* was predominantly defined by cynical attitudes towards it. And while it still retained ties to romanticism and nostalgia via Matuschek and Klara, these characters' respective otherness undercut any positive associations the music box may have had. The affective power of the music box, though, as the 1940s progressed, became more explicit. While the significance of the music box in *The Shop Around the Corner* was more oblique, pertaining to its relative unpopularity, *Kathleen*, released the following year, imbued the machine with greater significance. But in doing so, it also obscured the music box's relationship to bodies racialized as other.

Dreaming of Desire: Restoring the Music Box's Power in *Kathleen*

While *The Shop Around the Corner* was set in the relatively exotic location of Budapest, Hungary, *Kathleen* mainly takes place in a wealthy household in New England. In this setting, the music box gained new life as a fantastical and otherworldly machine, inducing dream sequences and, by the end, granting the titular character's wish. In this section, I show how the film's narrative imbued the music box with this affective power. Compared to *The Shop Around the Corner*, which delegitimized Klara and Matuschek's feelings toward the music box, *Kathleen* celebrated an adolescent girl's fervent belief in it. And while the machine's sentimentality still was connected to gender- and class-based othering, this was obscured in favor of the music box's positive qualities.

Kathleen (1941) served as a vehicle for Shirley Temple, who was thirteen at the time, to take on a more grown-up film role compared to her '30s output. In the titular role, she

played a wealthy adolescent with an absentee widower father, John. Kathleen, because of her father's neglect, feels lonely most of the time but also dreams of having another mother figure in her life. When her father does bring home a woman, named Lorraine, Kathleen instantly dislikes her. Kathleen seeks comfort from her only on-screen friend, the elderly antique shop owner Mr. Schoner, who gives her a music box. In the meantime, John hires a psychologist, Dr. Angela Martha Kent, to help him figure out Kathleen's behavior. Unlike with Lorraine, Kathleen immediately likes Angela and wishes the doctor could be her new mother. When it appears unlikely this will happen, and when Angela argues with John and threatens to leave, Kathleen runs away from home. Kathleen sneaks into Schoner's moving van and ends up in Philadelphia with the shop owner. Schoner calls her father, and when John arrives, Kathleen is pleased to learn that he left Lorraine and chose Angela instead.

Mr. Schoner, otherwise a minor character in the film, is the one who provides Kathleen with the music box. He is also the one who suggests how she can make use of it, by letting its metallic, tinkling sound spur her imagination:

> SCHONER: You see, sometimes with me, things aren't so good. Mortgage looks bigger than usual, more and more things in the store get moth-bitten…so, then, what do I do?
>
> KATHLEEN: What?
>
> SCHONER: Evenings, I sit here, I turn out all the lights. The moon shines only on the nice things I've got. And then, I start the music box. [*Music box starts playing*.] I sit, I listen, I look, and soon, I'm handsome. I'm rich, even. D'you know, if you imagine hard enough, there's no more second hand, it's all antiques…. Give this box to your friend, will you? Maybe that's a way out of that big, sad house she's always been looking for.

Although Schoner references a third person—Kathleen made up a scenario where she is lower-class with two loving parents, thus referring to her own situation as that of a "friend"—

Schoner is well aware Kathleen is the wealthy yet lonely girl who needs the power of the music box. And he attests to its power by providing a first-hand account of how it has helped him over the years: it makes him feel wealthier, handsomer, and generally more successful. In one way, it is akin to early nineteenth century travel accounts, such as that of Dixon Denham, that promoted the music box's ability to soothe the so-called savage with its sound; however, although Denham owned the music box, he never wrote of its impact on him. The supposed power of the music box in *Kathleen*, then, is legitimized by Schoner's personal experience.

The music box, through its association with Kathleen and Schoner, nonetheless is linked to otherness. As evidenced by the above dialogue, Schoner is a lower-class owner of a struggling consignment shop. Schoner's accent also codes him as foreign; he is played by Felix Bressart, a German Jewish actor who immigrated to the US after the Nazis' rise to power who was known for his inflected English and, as such, typically played non-American or immigrant characters.[23] Kathleen, although the protagonist of the film, sees herself as an outcast compared to the adults aside from Schoner who surround her. As a twelve-year-old pre-teen, she is spunky and mischievous, which seemingly goes against her upper-class upbringing, especially as represented by her stiff and aloof father.

The music box tune also connects Schoner and Kathleen to each other. An original composition for the film titled "Around the Corner," with music and lyrics by Roger Edens and Earl Brent, the tune is first heard when Schoner plays the music box for Kathleen before

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[23] This included the character Pirovitch in *The Shop Around the Corner*.

giving it to her. Other than the daydream sequences Kathleen has later in the film, which I discuss in greater detail below, the tune does not emerge in the underscoring aside from when Kathleen learns that Schoner is moving to Philadelphia. After they say their goodbyes to each other, the opening five notes of "Around the Corner" emerge in the orchestration as a motive that repeats multiple times (see Example 4.2). Through both the exchange of the music box from Schoner to Kathleen and the use of the tune as a motive representing their relationship, the music box is integral in connecting these two characters.

Music box-based relationships like the one between Kathleen and Schoner had precedence in late nineteenth century fiction, particularly when there was a class distinction between the characters. The anonymously penned "Patty's Music Box" (1888) was just one example that both highlighted class divisions between two people and used the exchange of a music box to clarify their otherness with respect to each other. It also affirmed the music box as a luxury commodity that was not affordable for everyone. "Patty's Music Box" tells the moralistic tale of a young girl, Patty Hendrick, who becomes enamored with her friend Amy's music box and works hard to be able to buy her own. Amy's uncle had given his niece a music box for her birthday, that could play "tune after tune," and "Patty was so astonished that she could hardly speak, for she had never seen a music box before." Patty's mother, perhaps unable to afford a music box outright, offers her daughter pennies for completing various chores; after several weeks, Patty is "nearly" able to purchase one with three dollars saved up.[24]

[24] "Patty's Music Box," *Atchison Daily Champion* (Atchison, KS), October 21, 1888.

However, news of a tragedy compels her to donate her savings to needy families who were victims of fires. She becomes upset, both because of the tragedy and because she is no longer able to get a music box. Upon running into Edward Simms, an older gentleman, she tearfully confesses this to him. Unlike other adults who judge him as aloof and an outsider, Patty treats Edward kindly. At the end of the tale, Patty receives a "good-sized box" as a gift: "When Patty's papa opened it there was—what do you suppose? A big, big, music box made out of shining dark wood, beautifully inlaid with mother-of-pearl. It was made abroad and there was a key with it, and after it was wound it would play for an hour." The exchange of the music box from Edward to Patty reinforced their related marginalized statuses in the story: Edward had money but no close friendships in the town, while Patty lacked the money to buy a music box but otherwise had the support of her friends and family. And the gift of the music box to Patty gave her access to a luxury commodity that she could not have afforded otherwise.

Like in "Patty's Music Box," the music box forged a connection between Kathleen and Schoner; however, two key differences from short story to film re-codified the music box as a transcendent, sentimental machine. Rather than an upper-class man giving a music box to a lower-class girl, in *Kathleen* it was the lower-class Schoner who gave the upper-class Kathleen the music box. Additionally, whereas "Patty's Music Box" emphasized the music box as a commodified object that needed to be purchased, in *Kathleen* the music box merely existed in Schoner's shop; the machine had no origin story or monetary value attached to it. *Kathleen* thus articulated the sentimental power of the music box more clearly than "Patty's Music Box." For Kathleen, who seemingly had everything, she remained lonely because of

the absence of parental love. The music box, as it did for Schoner, allowed her to imagine a new reality where her father openly loved her and she had a new mother.

Kathleen narrates her three dream sequences in the course of the film, a form of embodied voiceover. In this type of voiceover, as critical theorist Kaja Silverman writes, "the voice in question functions almost like a searchlight suddenly turned upon a character's thoughts; it makes audible what is ostensibly inaudible, transforming the private into the public."[25] For Silverman, the embodied voiceover in film has a negatively feminizing impact, related to the Freudian talking cure. But while Kathleen's dream sequences do affirm her non-normative adolescence, as her own narrator she is also in full control of what transpires.[26] In the first sequence, Kathleen imagines reading a poem to her father, John, which convinces him to devote more time to her. In the second, after the psychologist Angela arrives at the house, Kathleen dreams of Angela and John falling in love with each other. In the third, which is the most elaborate and fantastical sequence, Kathleen becomes independently wealthy after becoming the surprise star of a new musical, *Around the Corner*. After she successfully uses this money to bribe Lorraine into giving up John, Kathleen has her arrested; John then proposes to Angela. In all three, Kathleen's voice, coupled with the music box, spurs the daydream; the film then dissolves into the dream sequence proper,

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[25] Kaja Silverman, *The Acoustic Mirror: The Female Voice in Psychoanalysis and Cinema* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1988), 53.
[26] Some of these more progressive elements pertaining to women, particular compared to '40s filmic output at large, may be related to the fact that the screenplay was written by a woman, Mary C. McCall, Jr., and based on a story by another woman, Kay Van Riper.

where her narrative voice eventually disappears. When the sequence dissolves back to Kathleen's reality, her voiceover returns to conclude the dream.

The third dream sequence, the longest of the three, is particularly significant because it formally establishes the music box melody as the song "Around the Corner" and attaches sentimental power to it (Example 4.2). Because this song is original to the film and is only heard with lyrics after the music box has played several times, this scene quite literally gives a voice to the music box. For much of the song, it is Kathleen who sings, as the star of her dream-invented musical.[27] The song, like the music box, privileges escapism, claiming that a better life is nearby if you "leave your cares behind you" and "start life over anew." The connection to the music box is more explicit in the second half of the chorus, when Kathleen sings that "you'll find a song [...] when things go wrong." At this point, the male chorus, who has been listening to Kathleen, interjects with the next lines, as if speaking to her: "And if you keep pretending, you'll find a happy ending." If Kathleen has been singing along to the music box melody up until now, this choral interjection is the music box responding to her, affirming its own power in the process.

In these three dream sequences, the music box assumes agency and promises a new life through imagination, but it never actually provides lasting happiness for Kathleen. It does finally deliver, though, at the very end of the film. After Kathleen overhears an

[27] When she makes her grand entrance onto the stage, Kathleen sings in a lyric-less and florid operatic style that is clearly not Shirley Temple's own voice; however, when she sings "Around the Corner" a short while later, it is Temple's voice once again. This relates to another aspect of the film, in which Kathleen asserts her own maturity despite being twelve. The studio, MGM, also made Temple's age a selling point; the tagline simply stated, "She's twelve and terrific!"

A - round the cor - ner ___ the skies are blue ___ a - round the

cor - ner ___ where dreams come true ___

___ just leave your cares be - hind you where they can't

find you and start life o - ver a - new ___

___ A - round the cor - ner ___ you'll find a song ___

___ to al - ways help you ___ when things go wrong ___

___ and if you keep pre - tend - ing you'll find a hap - py

end - ing a - round the cor - ner from you.

Example 4.2: Edens and Brent, "Around the Corner," chorus

argument between Angela and John where Angela threatens to quit, Kathleen stows away in Schoner's moving van and ends up in Philadelphia. Schoner, after putting her to bed, calls John and alerts him of Kathleen's whereabouts. When she wakes, Kathleen learns that her father's arrival is imminent; she then starts the music box and wonders aloud at the possibility that John brought Angela with him instead of Lorraine. The daydream is cut short, because at that moment John walks into the room with Angela, fulfilling Kathleen's wish. The music box's tune also transforms, anticipating and emphasizing this twist. In previous dream sequences, the music box melody was in A Major; however, in the final scene it modulates to D-flat Major. Additionally, the melody changes at the lyrics about finding a "happy ending" (Example 4.3), signaling that this has finally been achieved.

The depiction of the music box in *Kathleen* diverged from that in previous filmic portrayals. First, the music box was explicitly ascribed power that impacted the film's trajectory. The music box has agency, transforming its melody and key signature at crucial moments. Second, this agency manifested as having a human voice, as indicated in the "Around the Corner" scene. The interjection of the male chorus emphasizing the music box's function for Kathleen gave the music box, even if temporarily, a masculinized voice. Whereas the mechanized voice of the music box was feminized in the early- to mid-nineteenth century, *Kathleen* re-framed this voice as more masculine. *Since You Went Away* and *Going My Way*, as I discuss in the next section, took this one step further and aligned the music box with more normative masculine voices.

[and if you keep pre - tend - ing you'll find a hap - py end - ing]

Example 4.3: Excerpt of "Around the Corner," heard on the music box

Memories of Love in Wartime: *Since You Went Away* and *Going My Way*

In this section, I consider the role of the music box in two films that dealt with the impacts of World War II on those in the US who were not on the war front. *Since You Went Away* and *Going My Way* were both released in 1944, and both were nominated for several Academy Awards the following year, including Best Picture (*Going My Way* won the top award). They both employed the music box to similar ends: in *Since You Went Away*, it reinforced the connection of two lovers separated by war; in *Going My Way*, it sounded the link between a man and his mother who were separated by religious duty. And like the previous films discussed, both invoked the power of the music box as a source of memory and nostalgia. Compared to *Kathleen*, both films also shifted the music box trope further from feminized otherness, linking the mechanized voice of the music box more strongly to normative masculinity. But whereas *Since You Went Away* explored the impact of the war on women, *Going My Way* focused on a Catholic parish run by two (male) priests. In turn, how the music box functioned with respect to memory shifted based on who it belonged to.

Since You Went Away, a propagandistic film supporting the American war effort during World War II, centers on a woman, Anne Hilton, who struggles to find new purpose in life after her husband, Tim, enlists. Based on the 1943 book by Margaret Buell Wilder, which was comprised of letters from Wilder to her husband at war, the film was a contemporary look at the impact of the war on the women left at home. While not clearly established, the film seems to take place in the course of a year, beginning January 12, 1943, when Tim first deploys, and ending at Christmastime, when Anne receives news that Tim is on his way home. Throughout the year, Anne, with the help of her daughters Jane and Brig, finds ways to support the war effort, deals with the absence of her husband and other tragedies, and negotiates rations and her newly limited finances. At Brig's suggestion, she takes in the retired colonel William Smollett as a boarder; later, she allows Jane to become a nurse's aide. It is not until much later in the film, though, that Anne joins the workforce herself, becoming a welder in a shipyard. The film, through its idealization of Anne, promoted the ways in which American women could support their husbands and their country.

The music box only appears at the very end of the nearly three-hour film, but the tune it plays—the 1928 Tin Pan Alley song "Together" by B. G. DeSylva, Lew Brown, and Ray Henderson—is a clear musical representation of Tim and Anne's love for each other throughout the entire narrative.[28] The lyrics of the chorus, the only musical section heard in the film, makes the significance of the song especially plain (see Example 4.4):

[28] B. G. DeSylva was also the executive producer for *Going My Way*, a Paramount film.

We strolled the lane together
Laughed at the rain together
Sang love's refrain together
And we'd both pretend it would never end
One day we cried together
Cast love aside together
You're gone from me but in my memory
We always will be together

The lyrics clearly point to the physical separation of two lovers, albeit for unclear reasons, but the protagonist invokes the power of memory to imagine them still together. This, of course, applies to Anne and Tim, the two of them casting their love aside for the greater love of their country.

Notably, no one speaks or sings the lyrics in the film, but the musical cue nonetheless emphasizes the relationship between Anne and Tim. Heard in the underscoring multiple times beforehand as a leitmotif, the importance of "Together" to Anne is made explicit an hour into the film, when it is first played diegetically by a dance band. Dancing with her husband's best friend, Tony, Anne and Tony discuss the song's importance and the memories it invokes; in the next scene, they whistle the song together as they go for a night drive. After Anne learns that Tim is missing in action, the musical cue disappears entirely from both the diegesis and the underscoring until she opens the music box. As such, when the music box finally appears, the narrative has not only established "Together" as a musical cue representing Anne and Tim's love; through its protracted absence in the second act, the tune's return via the music box emphasizes their physical separation.

The music box tune also relates to how Anne and Tim are individually portrayed in the film. Anne represents the ideal, angelic mother figure, balancing being emotionally

We strolled the lane to - geth - er
Laughed at the rain to - geth - er
Sang love's re - frain to - geth - er and we'd
both pre - tend it would nev - er end
One day we cried to - geth - er
Cast love a - side to - geth - er
You're gone from me but in my mem - or - y We
al - ways will be to - geth - er

Example 4.4: DeSylva, Brown, and Henderson, "Together," chorus

vulnerable without, in the psychoanalytic sense, lapsing into melancholy like Klara Novak did in *The Shop Around the Corner*. There are three distinct moments when Anne's emotions physically overcome her: the day Tim first enters the service; when she receives news that Tim is missing in action; and when she listens to the music box. These three moments—occurring during the opening scene, at the midpoint of the film (just before the scheduled intermission), and during the closing scene—are justified as appropriate emotional outbursts because they address the problem of men necessarily going off to war and no longer being present as the heads of their households. Throughout the rest of the narrative, Anne is emotionally available for others when needed, especially by her two daughters, but does not betray her own inner turmoil. Col. Smollett commends this one day during lunch:

> SMOLLETT: Mrs. [Anne] Hilton, I would like to say that I admire very much the manner in which you've taken the recent news about your husband.
>
> ANNE: Well, I'm afraid that underneath, I'm perhaps not quite so courageous.
>
> SMOLLETT: Then it's all the more admirable. Fortitude is easy when there's no feeling.

In this exchange, Smollett's praises what he sees as Anne's emotional fortitude and her vulnerability. Anne's reticence to accept his compliment prompts a "yes and" response by Smollett; in doing so, Smollett teaches Anne about what it means to properly convey womanly strength. If, in Hoffmann's "The Sandman," Nathanael accused his fiancée Clara of being an automaton because of her alleged coldness toward his feelings, in the context of *Since You Went Away* Anne becomes a pillar of strength while retaining her humanity.

Anne's position as the ideal woman is paradoxical, since she grows throughout the film. For instance, she is initially reluctant when her elder daughter, Jane, wants to become

a nurse's aide instead of attending college, but eventually comes around to the idea. But Anne's growth is especially clear when compared to her foil, Emily Hawkins. Anne and Emily are longtime friends who move through similar upper-class social circles. One of their first conversations in the film centers on the financial struggle Anne now faces since Tim is in the military rather than working his high-paying advertising job; Emily, as a wealthy divorcée, does not face any of the same issues. As Anne continues to grow throughout the narrative, she becomes increasingly frustrated with Emily's apparent selfishness given the war climate. Their friendship hits a breaking point in the film's climax, after Emily insults Jane's choice to work as a nurse's aide. Anne comes to Jane's defense and, through her criticism of Emily's behavior, realizes that she could be even more helpful to the war effort. Anne then starts learning to weld in a shipyard, thus becoming the ideal mother figure not just to her family but to the nation at large. Her coworker Zofia, presumably a Jewish, Eastern European refugee, makes this arrival clear, likening Anne to the Statue of Liberty and concluding: "You are what I thought America was."

As a gift from Tim, the music box also gives Anne license to show vulnerability after having to carry on without his support. The music box acts as a stand-in for Tim, who is never shown, either in pictures or in flashbacks. His actual voice is never heard, either; when Tim sends letters, either Anne reads them aloud—another example of the embodied voiceover as heard in *Kathleen*—or the letter is shown on screen for the audience to read. As soon as Anne opens the music box and hears "Together," she breaks down; Tim's accompanying note then appears on screen: "This powder-box is not too gay, but the melody has told you already why I couldn't resist it. With it goes something I need no Christmas to

send you—my eternal love." The combination of the letter and the music box playing "Together" produce the primary sonic trace of Tim's voice. As with the music box at the end of *Kathleen*, which helps Kathleen's wish for Angela to be her new mother come true, the music box summons Tim into being. Like in the 1872 short story "Euphemia's Music-Box," where the Bellini duet "Hear Me, Norma" had become so aligned with Effie's love interest Luigi that the tune prompted Effie to imagine Luigi's lips whistling it even when he was not there, Anne's music box is a mechanized voice. But compared to Luigi, who was a lower-class Italian music teacher, Tim fell within more normative, ideal conceptions of masculinity.

If *Since You Went Away* considers the music box with respect to Anne's idealized femininity, *Going My Way* implements the music box to highlight alternative masculinities. *Going My Way*, which won seven Academy Awards, including Best Picture, Best Actor (Bing Crosby, playing Father O'Malley), Best Supporting Actor (Barry Fitzgerald, playing Father Fitzgibbon), and Best Song ("Swinging on a Star"), centers on a younger priest, O'Malley, who is sent to help a struggling church run by the elderly Fitzgibbon. Although O'Malley's more progressive approach to the priesthood initially irritates the more conservative Fitzgibbon, Fitzgibbon grows to respect O'Malley and laments his departure for another assignment by the end of the film.

Fitzgibbon, the owner of the music box, is presented as the non-normative figure to O'Malley's idealized masculinity. From the outset, Fitzgibbon is portrayed as a good man but also prone to forgetfulness. When he first meets O'Malley, a gag ensues when he starts to ask how O'Malley became a priest, gets interrupted, and then needs to be prompted by O'Malley. He is also, compared to O'Malley, out of touch with the local youth; in one example, a young

woman, Carol, is brought to Fitzgibbon's church after running away from home. O'Malley tries to work with Carol on her own terms, as she is interested in becoming a singer. Fitzgibbon, instead, insists that Carol go back home to her parents and wait for a potential husband. Perhaps most notably, multiple characters infantilize Fitzgibbon as obstinate and fussy. An explicit example of this is when Fitzgibbon abruptly leaves the church building after learning that the bishop put O'Malley in charge. When the local sheriff finds him and brings him back, they have the following conversation:

> SHERIFF: Come on. Now what's the matter?
> FITZGIBBON: If you don't mind, I'd rather go in by myself.
> SHERIFF: If you don't mind, I found you and I want to deliver you personally.
> FITZGIBBON: That's not necessary. [*Pause*.] There's no reward, you know. It's going to be a little difficult, and I'd rather explain to Father O'Malley in me own way. And I can do that better when you're not around.
> SHERIFF: Okay. But if you want my advice, you just tell him you've been a bad boy, you ran away from home, and you're sorry.
> FITZGIBBON: And if you want my advice, you'll go to church on Sunday and say you haven't been to Mass in ten years and that you're sorry.

O'Malley also infantilizes Fitzgibbon. Toward the end of the film, Fitzgibbon falls ill and becomes bed-ridden after working too hard to collect donations. While O'Malley spoon-feeds Fitzgibbon medicine, he lightly chastises Fitzgibbon for trying to do too much in his old age. Ultimately, the film showcases Fitzgibbon as an obstinate but hard worker, but also physically and mentally vulnerable given his elderly status.

O'Malley, as the ideal, does not show any of these vulnerabilities. Being a Catholic priest, of course, did demonstrate an alternative masculinity, partially because of Catholicism as a minority religion in the US, because he could not marry, and because his religious obligations prevented him from enlisting in the war. A gang of boys whom O'Malley takes

under his wing address this issue of masculinity; one of the older boys expresses his belief that participating in church-related activities, such as singing in the choir, will make him more effeminate by pointing to woman's undergarments on a nearby clothesline and indicating that is what O'Malley will make them become. This fear, though, is never realized: once O'Malley starts to teach them, all the boys become invested to the point that, when he asks if they want to stop rehearsal and play baseball, they decline in favor of singing. O'Malley's more normative masculinity is also affirmed through the character of Genevieve, heavily implied to be O'Malley's former lover. Before Genevieve became a star opera singer at the Met, itself a display of non-normative femininity, she and O'Malley had written letters to each other until O'Malley joined the priesthood. And although their relationship remains platonic, Genevieve's care for O'Malley is still deep; she secures Met resources in order to help him sell one of his songs, and she provides a large donation to his and Fitzgibbon's church after it burns down.

O'Malley's idealized masculinity is also defined against Fitzgibbon more directly. In addition to his infantilization of Fitzgibbon when the latter becomes ill, O'Malley, unlike Fitzgibbon, is also revealed as a sportsman. Toward the beginning of the film, when O'Malley first arrives at Fitzgibbon's parish, Fitzgibbon criticizes all the sports equipment included in O'Malley's luggage, including golf clubs and a fishing rod. On multiple occasions, O'Malley tries to get Fitzgibbon out on the golf course, but Fitzgibbon prefers meditating in the garden. At the end of the film, when O'Malley does finally get the elder priest to join him, Fitzgibbon's presence becomes a source of humor. For instance, Fitzgibbon's incessant questions about the rules of the game interrupt the players' concentration; then, when he

finally tries to swing a club himself, one of the players surreptitiously pushes the ball into the cup so it looks like Fitzgibbon has beginner's luck.

These differences in masculinities inform the music box's presence in the film, which only appears when Fitzgibbon and O'Malley are together. Fitzgibbon's music box holds a bottle of Irish whiskey, a yearly gift from his mother: "Every Christmas since I left, my old mother sends me one of these." When Fitzgibbon firsts opens the box in front of O'Malley, it is after the sheriff has brought him back to the church, as discussed above; as such, it is the first true bonding moment between the two priests. In this moment, Fitzgibbon mentions that he has not seen his mother in forty-five years, since he left to build the church. Although he intended to visit over the years, there was never enough money. But the music box always reminds him of her, and while it plays, he notes, "She always had a song in her heart. I can almost hear her now." In what is one of the most vulnerable moments for Fitzgibbon in the course of the film, he emphasizes that the sound of the music box helps him remember the sound of his mother's voice.

The importance of the music box conveying Fitzgibbon's mother's voice also emerges in the tune it plays, the 1913 song "Too-ra-loo-ra-loo-ral (That's an Irish Lullaby)" by J. R. [James Royce] Shannon.[29] With a simple verse-chorus structure, the verses of the song tell the story of a person who longs to hear their mother's voice again, while the chorus is the

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[29] Since Fitzgibbon's church opened in 1897 in New York City, this implies that the Fitzgibbon acquired the music box several years after his mother started sending whiskey as a Christmas present. It is never established in the film where the music box came from.

lullaby the mother used to sing. In the second verse in particular, the protagonist can feel her presence in dreams:

> Oft, in dreams, I wander to that cot again,
> I feel her arms a huggin' me as when she held me then.
> And I hear her voice a hummin' to me as in days of yore,
> When she used to rock me fast asleep outside the cabin door.[30]

While the entire song's narrative aligns with Fitzgibbon's own separation from his mother, this verse especially echoes Fitzgibbon's declaration that the music box helps him "almost" hear his own mother's voice. This connection to memory also emerges in the musical structure, since the beginnings of each lyric—with the exception of the final line—contains the same motive as in the beginning of the chorus's lullaby (Example 4.5).

The content of the verses, however, are only implied in the film, as Fitzgibbon's music box solely plays the chorus—or the mother's lullaby. The chorus lyrics, most of which make up the title, are mostly nonsense syllables, putting greater emphasis on the melody's power to soothe. In the absence of Fitzgibbon's mother, O'Malley sings the chorus over the top of the music box, effectively soothing Fitzgibbon to sleep with the lullaby. This is yet another instance of O'Malley infantilizing Fitzgibbon, taken to a new extreme by adopting a mothering role. After the sheriff brings him back to the church, Fitzgibbon is clearly hungry and tired. As O'Malley sings the tune, Fitzgibbon starts drifting off to sleep; O'Malley

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[30] The first verse: "Over in Killarney, many years ago/My Mother sang a song to me in tones so sweet and low/Just a simple little ditty, in her good old Irish way/And I'd give the world if she could sing that song to me this day." Bing Crosby's recorded version, released in 1945, changes the final line to "And I'd give the world if I could hear that song of hers today," and also does not include the second verse. Crosby's version (chorus, verse 1, chorus) brings in the music box sound for the final iteration of the chorus. This may be a direct reference to his character O'Malley singing over Fitzgibbon's music box in the film.

Too-ra-loo-ra-loo-ral

THAT'S AN IRISH LULLABY

Words and Music
By J. R. SHANNON

Moderately

mf

With expression

O - ver in Kil - lar - ney, Man - y years a - go, Me
Oft, in dreams, I wan - der To that cot a - gain, I

mp in sustained style

Mith - er sang a song to me In tones so sweet and low, Just a
feel her arms a hug - gin' me As when she held me then. And I

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Example 4.5: Shannon, "Too-ra-loo-ra-loo-ral (That's an Irish Lullaby)"

4

sim - ple lit - tle dit - ty, In her good ould I - rish way, And I'd
hear her voice a - hum - min' To me as in days of yore, When she

retard

give the world if she could sing That song to me this day.
used to rock me fast a - sleep Out - side the cab - in door.

retard

REFRAIN *Smoothly with much expression*
in time

"Too - ra - loo - ra - loo - ral, Too - ra - loo - ra - li,

mp in time

SONGS OF IRELAND §§ Price $1.00
A COLLECTION OF TYPICAL IRISH FAVORITES

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Example 4.5 continued

5

Too - ra - loo - ra - loo - ral, Hush now, don't you cry!

Too - ra - loo - ra - loo - ral, Too - ra - loo - ra - li,

Too - ra - loo - ra - loo - ral,

1. That's an I - rish lul - la - by."

retard

2. Optional ending

loo - ral, That's an I - rish lul - la - by."

retard

M.W.&SONS 13094 - 3

WARNING: Any person who shall willfully and for profit copy the words or music of this song, or any portion thereof, shall be liable to criminal prosecution under the United States Copyright Law.

Example 4.5 continued

continues to hum the chorus as he puts the music box away and shuts off the lights. By the end of the scene, O'Malley's voice has fully supplanted the music box tune, effectively becoming a human manifestation of the machine. With the additional effort made in the film to affirm O'Malley's more normative masculinity throughout, O'Malley's singing of "Irish Lullaby" effectively re-genders the tune to be about fatherhood. To be clear, this is not simply because O'Malley is singing the tune, but also because of the relative power dynamic between O'Malley and Fitzgibbon. Though he avoids telling Fitzgibbon initially, O'Malley is actually sent to the church as Fitzgibbon's superior. Even more than this, O'Malley functions more like a guardian angel than a person, one whose past is shrouded in mystery. No one finds out why exactly O'Malley became a priest, or why he has the clout he does within the Church system. Nevertheless, by selling a song he wrote, he is able to save the church from financial ruin, and then help secure money for rebuilding after the church burns down. And perhaps most importantly, he is able to restore Fitzgibbon to his mother; when the church fire prevents Fitzgibbon from having the means to go back to Ireland, O'Malley instead finds a way to bring Fitzgibbon's mother to New York City. To make this reunion complete, he teaches the boys' choir to sing "Irish Lullaby," which cues and accompanies the mother's entrance. But the song also signals O'Malley's own departure, now that he has successfully helped the church and Fitzgibbon. Prior to the surprise reunion with his mother, Fitzgibbon brings out the music box—and the whiskey—one more time to toast O'Malley's departure. By the end, with Fitzgibbon reunited with his mother, O'Malley slips away from the church unseen; and O'Malley, as patriarch to Fitzgibbon, becomes the voice of memory.

In both *Since You Went Away* and *Going My Way*, the music box reinforced the power of memory and nostalgia, the pain of separation, and the promise of reconciliation. In *Since You Went Away*, the music box emphasized the love between Anne and Tim while Tim was fighting in Europe; in *Going My Way*, it sonified Fitzgibbon's longing for his mother while working on a different continent. Both films also centered on self-sacrifice, with Tim leaving his family to support the US in World War II, and Fitzgibbon heeding a higher religious authority by starting a parish in New York City. Because of this, the music box opened characters up to the memory of what was lost, even if for a good reason, and the toll it took on them. Anne, who was reticent to show vulnerability for fear of selfishness, was nonetheless moved to tears when she listened to the music box. And Fitzgibbon only revealed his longing for his mother when listening to the music box with O'Malley. By making this internal strife external through sound, the music box allowed for the possibility of reconciliation.

The music box in both films also reflected the otherness of Anne and Fitzgibbon, but this was obscured in favor of what the music box's sound represented. In *Since You Went Away*, the music box contained the only sonic trace of Tim's voice in the film; while it was a mechanized voice, this trace also emanated from an idealized and normative masculinity. And the music box, only present at the very end of the film, signaled Tim's homecoming and his restoration of authority in the home. In *Going My Way*, O'Malley sings over the top of, and eventually in place of, the music box, effectively re-humanizing the music box melody. And whereas the music box communicated the absence of Fitzgibbon's mother, O'Malley's efforts reunited mother and son by the end of the film. With both of these examples, the

music box was no longer about subjects marked as other but, instead, about the more normative characters who fixed them.

Conclusion: Looking Back, Looking Forward

By 1944, when *Going My Way* hit the theaters, the music box was a ghostly echo of its nineteenth century self. To conclude this study, I want to go back to where I began chronologically and look at the contrasts between mid-twentieth century media embodiments of the music box and their nineteenth century precursors. These contrasts underscore the music box as a kind of interlocutor in an American story of difference. Whereas "Euphemia's Music-Box" in 1872 showcased the music box as a mechanized voice, *Going My Way* de-emphasized this role. Fitzgibbon's memories of his mother singing to him, on the one hand, established the music box as a mechanized voice; however, O'Malley accompanying, and then replacing, the music box tune with his own voice prioritized human (male) over mechanized (female) voice. Additionally, the film fulfilled promises made on the music box, specifically Fitzgibbon's desire to see his mother again. In 1886, "The Story of Agee Sang Long" highlighted the heathen-like nature of Agee considering the divinity of the music box. But in *Going My Way*, O'Malley was divine and therefore had the authority to legitimize Fitzgibbon's wishes. In short, the gendered and racialized tensions highlighted by the music box in the nineteenth century were obscured (but not eliminated) in favor of cementing the music box as a powerful marker of nostalgic desire.

There are ramifications for forgetting the mechanized voice and machinic body as they were understood in the nineteenth century. Notably, in doing so we erase or efface

important histories, such as how contingent voices and bodies emerged in music box discourse. As I showed with *Going My Way*, the music box's connections to otherness did not disappear but were supplanted by more normative bodies. This obscuring has continued in today's media. In the film *Ex Machina* (2015), my discussion of which opened this project, the music box was not physically present in the film, yet its timbre remained as a core feature of the automaton Ava's theme. Her seeming sonic innocence, as the director and composers described it, bely the ostensible narrative point of the film, which ties to Ava's awareness of her confinement and desire to escape her creator, Nathan. Immediately preceding the first presentation of Ava's theme, when she first appears on screen, another character takes note of a crack in the plexiglass, clearly made by someone (or something) hitting it, complete with ominous underscoring. Additionally, Ava's theme clearly borrows from the musical code that aliens used to communicate with humans in *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* (1977), a reference to otherness or an unknowable foreign entity.

As I have shown in this dissertation, the music box as sonifying difference has been prevalent in literature since the beginning, and its resonances extend far beyond World War II-era films like *Since You Went Away* and *Going My Way*. Music boxes have consistently appeared in films since 1944, including featuring nearly every year in at least one film for the past fifty years (see Appendix). And although *Ex Machina* is not on the list, the music box timbre has nonetheless retained certain signifiers, such as romantic innocence and nostalgia, while eliding notions of otherness. As I indicated at the beginning of the chapter, *Anastasia* was just one recent example that featured the music box as having the power to restore memories but also doing so for someone with immense privilege. It is telling that Anastasia,

who remembers her past when prompted by the music box, is not actually an othered orphan of low means but a lost Russian royal. A rare exception to this shift away from the music box highlighting otherness was the 1965 film *A Patch of Blue*, which starred Sidney Poitier as the owner of the music box featured in the film. While still rooted in romanticism—Poitier's character shares the music box with a white, blind teenager, and it emphasizes their relationship among racial tensions—the music box nonetheless highlights both characters' otherness and how it brings them together.

This study constitutes the beginning of a more in-depth exploration of the music box as a distinct mode through which to understand gender, race, and voice in US popular media, and there are still lingering questions. For me, this project is a story of contingency, as I conveyed through the rhetoric of mechanized voice and machinic body. One thing I did not fully address was the question of why an author would be more willing to grant a machine humanity than a person, and what it was about the music box that allowed for that possibility. Even at the beginnings of the music box industry, Leigh Hunt's poetic celebration of the music box drew out the supposed humanity of the music box sound. A few years later, though, British explorers were quick to dismiss indigenous peoples' own reactions to the music box, undercutting their humanity. Who and what were placed within humanizing and dehumanizing discourses, and why? How did writers establish sound as a component of the human or subhuman, and in what contexts?

Related more specifically to contingent bodies, I am also interested in thinking more philosophically about the mechanical versus the human and how this apparent dichotomy relates to other theories and comparisons, or if there was any differentiation among various

terms referring to the subhuman. For instance, white authors described enslaved laborers as both animalistic and machinic, as of nature and antithetical to nature. The music box, too, in Leigh Hunt's conception of it, was both of and beyond nature. These seemingly contradictory descriptors nonetheless shaped conceptions of the other in the US from cultural, social, scientific, and political perspectives. Studying the music box, as an ever-present but little-studied machine, helps showcase the ubiquity of discourses surrounding contingent bodies and voices in the nineteenth century and beyond.

APPENDIX

Known Titles of Films Featuring a Music Box

An Alpine Echo (1909)
On the Stroke of Five (1912)
Zane Grey's The Golden West (1932)
Madame Rackateer (1932)
Dancing Pirate (1936)
The Wrong Road (1937)
Holiday (1938)
Pinocchio (1940)
The Shop Around the Corner (1940)
Kathleen (1941)
The Saint's Vacation (1941)
The Girl from Alaska (1942)
Timber! (1942)
Going My Way (1944)
Lake Placid Serenade (1944)
None But the Lonely Heart (1944)
Since You Went Away (1944)
Dressed to Kill (1946)
The Exile (1947)
Out of the Storm (1948)
Unfaithfully Yours (1948)
A Bullet Is Waiting (1954)
The Criminal Life of Archibaldo de la Cruz (1955)
The Burglar (1957)
Get Outta Town (1960)
The Innocents (1961)
Two Rode Together (1961)
For a Few Dollars More (1965)
A Patch of Blue (1965)
Chitty Chitty Bang Bang (1968)
House of Dark Shadows (1970)
Jenny (1970)
The Life and Times of Judge Roy Bean (1972)
Man and Boy (1972)
Scalawag (1973)
So Sad About Gloria (1973)
Terror Circus (1973)
From Noon Til Three (1976)
Candleshoe (1977)
The Spy Who Loved Me (1977)
Time After Time (1979)
The Blue Lagoon (1980)
Somewhere in Time (1980)
The Stunt Man (1980)
The Watcher in the Woods (1980)
Ghost Story (1981)
Mad Max 2 (1981)
The Seduction (1982)
Footloose (1984)
Splash (1984)
Brazil (1985)
Blue Velvet (1986)
Extremities (1986)
Labyrinth (1986)
Dirty Rotten Scoundrels (1988)
Sister Sister (1988)
Music Box (1989)
Silence of the Lambs (1991)
Doppelganger (1993)
Falling Down (1993)
The Secret Garden (1993)
The Christmas Box (1995)
Waterworld (1995)
Anastasia (1997)
Batman and Robin (1997)
Seven Years in Tibet (1997)
Titanic (1997)
Mighty Joe Young (1998)
The Haunting (1999)
The Cell (2000)
The Princess Diaries (2001)
Darkness (2002)
Gangs of New York (2002)
Speakeasy (2002)
Tuck Everlasting (2002)
Jeux d'enfants [Love Me if You Dare] (2003)

The Haunted Mansion (2003)
The Phantom of the Opera (2004)
Hide and Seek (2005)
Bartholomew's Song (2006)
Miss Potter (2006)
Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man's Chest (2006)
Pirates of the Caribbean: At World's End (2007)
The Little Mermaid: Ariel's Beginning (2008)
Tinker Bell (2008)
Black Swan (2010)
Hanna (2011)
The Cabin in the Woods (2012)
The Woman in Black (2012)
The Conjuring (2013)
Oz the Great and Powerful (2013)
Deliver Us from Evil (2014)
Sisters (2015)
Beauty and the Beast (2017)
The Music Box (2018)

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