Lawrence Baron

Noise and Degeneration: Theodor Lessing's Crusade for Quiet

> Even the little shocks of railway travelling, not perceived by consciousness, the perpetual noises, and the various sights in the streets of a large town, our suspense pending the sequel of progressing events, the constant expectation of the newspaper, of the postman, of visitors, cost our brains wear and tear.[1]
>
> Max Nordau

As a Darwinian, Max Nordau believed that the inhabitants of modern industrial cities would eventually adapt to the myriad of stimuli which incessantly assaulted their senses. He diagnosed all those who could not adapt to this commotion as 'degenerates, hysterics, and neurasthenics'. What Nordau mocked as a pathological hypersensitivity to the clamour of urban life,[2] Theodor Lessing praised as a 'criterion for the refinement of the nerves and the versatility of the brain'.[3] Lessing is usually remembered as the controversial German-Jewish intellectual who was hounded out of his teaching position at the Technical Institute of Hanover in 1926 by right-wing students protesting his opposition to Hindenburg's presidency, and who was assassinated in exile in Czechoslovakia by two local Nazis in 1933. This legacy, as well as the reputation of his books on historicism, Jewish self-hatred, and European and Asian culture, have obscured his role as a pioneer in the noise abatement movement at the beginning of the twentieth century. To Lessing, the din of the metropolis was an effect and a cause of the degeneration of the quality of life in Western civilization. The *Deutscher Lärmschutzverband* which he founded represented not only a reformist crusade for quiet, but also a fundamental critique of the modernization process itself and of the ideas which promoted it.[4]

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Born in 1872, Lessing grew up during the period of Germany's rapid transition from an agrarian to an industrial society. His adolescent rebellion against his parents and teachers coincided with the neo-romantic revolt against positivism, urbanism, and industrialism. Along with his boyhood friend Ludwig Klages, Lessing was attracted to this 'cultural pessimism' which rejected the materialistic values of his parents in particular and of the Second Reich in general.[5] Deriving his *Weltanschauung* from an idiosyncratic synthesis of the philosophical insights of Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, and Kant, Lessing believed that the modern concept of progress merely served as a rationale for the exploitation and domination of nature and humanity by advanced nations and their political and economic leaders. He claimed that their insatiable 'will to power' stemmed from the anthropocentric and egocentric mentality of Western cultures. Moreover, he feared that the same perspective had transformed modern man into a cerebral monster who had lost touch with his instinctual self. Unlike vitalists like Klages, Lessing doubted whether a conscious regression to a primordial spontaneity was either desirable or possible. Instead, he demanded that the future use of science and technology be guided by the moral imperative to eliminate the suffering of all living creatures. Lessing's anti-noise movement reflected this seemingly contradictory outlook which repudiated the consequences of rationality and modernization, yet tried to save mankind with a more ethical and rational application of modern knowledge and inventions.[6]

Lessing first articulated his concern over noise pollution in two articles published in 1901 and 1902. There he approvingly repeated the complaints of Schopenhauer, Wagner, Carlyle, and other past notables about how the constant clatter of urban life had disturbed their creative and contemplative concentration. Lessing surmised that their discontent would have been even greater if they had been living in a modern metropolis with its 'electric trolleys, steam locomotives, automobiles, and telephones'. Then he denounced the beating of rugs, the ringing of church bells, and the practising of pianos as the everyday noises which bothered him the most. Citing recent medical findings, he warned that continual exposure to grating sounds would lead to progressive hearing loss and nervous exhaustion.[7]

Rather than just grumble about the tumult in the cities like some curmudgeon, Lessing proceeded to analyze it as a reaction to the

regimentation and rationality of contemporary civilization. In his opinion, which clearly revealed Schopenhauer's influence,[8] the human desire to make noise emanated from an unconscious urge to repress self-consciousness and its awareness of the pain of existence. As the behaviour of men and women became more cognitive and inhibited, Lessing argued, they generated more noise to numb their hyperactive minds and to compensate for the decreasing number of outlets available for expressing their instinctual needs.[9] He pointed to the mass popularity of music at the turn of the century as an example of this process. Although Lessing appreciated the capacity of music to move the listener emotionally, he interpreted its current proliferation and the fanaticism of its devotees as surrogates for sexual gratification.[10]

Lessing also considered the making of noise to be a sublimated manifestation of the 'will to power'. He observed that the working classes tended to be more boisterous than the ruling classes. To explain this phenomenon, he employed Nietzsche's theory of *ressentiment:*

> A coachman who cracks the whip, a maid who shakes out the bedding, a drummer who beats the drum, detect in their noises a personally enjoyable activity and a magnification of their own sphere of power. If these people have no other means to draw the world's attention to themselves and let others take notice of their power, then they can clearly prove their existence and influence through the ears of their fellow man.[11]

According to the same reasoning, an angry mob attempts to intimidate the government by causing a ruckus. Lessing maintained that the tolling of church bells signified Christianity's mission to proselytize and redeem all people by making its call to worship loudly omnipresent. Similarly, he viewed the ballyhoo of German patriotism as exhibited in beer halls and various festivals as a blatant way to engender a sense of superiority and strength among its otherwise mediocre proponents.[12]

Summing up his first diatribe against the sources and dangers of noise pollution, Lessing placed the problem in the wider context of urban overpopulation and industrial pollution. Within the artificial environment of the city, noise was just one of several factors contributing to the dehumanization and deterioration of the quality of life. Lessing concluded that the human costs of urban and industrial progress might outweigh its material benefits:

> The pleasures and advantages of large cities, such as the theatre, art galleries, libraries, museums, and educational institutions, are purchased daily at too dear a price — namely, with the premature deaths of the urban populace, through enduring a rampant hubbub that would drive a cannibal to take flight, by inhaling thousands of disease germs in the dust and the litter on the pavement and in the man-made smog and stench that settles above the cities where hundreds of thousands of agitated, fatigued, estranged-from-nature, and actually deformed people, who are crammed together into the narrowest terrain and penned in clusters of stone boxes away from the sun and the forest, create an uproar and restlessly get on each other's nerves.[13]

With this dismal vision in mind, Lessing called for the formation of a 'coalition of intellectuals' which would propose and lobby for noise abatement reforms and ordinances.[14] In the second of his articles, he suggested a few measures that could be taken immediately to silence the sounds that especially irritated him. To control the practising of musical instruments, he recommended the enactment of strict municipal statutes designating uniform quiet hours for all residential buildings and requiring those who practise music during the permitted time to close their windows. He hoped that the deleterious effects of rug-beating — the resounding pounding and the introduction of bacteria and dust into the air — could be reduced either by the establishment of restricted areas for performing this task or by the centralization of it in the hands of a professional rug-cleaning service. Though these proposals seem eccentric and quaint, some of the other policies which Lessing mentioned in passing are still reasonable and relevant today: the use of rubber tyres and quieter paving materials to dampen the cacophony of vehicular traffic, the careful packaging of freight shipped through cities to cushion it from rattling and banging, and the construction of schools in public gardens and forest preserves to ensure the tranquil atmosphere needed for learning.[15]

Despite the feasibility of his suggestions, Lessing recognized that they were 'only provisional and piecemeal measures'. After all, he deemed noise pollution to be an offshoot of a deeper malaise in Western civilization. Thus, Lessing finished his early anti-noise articles with a condemnation of the systemic causes of irksome noises like rug-beating. He charged that modern individualism and materialism had fostered the spread of the nuclear family whose primary purpose had become the accumulation of possessions opulently displayed in each private household. Not only did this lead to 'the enslavement of people to the tyranny of dead objects', it also multiplied the amount of housework necessary for the

maintenance of society. If housing units could be consolidated and cooking and cleaning could be shared by the residents of such collective dwellings, then, Lessing hoped, the noise produced by housework would be diminished significantly. Furthermore, women would be liberated from their traditional housekeeping roles which always had stifled the development of their personalities and talents. As long as society resisted the socialization of its basic institutions, married couples, in Lessing's opinion, would consider the making of noise to be an inalienable right based on the sancity of the nuclear family.[16]

As his conclusions indicate, Lessing was more committed to socialism and feminism than to noise abatement at this stage of his career. From 1903 until 1908, he became more involved in those two causes and in the country boarding-school and adult education movements as well. During this period, however, he rarely mentioned the noisy conditions which he once had decried.[17]

While Lessing occupied himself with other issues, the first noise abatement organization was formed in the United States. After conducting a successful campaign for legislation regulating the blowing of whistles and foghorns by boats and ships in New York City's East River, Mrs. Julia Barnett-Rice founded The Society for the Suppression of Unnecessary Noise in December 1906. Its manifesto declared its aim to be 'the removal of one of the greatest banes of city life, unnecessary noise, which first wrecks health and then is a chief torment of illness'.[18] Through a combination of publicizing the hazards of noise pollution in newspaper and magazine articles and of recruiting influential figures like William Dean Howells, Felix Adler, Mark Twain, and Congressman William S. Bennet as leaders of the movement, the Society scored some impressive victories in its war against noise, including the passage by many city councils of ordinances mandating the creation of quiet zones in the vicinity of hospitals and schools.[19] By 1913 the Society counted forty state governors as its honorary vice-presidents and proudly pointed to 'the widespread attention which each branch (of its work) had commanded and the eagerness with which it has been adopted in other places'.[20]

Inspired by the accomplishments of the Society, Lessing started its German counterpart, the *Deutscher Lärmschutzverband* (German Association for Protection from Noise), in 1908. The Anti-Noise Association, as he usually referred to it, attracted five hun-

dred charter members who each paid annual dues of three Reichsmarks to support its activities. Under the motto '*non clamor sed amor*' (a modern translation of this slogan might be 'make love, not noise'), the Association sought to convince the German public that the right to quiet was an essential right which should be guaranteed by a strictly enforced Imperial law against unnecessary noise. To accelerate the achievement of this goal, Lessing encouraged his comrades to report the names of all disturbers of the peace for publication in the Association's newsletter and to instigate legal proceedings against them whenever possible. As a last resort, he urged his followers to give the offenders a taste of their own medicine by being equally and obnoxiously vociferous.[21]

In his capacity as editor of the Association's official organ *Der Antirüpel* (The Anti-Rowdy), whose title was changed after the first issue to *Das Recht auf Stille* (The Right To Quiet),[22] Lessing chronicled the contemporary struggle against annoying sounds and kept abreast of the judicial status and medical evaluation of noise pollution. *Das Recht auf Stille* typically printed protests against the barking of dogs, the clanging of trolleys, the chiming of clocks, the beeping of automobile horns, and the roaring of factory machinery.[23] When these complaints became the basis of law suits, the magazine followed the trials and analyzed the implications of the court's ruling in each case.[24] Lessing also published informational articles with titles like 'Quiet as the First Demand of Health Care and Nursing' and 'Neurology and Noise' which described the most recent research on the enervating impact of noise on the physical and psychological well-being of those constantly exposed to it.[25] In this way *Das Recht auf Stille* served as a forum for every facet of the noise abatement movement.

Although the Association received little support beyond the intellectual community, it did attract the attention of the few businesses engaged in noise abatement. Advertisements for doorstops, earplugs, acoustical insulation, and restful hotels and sanitoriums appeared on the back page of every issue of *Das Recht auf Stille*.[26] In December 1908, the mayor of Bad Nauheim inquired about the possibility of a corporate membership in the Association. The aldermen of Bad Nauheim, unfortunately, ridiculed and rejected this attempt to enhance the reputation of the town's spas for serenity.[27] Nevertheless, Lessing picked up the idea and decided to compile and publish a list of quiet hotels and resorts which had earned the Association's seal of approval.[28]

Aside from the forays into such ostensibly trivial campaigns, Lessing continued to regard excessive noise as an indicator of a serious pathology at the heart of Western civilization. He elaborated on this theme in his book *Der Lärm* (The Noise) which was released just prior to the founding of the Association. In the preface, Lessing anticipated the derision which a monograph about a mundane subject like noise would receive in academic circles. He challenged the prevailing notion that high culture and abstract philosophy provided the best index for understanding the nature of a society. An analysis of commonplace experiences, he contended, revealed 'what everyone basically considers most essential in life'.[29] As Herbert Poetzl has noted, Lessing's rationale for the study of routine occurrences 'exhibited a surprising affinity with certain of the critical tactics advocated in recent years by the French structuralist movement'.[30]

In the opening chapter of *Der Lärm*, Lessing expanded on his earlier hypothesis that man's vital energies were being sacrificed on the altar of consciousness. Sounding much like Freud in *Civilization and Its Discontents*, he portrayed the attainment of civilization as a process of increasing repression and inhibition of natural drives. In contrast to Freud, however, Lessing was less impressed with the advantages of progress and more dismayed with its concomitant debilitation of human instincts:

> Thus, the progress of human consciousness of the world threatens the life force which must bear this progress. Thus, our ascent to intellectual culture appears to become a descent of life. Thus, the growing shadow of decadence, depopulation, or, at least, of a vital enfeeblement and physical diminution of mankind casts a pall over the extolled ideal of evolution.[31]

This parasitical and antagonistic relationship between culture and nature was one of the central themes of Lessing's subsequent philosophical works.[32]

Although conceding that rationality had triumphed over irrationality, Lessing postulated that the human psyche had an automatic need to return to 'unconsciousness and oblivion'. In his thinking, religion, art, and music served as outlets for these libidinal cravings. But the Dionysian urge to escape consciousness also could assume potentially destructive forms. In this connection, Lessing equated the psychological functions of making noise, drinking alcohol, taking narcotics, and smoking tobacco: all acted

'to free, expand, and momentarily elevate the instinctual and emotional domain (that is the subjective side of life)' and conversely 'to suppress, contract, and push back the intellectual, rational, and conscious domain (that is the objective functions of the soul)'.[33]

Like the other types of addiction that he mentioned, Lessing diagnosed the compulsion to make noise as a socially and culturally induced disease. Once again he attributed the escalation of the noise level in modern Europe to the urbanization, industrialization, rationalization, and individualization of society. From here on, his analysis of the causes and effects of noise pollution diverged somewhat from his earlier pronouncements. Rather than accuse just the working class of being noisy to satisfy its desire for some semblance of power, he now discerned that the egoism inherent in Western culture instilled members of every class with the need to 'scream', whether it be through speaking, writing, performing, or gesturing, in order to make themselves heard and noticed. Amidst the pandemonium of these voices competing for recognition and the throbbing of machines, the city-dweller, as Georg Simmel also observed, became inured to the bombardment of his senses by selectively tuning much of it out and by striking a pose of indifference to his environment. Beneath that imperturbable facade with which the urbanite faced his peers, Lessing detected a chronic nervous tension which spontaneously could erupt into acts of violence against anyone whose intrusive presence was a source of this tension. Therefore, he calculated the social costs of coping with noise to be the intensification of alienation and aggression among the masses of people living in the metropolises of Europe.[34]

In further probing the roots of the noise mania, Lessing reached decidedly anti-capitalistic conclusions. Whereas before he had singled out the nuclear family for censure, he now explicitly inveighed against the whole ethos of acquiring and consuming private property. For one thing, the profit motive encouraged the economic development and despoliation of hitherto peaceful wilderness areas like the Lüneburg Heath. The typical businessman, as caricatured by Lessing, tried to impress others with his wealth by conspicuously spending it on expensive goods and diversions like travel. In the role of a tourist, he acted ostentatiously and disturbed the restful havens which he visited.[35] Lessing averred that the same possessive mentality was an obstacle to finding judicial remedies for the noise problem. The law in capitalistic societies, after all, rigorously protected an owner's right to do whatever he

wanted on his property. Lessing understood that this principle, in effect, granted property owners a license to emit noise and other pollutants from their land insofar as this activity did not infringe upon the property rights of those living nearby. Since property rights were defined narrowly in the most materialistic terms, Lessing realized that neither the physical nor psychological health of the people affected by such emissions was safeguarded legally. Consequently, he advocated the curtailment of private property rights on behalf of the personal welfare of the members of the community.[36]

In addition to this economic interpretation, Lessing theorized that the noisy egotism of the modern European was a sign of cultural immaturity. The peoples of the younger Western civilizations, in his view, had not yet accepted fully the need to internalize and spiritualize their biological drives for the sake of social organization. He juxtaposed Occidental boisterousness to Oriental sedateness. The older Asiatic cultures valued the contemplative and impassive life. Thus, silence was prized as a token of self-discipline and wisdom.[37] When Lessing expanded this comparison between East and West in his postwar book *Europa und Asien* (1918), he maintained that the differing attitudes in each region towards noise reflected differing conceptions of the individual's relationship to society. Europeans irresponsibly made noise because they were so self-centred; Asians respectfully remained quiet because they were so communally oriented. In Lessing's judgment, the dynamic progress of the former was marred by their tendency to fight each other and to contaminate the environment in the struggle for personal and national power; the technological backwardness of the latter was redeemed by their capacity to live in harmony with each other and with nature. The ideal society, as envisioned by Lessing, would retain the material advancements of the West, but would place them in the service of the collective morality of the East.[38]

Lessing's philosophy and practice of noise abatement failed to strike a responsive chord among the Germans. *Der Lärm*, as Poetzl correctly observes, 'was too ponderously philosophical and too stylistically convoluted to engage a popular audience, much less incite them to action'.[39] Although Lessing had mailed out 20,000 copies of the Association's programme to prospective members, fewer than 1,000 ultimately joined the organization. This fell far short of his original expectation of 6,000 members. Of those who did affiliate with the movement, most were either musicians, authors, artists, professors, doctors, or lawyers. Lessing complain-

ed that this elite group constantly squabbled over the tactics and goals of the Association. To add to his troubles, many newspapers treated the Association's activities as the butt of jokes.[40] Lessing relinquished the leadership of the Association and the editorship of its journal around 1911 to devote more time to the elucidation of his philosophical system. He, nevertheless, continued to write articles about the noise abatement movement. The Association was disbanded in 1914. It was another casualty of the first world war.[41]

It is instructive to speculate about the reasons for the success of the American Society for the Suppression of Unnecessary Noise and the failure of the German Association for Protection from Noise. It may be partly a function of the differing status of the respective leaders of these two groups. Mrs. Rice was a wealthy philanthropic socialite whose husband owned the magazine that carried her articles on noise abatement and who had plenty of spare time to devote to her pet cause.[42] Lessing, on the other hand, was a struggling college teacher and writer who had a notorious reputation for stirring up controversy. His defense of an atheistic dramatist against charges of blasphemy in 1895,[43] his resignation from the country boarding-school at Haubinda to protest the adoption of anti-semitic admission policies there in 1904, his conducting evening courses for factory workers in Dresden in 1905, and his outspoken feminism, did not exactly endear him to the German political and economic establishment.[44]

The conflicting approaches of the American and German movements appear to be an even more significant factor in determining their diverse fates. The Society stressed educational campaigns and avoided sponsoring anti-noise litigation. By categorizing 'unnecessary noise' as inefficient and unproductive noise, the Society admitted that much noise was required for economic prosperity. Raymond W. Smilor, a recent historian of the Society, has credited its ability to attract powerful politicians and industrial magnates to this conservative stance 'which never questioned the priorities of business, production, and progress'.[45] Though Lessing occasionally referred to 'unnecessary noise' too, he did not really distinguish between productive and unproductive noise. His position on noise grew out of a critique of the dominant social, economic, political, and intellectual trends of the era. His peculiar synthesis of romantic and socialistic ideas further restricted the appeal of his anti-noise league: while its elitist and regressive overtones probably offended Social Democrats and liberals, its inter-

nationalistic and communistic elements probably repelled most conservatives and *völkisch* nationalists. Lessing's advocacy of anti-noise litigation, consumer boycotts of loud establishments, and radical changes in bourgeois values challenged the 'priorities of business, production, and progress', which, in turn, explains why he failed to gain the mainstream support that the American movement enjoyed.

Lessing's ambivalence towards progress is also what distinguished his definition of degeneration from that of Nordau. Nordau used the term to discredit modernist dissatisfaction with contemporary European civilization. As one historian has declared, 'To be a degenerate by Nordau's standards was, quite simply, not to subscribe to his view of cultural progress'.[46] What was evolution to Nordau was devolution to Lessing: the displacement of emotion by reason, of nature by technology, of community by individuality, of cooperation by competition, of morality by power. For Lessing, these trends resulting from modernization had led to the degeneration of man's sense of responsibility towards others and the environment. He had singled out excessive noise as one of the omens of the destructive forces brewing beneath the facade of progress. The outbreak of the first world war confirmed his pessimistic analysis of modern society. After 1914, Lessing realized that the quest for peace would have to encompass far more than just a crusade for quiet.[47]

Notes

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1. Max Nordau, *Degeneration* (New York 1968), 39.

2. Ibid., 537-541. For discussions of Nordau's theory of degeneration, see George L. Mosse, 'Max Nordau and His *Degeneration*', in Nordau, op. cit., xv-xxxiv and Milton Gold, 'Nordau on Degeneration: A Study of the Book and Its Cultural Significance' (unpublished PhD thesis, Columbia University 1957).

3. Theodor Lessing, 'Ueber den Lärm', *Nord und Süd*, 24, 289 (April 1901), 77. On page 83 of this article, Lessing attacked Nordau's depiction of anti-noise advocates as neurotics.

4. For accounts of the student protest against Lessing, see August Messer, *Der Fall Lessing* (Bielefeld 1926) and Michael Stephen Steinberg, 'Sabres, Books, and Brown Shirts: The Radicalization of the German Student, 1918-1935' (unpublished PhD thesis, Johns Hopkins University 1971), 368-395. Although Lessing's involvement in the noise abatement movement is mentioned often in passing, the only extended description of it is to be found in Herbert Poetzl, 'Confrontation With Modernity: Theodor Lessing's Critique of German Culture' (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Massachusetts 1978), 112-123.

5. Theodor Lessing, *Einmal und nie wieder* (Gütersloh 1969), 172-252, 415-447; Hans Eggert Schröder, *Theodor Lessings autobiographische Schriften* (Bonn 1970); Gerd-Klaus Kaltenbrunner, 'Vom Weltschmerz des technischen Zeitalters: Ludwig Klages und Theodor Lessing', *Tribüne: Zeitschrift zum Verständnis des Judentums*, 8, 29 (1969), 3126-3146.

6. Lessing's major philosophical works are: *Schopenhauer, Wagner, Nietzsche: Einführung in moderne deutsche Philosophie* (Munich 1906); *Der Bruch in der Ethik Kants. Wert- und willenstheoretische Prolegomena* (Bern 1908); *Philosophie als Tat* (Göttingen 1914); *Europa und Asien* (Berlin 1918); *Geschichte als Sinngebung des Sinnlosen* (Munich 1919); *Untergang der Erde am Geist* (Hanover 1924). For an analysis of Lessing's thought, see Poetzl, op. cit.; Ekkehard Hieronimus, *Theodor Lessing-Otto Meyerhof-Leonard Nelson: Bedeutende Juden in Niedersachsen* (Hanover 1964), 9-57; Hans Dieter Huesgen, 'Geschichtsphilosophie und Kulturkritik Theodor Lessings' (unpublished PhD thesis, Mainz 1961); Manfred Küchler, 'Die literarische und philosophische Entwicklung Theodor Lessings' (unpublished thesis, Technische Hochschule Hanovers 1976).

7. Lessing, 'Ueber den Lärm', 71-82; Theodor Lessing, 'Noch Einiges über den Lärm', *Nord und Süd*, 26, 309 (December 1902), 336-338.

8. Arthur Schopenhauer, trans. Bailey Saunders, 'On Noise', in *Studies in Pessimism. The Essays of Arthur Schopenhauer* (New York n.d.), 90-95.

9. Lessing, 'Ueber den Lärm', 74-79.

10. Ibid., 84; Lessing, 'Noch Einiges über den Lärm', 331-332.

11. Lessing, 'Ueber den Lärm', 75-76.

12. Ibid., 79-80.

13. Ibid., 83.

14. Ibid., 84.

15. Lessing, 'Noch Einiges über den Lärm', 333-337.

16. Ibid., 338-339.

17. Lessing, *Einmal und nie wieder*, 400-405; Poetzl, op cit., 94-112. For a discussion of Lessing's feminism, see Theodor Lessing, *Weib, Frau, Dame. Ein Essay* (Munich 1910) and Lawrence Baron, 'Theodor Lessing: Between Jewish Self-Hatred and Zionism', *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book*, 26 (London 1981).

18. Mrs. Isaac L. Rice, 'An Effort to Suppress Noise', *The Forum*, 37 (April 1906), 552-570; Mrs. Isaac L. Rice, 'Our Most Abused Sense — the Sense of Hearing', *The Forum*, 38, 4 (April/June 1907), 558-572. Somehow Lessing got the erroneous impression that Mrs. Rice was the daughter of Congressman William S. Bennet who drafted the first federal anti-noise statute in response to her campaign. See Theodor Lessing, 'Der Verein gegen Lärm', *Die Zukunft*, 64 (19 September 1908), 427. Raymond W. Smilor, who recently interviewed her daughter, Marjorie Rice Levis, indicates that Mrs. Rice's maiden name was Barnett and not Bennett. See Raymond W. Smilor, 'Toward an Environmental Perspective: The Anti-Noise

Campaign, 1893-1932', in Martin V. Melosi (ed.), *Pollution and Reform in American Cities, 1870-1930* (Austin 1980), 141, 150.

19. Mrs. Isaac L. Rice, 'The Children's Hospital Branch of the Society for the Suppression of Unnecessary Noise', *The Forum*, 39, 4 (April/June 1908), 560-567; Mrs. Isaac L. Rice, 'Quiet Zones for Schools', *The Forum*, 42 (December 1911), 731-742.

20. *Report of the Society for the Suppression of Unnecessary Noise 1907-1913* (New York 1914). For an overview of the Society and other noise abatement movements in America, see Smilor, op. cit., 135-149; Raymond W. Smilor, 'Cacophony at 34th and 6th: The Noise Problem in America, 1900-1930', *American Studies*, 13, 1 (Spring 1977), 23-38; Raymond W. Smilor, 'Confronting the Industrial Environment: The Noise Problem in America, 1893-1932' (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Texas 1978).

21. Lessing, 'Der Verein gegen Lärm', 437-442; Theodor Lessing, 'Die Lärmschutzbewegung', *Dokumente des Fortschritts*, 1 (October 1908), 954-961; Theodor Lessing, 'Aufruf des Deutschen Lärmschutzverbandes', *Der Anti-Rüpel*, 1, 1 (November 1908), 1-2.

22. Theodor Lessing, 'Anti-Rüpel', *Das Recht auf Stille*, 1, 2 (December 1908), 17-18.

23. For reports and complaints about these kinds of noises, see *Das Recht auf Stille*, 1 (1909), 124-125, 140-141, 143-145, 222-223.

24. For reports on the legal status of noise abatement, see *Das Recht auf Stille*, 1 (1909), 61, 77-81, 145-146, 230-231.

25. W. Nägeli Äkerblom, 'Neurologie und Lärm', *Das Recht auf Stille*, 1, 5 (March 1909), 81-82; Dr. A. Kühner, 'Ruhe als erste Forderung der Gesundheits- und Krankenpflege', *Das Recht auf Stille*, 1, 11 (October 1909), 221-223.

26. 'Inserate', *Das Recht auf Stille*, 1 8 (June 1908), 156.

27. Theodor Lessing, 'Stadtväter im Kampf gegen Lärm', *Das Recht auf Stille*, 1, 4 (March 1908), 57-61; Theodor Lessing, 'Die deutschen Bäder und der Antilärmverein: Eine Anklage', *Das Recht auf Stille*, 1, 8 (June 1909), 139-141.

28. Theodor Lessing, 'Ruhe Hotels, ein neuer Vorstoss des Antilärmvereins', *Das Recht auf Stille*, 1, 9 (July 1909), 157-158.

29. Theodor Lessing, *Der Lärm: Eine Kampfschrift gegen die Geräusche unseres Lebens* (Wiesbaden 1908), 1-2. (Hereafter designated as *Der Lärm*.)

30. Poetzl, op. cit., 114-115, 272.

31. Lessing, *Der Lärm*, 3-4, 14-19. Although many of his insights sound very Freudian, Lessing was critical of Freud for being too positivistic.See Theodor Lessing, *Ueber Hypnose und Suggestion. Eine psychologisch-medizinische Studie* (Göttingen 1907), 22-27. Freud disliked Lessing because Lessing had once sent a letter to him denouncing psychoanalysis for typifying Jewish intellectuality. See Kurt Hiller, *Koepfe und Troepfe: Profile aus einem Jahrhundert* (Stuttgart 1950), 307-308.

32. See Theodor Lessing, *Die verfluchte Kultur. Gedanken über den Gegensatz von Leben und Geist* (Munich 1921) and Lessing, *Untergang der Erde am Geist*.

33. Lessing, *Der Lärm*, 1-11.

34. Ibid., 11-19, 22-36. For Lessing's views on Simmel, see Lessing, *Philosophie als Tat*, 303-342. Also see Poetzl, op. cit., 118-120.

35. Lessing, *Der Lärm*, 46-49. Lessing's first novel chronicled the destruction of a forest by industrial developers. See Theodor Lensing (pseudonym for Lessing), *Komödie. Roman* (Leipzig 1894).

36. Lessing, *Der Lärm*, 82-88.

37. Ibid., 18-22; Theodor Lessing, 'Ueber Psychologie des Lärms', *Zeitschrift für Psychotherapie und medizinische Psychologie*, 1 (1909), 82-84. Also see Dr. Okiyama, 'Ein Japaner über deutschen Lärm', *Das Recht auf Stille*, 1, 2 (December 1908), 18-20.

38. Lessing, *Europa und Asien*, 63-68, 105-127.

39. Poetzl, op. cit., 114.

40. Theodor Lessing, 'An die Mitglieder und Freunde der Antilärmsache', *Das Recht auf Stille*, 1, 11 (October 1909), 223-224; Theodor Lessing, 'Jahres Ende. Ein Brief des Herausgebers', *Das Recht auf Stille,* 1, 12 (November 1909), 228-230; Lessing, 'Die Lärmschutzbewegung', *Dokumente des Fortschritts*, 1 (1908), 958. Some of the better-known members of the Association were Ferdinand Avenarius, Franz Blei, Hans Pfitzner, and Karl Lamprecht.

41. Lessing, *Einmal und nie wieder*, 405. For bibliographical information on *Das Recht auf Stille* and Lessing's subsequent anti-noise articles, see Ekkehard Hieronimus and Luitger Dietze, *Theodor Lessing: Eine Lebensskizze und Bibliographie* (Hanover 1972), 50, 60-61.

42. Smilor, 'Toward an Environmental Perspective: The Anti-Noise Campaign, 1893-1932', 141.

43. This case involved the dramatist Oskar Panizza and his play *Das Liebeskonzil*. See Theodor Lessing, *Der Fall Panizza. Eine kritische Betrachtung über 'Gotteslasterung' und kunstlerische Dinge vor Schwurgerichten* (Munich 1895) and Peter David Gilson Brown, 'Doghouse, Jailhouse, Madhouse: A Study of Oskar Panizza's Life and Literature' (unpublished PhD thesis, Columbia University 1971), 59-81.

44. Lessing, *Einmal und nie wieder*, 402-404; Poetzl, op. cit., 94-113.

45. Smilor, 'Toward an Environmental Perspective: The Anti-Noise Campaign, 1893-1932', 141-145.

46. P. M. Baldwin, 'Liberalism, Nationalism, and Degeneration: The Case of Max Nordau', *Central European History*, 13, 2 (June 1980), 103-107.

47. For some of Lessing's anti-war writings, see Theodor Lessing, *Europa und Asien oder der Mensch und das Wandellose* (Hanover 1923), 397-438 and Theodor Lessing, *Feind im Land. Satiren und Novellen* (Hanover 1923).

Lawrence Baron
is Associate Professor in the Department of History at St. Lawrence University, Canton, New York. He is the author of *The Eclectic Anarchism of Erich Mühsam* (New York 1976), and is at present working on an intellectual biography of Theodor Lessing.