

Expression, Truth and Authenticity: On Adorno's Theory of Music and Musical Performance

Edited by
Mário Vieira de Carvalho



Edições Colibri

Centro de Estudos de Sociologia e Estética Musical
Universidade Nova de Lisboa

**Expression, Truth and Authenticity:
On Adorno's Theory of Music and Musical Performance**

**Expression, Truth and Authenticity:
On Adorno's Theory of Music and Musical Performance**

Edited by
Mário Vieira de Carvalho

Text revision
Ivan Moody



Edições Colibri

•

Centro de Estudos de Sociologia e Estética Musical

CONGRESS EXPRESSION, TRUTH AND AUTHENTICITY : ON ADORNO'S
THEORY OF MUSIC AND MUSICAL PERFORMANCE, LISBOA

Expression, truth and authenticity : on adorno's theory of music and musical
performance / Congress Expression, Truth and Authenticity... ; ed. Mário
Vieira de Carvalho. – (Ensaaios musicológicos ; 6)

ISBN 978-972-772-872-5

I – CARVALHO, Mário Vieira de, 1943-

CDU 78.01
061

Título: Expression, Truth and Authenticity:
On Adorno's Theory of Music and Musical Performance

Editor: Mário Vieira de Carvalho

Edição: Edições Colibri/Centro de Estudos
de Sociologia e Estética Musical

Capa: Ricardo Moita

Depósito legal n.º 288 508/09

Contributors

Angelo Martingo. Pianist and musicologist, Ph. D. in music aesthetics at Sheffield University (2004). Post-doctoral research in performance studies at the Universidade Nova de Lisboa (CESEM) since 2004. Co-editor of a book on *Musical Performance* (Lisbon, 2007).

António Pinho Vargas b. 1951 in Oporto. He graduated in history and piano (Oporto), and majored in composition at Rotterdam Conservatory. He teaches composition and is one of the artistic directors of OrchestrUtopica. He began his career as a jazz musician, recording seven CDs. As a composer of contemporary music, his works have been performed in several countries, and he has reached a position of pre-eminence in the world of music. Books: *Sobre Música (About Music)* (2002); *Cinco Conferências. Especulações Críticas sobre História da Música do Século XX* (2008).

Jean-Paul Olive. Musicologist and composer. Former director of the UFR Arts, philosophie et esthétique of the Université de Paris 8. Jean-Paul Olive teaches at the Université de Paris 8 and directs the Equipe d'Accueil "Esthétiques, musicologie et créations musicales". Specialist in the study of twentieth century scores and in the relationship between musical writing and society, his published work includes *Alban Berg, le tissage et le sens*, and *Musique et montage, essai sur le matériau musical au début du 20ème siècle* (Paris, Editions L'Harmattan).

José Júlio Lopes is a composer, teacher and researcher (at Universidade Nova de Lisboa – CESEM). He is currently preparing his PhD thesis with the title *A Discrete Machine – New Technologies and the Performing Arts: the Opera of the Future* (Culture and Communication Studies, Sociology of Music). He has a Master's degree in Culture and Communication Studies, with a dissertation on the theme *Operamulti – the contemporary reunion of the arts*.

Mário Vieira de Carvalho (Editor): Chairman of CESEM (Research Institute for Aesthetics and Sociology of Music), and Professor for Sociology of Music at the Department of Musicology of Universidade Nova de Lisboa (UNL). As invited professor has taught at the Humboldt-University (Berlin, Germany) and the universities of Innsbruck (Austria) and São Paulo (Brazil). Member of ISA (RC51). Member of the

Academy of Sciences of Lisbon (since 2008) and of the Direction of the Europäische Musiktheater-Akademie (Vienna). Between 2005-2008 Secretary of State for Culture of the (Socialist) Portuguese Government. Ca. 100 publications on sociology, aesthetics and history of music, including his more recent books on Contemporary music (2006, 2007), Dramaturgy and Opera staging (2005), Social History of Opera (*Sozialgeschichte des Opernhauses Lissabon*, 1999), Music and Literature (1999, 2005), and a contribution to the book *Soziale Horizonte von Musik – Ein kommentiertes Lesebuch zur Musiksoziologie*, edited by Christian Kaden and Karsten Mackensen (2006).

Max Paddison is Professor of Music at the University of Durham. He did research on the aesthetics and sociology of music of Adorno at the University of Frankfurt. He works in the field of aesthetics, philosophy and sociology of music, and critical theory, and his publications include two books, *Adorno's Aesthetics of Music* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), and *Adorno, Modernism and Mass Culture* (London: Kahn & Averill, 1996), and articles in *Journal of the Royal Musical Association*, *Music Analysis*, *Popular Music*, *Tempo*, *The British Journal of Aesthetics*, and *Musik & Ästhetik*.

Otto Kolleritsch, Rector of the University of Music and Dramatic Arts Graz; b. 1934 in Brunnsee in Styria, Austria. Otto Kolleritsch studied piano and music theory at the Graz Conservatory of Music and philosophy and musicology at the Graz Karl-Franzens-University. Since 1970 he has headed the Institut für Wertungsforschung, which deals with critical music aesthetics and research into aesthetic criteria. He is editor and co-author of the series “Studien zur Wertungsforschung” (published by Universal Edition, Wien-Graz, ca. 50 volumes to date). Since 1970 he has been the organizer of the yearly symposium within the Austrian avant-garde festival “steirischer herbst”. In 2003 he was re-elected Rector for a further four years. As a professor of “Wertungsforschung und kritische Musikästhetik”, he retired in September 2002.

Paula Ribeiro completed her Ph.D. thesis at the Université de Paris VIII (Department of Aesthetics, Sciences and Technologies of Arts – Musicology/Opera Dramaturgy). At the same time she studied opera staging (London, Paris and Lisbon). She is currently lecturer at Universidade Nova de Lisboa (Department of Musicology) and researcher at CESEM. Several publications on opera dramaturgy and aesthetics of music, notably *Hystérie et Mise-en-Abîme, le drame lyrique au début du XXe siècle* (Paris, L'Harmattan, 2002).

Paulo Ferreira de Castro studied musicology in France and England and is currently a lecturer at the Departamento de Ciências Musicais (Universidade Nova de Lisboa) and a member of CESEM. He is co-author of a book on the History of Music in Portugal and of many musicological articles and essays (focusing mainly on Music Aesthetics, Analysis and Dramaturgy). He is also active as a stage director for opera. PhD thesis on the subject of Wittgenstein and music (Royal Holloway, University of London).

Pedro Boléo studied musicology at the Universidade Nova de Lisboa – Faculdade de Ciências Sociais e Humanas. As a researcher for CESEM, supported by a grant from the Portuguese Foundation for Science and Technology, he is now preparing his Ph.D. dissertation.

Robert Hullot-Kentor is an associate professor of philosophy and literature at Southampton College in New York. Most recently he has completed a new translation of *Philosophie der neuen Musik* and a volume of Adorno's *Nachlass* for the Adorno Archiv that reconstructs the extensive volume Adorno began, but left incomplete, during his years in New York City, *Current of Music* (published in 2007). Hullot-Kentor has written widely on Adorno, and completed translations of Adorno's *Aesthetische Theorie* and Kierkegaard. He is at work on a new translation of *Negative Dialektik*.

Rodrigo Duarte. Ph.D. Universität Gesamthochschule Kassel (Germany), Professor at Dept. of Philosophy of UFMG (Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais) – Brazil. Post-doctoral research at University of California (Berkeley). Visiting Professor at Bauhaus Universität Weimar. Numerous publications in Brazil and other countries. Books: *Marx e a natureza em "O Capital"* (1986), *Mimesis e Racionalidade. A concepção de domínio da natureza em Th.W. Adorno* (1993), *Adornos. Nove ensaios sobre o filósofo frankfurtiano* (1997), *Adorno/Horkheimer e a Dialética do esclarecimento* (2002), *Teoria Crítica da indústria cultural* (2003), *Theoria Aesthetica* (as editor) (2005), *Dizer o que não se deixa dizer. Para uma filosofia da expressão* (2008).

Sonja Dierks b. 1970. Studied singing; studied New German History of Literature, Musicology and Philosophy at Albert Ludwig's University of Freiburg. 1995 Master's Degree. 1995/96 Lecturer at University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg, South Africa. 2001 Ph.D. in New German History of Literature. Publications: "Quasi Parlando" (*Musik und Aesthetik*, 1998), "Roland Barthes, Gisèle Brelet, Michel Butor" (*Musik in Geschichte und*

Gegenwart 2000f), *Adagio: Beethovens Hammerklaviersonate opus 106* (Koblenz 2001), “Die Stimme, das Schweigen, Kafkas Sirenen” (*Musik und Aesthetik* 2002), *Es gibt Gespenster, Betrachtungen zu Kafkas Erzählung* (Koenighshausen & Neumann 2003).

Tilo Wesche, b. 1968, studied philosophy in Berlin. Dr. Phil. 2001 in Tübingen. 2001-2003 lecturer in Freiburg i.Brsg, and since 2003 at Basel. Currently working on a book about ‘Truth in the philosophy of Hegel and Heidegger’. He has also published on Kierkegaard and Adorno.

Contents

Introduction, by Mário Vieira de Carvalho	13
<i>Adorno's Conception of Expression, and the Relationship between Music and Philosophy</i>	
Rodrigo Duarte	27
<i>Reading History in the Ruins of Nature: Images of Truth, Mortality and Reconciliation in Adorno's Schubert Interpretation</i>	
Max Paddison	41
<i>The Truth-Finding Role of Interpretation in the Present Abundance of the Musical Repertoire – Concerning the Necessity of a Critical Music Aesthetics</i>	
Otto Kolleritsch	59
<i>Musical Writing and Performance – About Adorno's Theory of Musical Performance</i>	
Sonja Dierks	71
<i>Meaning, Mimesis, Idiom: On Adorno's Theory of Musical Performance</i>	
Mário Vieira de Carvalho	83
<i>Adorno Searching for Wagner: Music, Fetishism, and Phantasmagoria</i>	
Pedro Boléo	95
<i>Enlightened New Music Prisms: Towards a Contemporary Critical Philosophy of New Music</i>	
José Júlio Lopes	113
<i>On Adorno's Use by Musicians</i>	
António Pinho Vargas	121

<i>Ethics and Aesthetics in the Musical Writings of Teodor W. Adorno</i> Jean-Paul Olive	131
<i>The Value of Transgression and Disorder: Richard Strauss in the Light of Adorno's Theory of Music</i> Paula Ribeiro	145
<i>"As speaking entities do artworks live"</i> <i>Aesthetics as a Philosophy of Language</i> Tilo Wesche	159
<i>'Identity is the very Devil!': Notes on Adorno, Wittgenstein, and Music</i> Paulo Ferreira de Castro	189
<i>'Musique informelle' as Postmodern Thought: Adorno and Lyotard on the Critical Possibility of Art</i> Angelo Martingo	209
<i>Adorno without Quotation</i> Robert Hullot-Kentor	221
<i>Abbreviations of Adorno's Works</i>	241
<i>Bibliography</i>	243
<i>Index</i>	255

Aknowledgments

I would like to express my gratitude to the Goethe-Institut and to the Austrian Embassy in Lisbon for their financial support with respect to the translations into English of the contributions to this volume originally written in German.

Mário Vieira de Carvalho

Lisbon, 2008

Introduction

Theodor W. Adorno (1903-1969) is one of the most representative German philosophers of the 20th century and of the so-called Frankfurt School. Amongst the main topics of his critical thinking is aesthetic theory, which he developed in particular in a great number of his essays on music. By dealing mainly with Adorno's theory of music and musical performance, the essays collected in this book offer critical insights not only into his approach to music, but also his philosophy as a whole. Adorno's theory of music and musical performance does not merely exemplify his aesthetic theory, but, rather, plays an essential role in the development of it and of his critical approach to culture and society.

The constellation in which Adorno's unity of thought comes to light – the critique of science as ideology, the overcoming of the distinction between philosophy and sociology, the concept of art as the beginning and end of philosophy, knowledge (*Erkenntnis*) and *chance* of truth as constituents of both (art and philosophy) – presupposes, in fact, an essential relationship between his theory of art and his social theory. In the posthumous publication (2008) of a series of lectures given in 1964 at the University of Frankfurt – *Philosophische Elemente einer Theorie der Gesellschaft* (ThG) –, a condensed explanation of his social theory, we find some reference points that help us to understand such a relationship.

In a critical review of theoretical systems such as those by Ricardo, Marx, Saint-Simon, Comte, Fichte and Hegel, Adorno diagnoses their collapse, because there is no unity, either in society, or in the system that seeks to seize it. Adorno's critique includes deductive thinking (mathematic deductibility) since Descartes, that is, the concept of science as “the production of the world from pure thinking”. Adorno calls into question the praise of the internal coherence (*Stimmigkeit*) of knowledge: “it takes place at the expense of truth, which is not coherent” (ThG: pp. 46-51). Science turns into scientism – the moment of science fetishism, in so far as science is itself captured by commodity fetishism.

By taking up a position against this fetishization of knowledge, this inversion of means and ends, Adorno opposes Bacon to Descartes. Accordingly, he proposes a reflection on the object, which may not properly abolish or suspend the rules of the scientific game, but rather

submit them to a critical reflection, making it evident that there are object fields that cannot be apprehended by scientific norms. In this sense, truth is frequently more easily reached when we give up the beauty or coherence of the system. The decisive epistemological problem resides, therefore, according to Adorno, in the resistance of social reality to theory, above all if the latter wishes to constitute itself into a system (ThG: pp. 136-137).

Although admitting that the concept of theory as a system is, in a way, unavoidable, Adorno postulates that theory must be forced to embrace what escapes it – the only way of catching both moments of rationality and those of irrationality in society. In fact, for Adorno, the theoretical constructions that aspire to the absence of contradictions as the highest criterion enter into contradiction with the object they intend to comprehend or explain. A theory able to capture social antagonisms must be itself dialectic. It is not part of the traditional concept of deductive theory, for it is able to start from the paradoxical. Instead of being coherent, perfect, not in itself contradictory, social theory must take into account reality itself: what reality is, and what it demands from us. The claim to build a theory without lacunae, which gives immediate solutions for the praxis, should be, therefore, abandoned. Social theory must be, in itself, contradictory. It must be simultaneously system and not system (ThG: pp. 125-126).

Adorno's critique also touches upon positivism and its different variants, in which thought is primarily orientated towards methodology. Method becomes an end in itself, preceding the object. Method takes the place of truth, while method, in fact, is nothing else than a means to reach truth. The foundational principle of our societies, according to Adorno, is based on the prevalence of method over object. The qualities and specific use-values that things acquire in their relationship to individuals are left aside. All is reduced to the form of general equivalence – the exchange-value, an abstract principle of value, separated from the object itself, a principle that is reproduced in science and philosophy. Instrumental reason or the instrumentalization of reason, which postulates the separation between object and method, prevails (ThG: pp. 176-177).

Engaged only in the collection of facts and methodology, instrumental reason leads to the defamation of the intellect or spirit (*Geist*). But Adorno appeals to the rehabilitation of the intellect, by overcoming the separation between method and object, that is, by approaching the object without prejudices, intentions or preformed categories that prevent the object from being experienced (ThG: pp. 178-180). This is the background to Adorno's critique of science fetishism, which has its correspondence in his aesthetic theory. The principles on which Adorno's

concept of authentic art is based converge entirely with those which in his philosophy of science are inherent to a valid social theory.

If thought is sovereign (lord of itself) and asserts itself both in relation to itself and to the object, then the findings or ideas (insusceptible to being learnt, as has been said) are not gifts from heaven (exalted by intuitionists and defamed by scientific theories), but rather the result of mental processes, sometimes of great depth, which occur unconsciously, and suddenly emerge at the surface, becoming visible. Thus, what distinguishes the force of thought is not its non-arbitrary character, but the unity of the arbitrary and the non-arbitrary: the quality of the spontaneity of what suddenly erupts, but results from an unconscious continuity. The more intense the thought, the greater the *chance* of findings or ideas (*Einfälle*), as fruits of a continuous underground work. Without this moment of sudden irruption (what is new in an idea) there is no productive thought (this being the continuous underground work presupposed). In this way, Adorno notes, the method is not called into question, but, rather, its limits are defined (ThG: pp. 157-158).

Critical theory corrects the method by means of reflection on the object and by recovering the subject-object dialectic. It recognizes that, not infrequently, the immediate approach to the object, the recovering of naïve spontaneity are more productive, in opposition to the absolute correctness of the methodology that fetishizes science and sterilizes critical knowledge. Method needs a self-critique, to render itself problematic; this is required by the necessity of understanding the object. The historical roots of dialectics reside in the necessity for reciprocal mediation between concept and diversity of sensual experience. In opposition to Kant, who admitted the *Einfall* only in art, Adorno claims that the capacity of non-regulated experience and the spontaneity of finding must be recovered and cultivated also in science and philosophy. Simultaneously, however, this spontaneous finding must be called into question and submitted to the control of adequacy to the object.

In this way, Adorno takes up a position against the dominant trend in social sciences, which expulses spirit or ideas from the field of knowledge, against what he calls reified consciousness, that is, a consciousness that reduces itself to a mere instrument for registering facts, and for which truth becomes a residual category. But he also takes up a position against totalizing theoretic systems, which are dominated by the primacy of subjectivity (by the absolutization of the thinking subject), and do not allow the solving of the problem of the “non-identical” (ThG: pp. 186-192).

Knowledge presupposes a change of consciousness, but this is only possible by means of the subject-object dialectic. Subjectivity is not

“ingredient, ornament, sauce added to objectivity to make it more savoury” – Adorno says. It is just what the object needs to reveal itself. Subjectivity has to extinguish itself, to disappear into the object, in order that the latter manifests itself dialectically and be comprehended. The ideal of knowledge is this extinguishing (*Verlöschen*) of subjectivity, but this is not possible if subjectivity is initially eliminated. Subjectivity is not objectivity itself, and neither can objectivity be resolved in subjectivity: both require reciprocal mediation (ThG: p. 194).

A decisive point for Adorno is that social theory, to be truly itself, must transcend the existent, but without falling into mere speculation, arbitrary and blind. It goes beyond the existent or the present, but taking into account the weight of what exists. One thing is the extrapolation, generalization from the found elements, the going-on-so (*So-weiter-Gehen*), if the given presupposes are stable. This is called by Adorno a mere prediction, based on the identification of a *trend*. A different thing is, not merely formulating what can be foreseen or predicted, but rather daring to prefigure the new, the non-identical, which opposes the already existent: only then, according to Adorno, does the domain of theory begin, starting with the identification of a tendency: that to which society evolves, having in view the vectors that determine it today (ThG: pp. 37-39).

The convergence of the theoretic apparatuses of philosophy and sociology occurs precisely within this concept of theory: not a tautological concept, but rather one that falls upon the new, the non-identical. In other words, theory is only reached, when, on the basis of concepts operating in society, we arrive at definitions or formulations to which such concepts *tend*, but which are, at the same time, different from these and opposed to these. Theory is, thus, “hope for truth”, in something qualitatively different: truth as otherness (ThG: pp. 39-40).

This is the standpoint from which Adorno criticizes both systemic approaches like that of Parsons and the positivism of empirical sociology. In his critique of Parsons, Adorno postulates the irreducible conflict between individual and society. He distinguishes the external psychological conflicts from those hidden behind them, which are in reality authentic social conflicts. It is necessary to apprehend the pressure of social objectivity, which is transmitted to the individual consciousness through one’s own *ratio*. By referring to Freud and psychoanalysis, Adorno stresses the situations in which individuals, even when saying they act freely as psychological entities, identical to themselves, are nothing else than role-masks (*Charaktermasken*): they do only what corresponds to their objective function, their role, in society. Totality compels them to act in that fashion (ThG: pp. 145-150).

Accordingly, Adorno rejects also the postulate of the classic liberal theory, which describes social integration as a consequence of the spontaneous action of separate individuals. He claims, on the contrary, that social integration occurs from the top downwards, through methods of technological standardization of the labour process, mass media, and planning of the more powerful groups (including advertising and propaganda, between which there would be no distinction). That is to say: integration is nothing but latent disintegration; the greater the integration, the less the reconciliation between totality and the individual. As a kind of “collective schizophrenia”, the growing rationalization of individuals within the production process enters into contradiction with their own reality as persons, and little then remains of the finality towards which one works. It is not the single subject that counts, but the *client* in view, the *consumer* (as if this were the goal of the whole). The person as an entity charged with sense no longer exists. This is another example of the inversion of ends and means. Rationality becomes irrationality. In this sense, and calling into question the Marxist principle of economy as a determining factor, Adorno diagnoses in the present day world such a degree of “social objectivity” that one can no longer speak of the primacy of economy over the relations of domination, but rather, conversely, of the primacy of the relations of domination over the economy (ThG: pp. 96-97; 108-110; 119).

According to Adorno, we live in an administered world (*verwaltete Welt*), a category that apprehends the whole constituted by the rational irrationality (*Gesamte Verfassung rationaler Irrationalität*). The individuals are the object of administration. On the one side, particular rationality dominates, meaning the adequation between the ends that each sector, separately and in antagonism with the other ones, establishes, and the means it makes use of to attain them. On the other side, the constitution of the whole (*Gesamte Verfassung*), that is, the finality of the common life of the humans, remains irrational, abandoned to a blind game of forces. One could also speak of rational irrationality in the sense that the single rationality of means and ends (*Zweck-Mittel-Rationalität*) does not cancel the irrationality of the whole, but rather reinforces it (ThG: p. 201).

In the administrative rationality (*Verwaltungsrationalität*) – Adorno refers to Max Weber – the confusion between form and content functions as ideology, in so far as an administrative form is taken for the decisive instance, whereas its social content is not called into question. The formal rational planning and organization of society, opposing the anarchy of commodity production, also reproduce the relationships of domination from the point of view of their content, which they acquire by being

constituted within the frame of the concrete differences as regards the power of disposition over the means of production. The administered world comes into being with the autonomy of bureaucracy, which is determined in the last analysis by economic motives and objectivities: the established relations of power, the real power of command over the other's work. The source of domination is not administration in itself. Bureaucrats and managers become the scapegoats of the administered world, while in reality they are nothing but mere executors of power relations (ThG: pp. 202-205).

In his critique of empirical sociology, Adorno focuses on some vectors that have in the meantime become increasingly relevant. One of them is what he calls *concretism*. Because of the enormous disproportion between the single person and power, which allows the belief that resistance against this concentrated power is illusory (awareness of having no power reinforces the lack of power), all concerns address the concrete: consumer goods or commodities, whatever their kind, both material and cultural. The synthetic character of the goods produced is expressed in the fact that people do not properly consume the use-values (or do not cling just to them), but rather the exchange-values. Owning something of value becomes by itself a source of pleasure, almost a use-value. In Adorno's words, consciousness is reified, and clings to commodity fetishism – a concept taken from Marx. There is also here an inversion of means and ends: the important thing is what things represent in the market, and not what they really signify for people. The crucial point, stressed by Adorno, is the anthropological phenomenon that results from this: the loss of the primary capacity of experience (*Erfahrung*). Experience is replaced by mere succedanea (*Ersätze*), so that one experiences the reproduction of what exists as a fatality, by excluding the new, openness to the world, change, as possibilities (ThG: pp. 75-76; 80-81).

Accordingly, ought sociology to be satisfied with the acceptance of empirical data about what people think of themselves and of their social situation? Adorno's response distinguishes, on the one hand, between what a social group subjectively thinks of the situation in which it finds itself and the objective structure in which it is inserted; and, on the other, between the self-consciousness of the individuals and the opinion they display of themselves and of society. That is to say: it is necessary to relate the subjective moment with objective data, subjective reason with objective reason. Therefore, the problem of research into mass communication, for Adorno, resides in taking the so-called average of subjective reason for the highest degree of objectivity. But this subjective reason must be submitted, just as subjective reason, to a critique (ThG: pp. 92-95).

In this sense, the phenomena of social integration observed by empirical research are essentially subjective, or phenomena of consciousness. The integration constitutes, according to Adorno, a kind of crust that is too thin. But there could be such strong subjective moments that they create feedback on the own reality and gain at the end an objective meaning. This is valid in-two senses: both that of integration, and that of fracture. The structural complexity of these different nuances and dimensions must be considered. Here lies the problem of ideology: the mere self-consciousness of the individuals turns into ideology, while it is not manifested in any way as social reality. The individual takes him/herself, and is taken as, the highest value, but as an abstract concept, without correspondence in reality: that is, as mere ideology (ThG: pp. 100-102).

Besides the traditional forms of ideology that provide complementary ideas aiming at consoling and diverting from what exists, there occurs a phenomenon that Adorno calls the fusion between ideology and the idea of reality such as it is. The disenchanted world (Weber's *entzauberte Welt*) appears as something that is so, and cannot be in other way. What exists becomes an ideology of its own self. The veil between reality and ideology is so transparent that a breath seems enough to cause it to fall. But the more transparent the veil, the more difficult it is to destroy it. When there is apparently no more ideology, then it is precisely the moment at which the ideological culminates: the moment of reified consciousness – which demands that the critique of ideology become critique of language. Positivism, by giving voice to an apparent social objectivity, and giving up theory, is also, in this sense, according to Adorno, a manifestation of ideology (ThG: p. 120).

The so-called dis-ideologization is, therefore, one of the configurations of ideology itself – Adorno insists –, and this an important point in the understanding of his critique of consumer culture. Lived reality, marked by antagonisms, tends to become its own ideology. People consume without having any awareness that they are compelled to do so by the motivation of profit. The consumer world manipulates the people and misleads them much more than explicit forms of ideology (for instance, fascisms): they buy, surrendering their ideals. The realization of individuals, reality itself, appears under the form of a succedaneum (*Ersatz*), which is granted to them by interests in profit. The people's realism is ideology itself, in so far as it reproduces the behaviour of consumers. There is no more gap between false reality and false consciousness. What prevails is the illusion that the appearance in which people move is authentic reality. Ideology is no longer theory concerning the real, that is, something relatively autonomous and different from the

real. What remains today of the ideology – Adorno refers to the mid-1960s, but in fact diagnoses a trend that has expanded in the present globalized world and includes the rise of religious fundamentalisms – is, on the one side, the naked lie, mere arbitrary invention, and, on the other side, the duplication of what already exists (ThG: pp. 207-208).

The decisive instance for ideology has become the “technological veil”, replacing the money veil (which formerly concealed social relationships). Forces of production and technology condition themselves reciprocally. The technological veil is revealed, according to Adorno, in the “*quantum* in libido, love, that people invest in technique for its own sake, and not for the ends it deserves”. Reified consciousness (the configuration of ideology at the subjective level) obeys the technological veil, speaks unreflectively the language that is appropriate to it, is modelled by it in its thought structure. It is not able to experience, that is, to make real what should be live relations, because there is an armoured wall between it and its objects. It is incapable of remembrance, gratitude, memory. It accepts the façade uncritically. It makes people identical to things, in order that they can survive (“identification with the aggressor”) (ThG: p. 213).

In so far as ideology no longer accomplishes its former function of occultation, and becomes mere duplication of reality, individuals adapt themselves so completely to the power (that is exercised upon them) that ideology turns into “objective spirit”. Being neither transfiguration nor complement of what exists, it becomes “what exists as apparition” (*das Bestehende als Erscheinung*), just as the existent reflects itself in the global social consciousness that is particularly present in the language. Quoting Humboldt – “thought and language constitute themselves reciprocally” –, Adorno diagnoses the reification of thought, consciousness, and language: the form of language and expressed content enter into conflict. The falseness of language is deduced from the objective untruth of the object (ThG: pp. 212-214).

Accordingly, Adorno concludes that the critique of ideology must fall, not upon a false theoretic content of language, but rather upon the form through which the contents reveal themselves in consciousness. It must be, thus, a critique of language, as practised by Karl Kraus. Only in this way it would be possible to break with reified consciousness (ThG: p. 212).

Such a short synthesis of Adorno’s *Philosophical Elements of a Theory of Society* may help to clarify the wider theoretical background of the topics discussed in this volume.

‘Expression’, ‘truth’ and ‘authenticity’ are key concepts in Adorno’s thinking. In his essay, Rodrigo Duarte shows that the term ‘expression’

acquires in Adorno a very specific sense, related to the ability of the ‘authentic’ work of art, by means of its formal and mimetic features, “to lend voice to human suffering”. Instead of leading to immediate understanding, the ‘authentic’ work of art instead overcomes ideological delusion and moves closer to truth. But the non-exteriority between what is said and the form in which it is said, specific to art and particularly to music, is also common to philosophy, as a way of reaching a much higher level of critical understanding. Philosophy and ‘composing music’ become the same.

“Truth-content” is an elusive but important concept in Adorno’s aesthetics, which Max Paddison approaches obliquely through a focus on the concepts of lyrical subjectivity, history, nature and redemption in Adorno’s early article ‘Schubert’ (1928). What emerges from his analysis of the dialectical image of mythical landscape constructed by Adorno in order to discuss Schubert is the extent to which, as a piece of poetic writing, Adorno’s image is constructed through establishing elective affinities both with the language of the sublime in Kant and Goethe and with the language of modernist fragmentation. Adorno claims that the image of nature to be found in Schubert’s music and in the poems he chose to set is the projection of historical subjectivity as lyrical inwardness onto the ‘physiognomy of nature’, and that in this lies its truth content as repressed social reality. It is this claim that is investigated in this essay.

The search for ‘truth’ is the main topic with which Otto Kolleritsch deals. Cultural ‘reification’ of music – as the author states – is to be faced with scholarly reflection on performance. Even if musical life may not be possible without marketing, it has to depart from the premise of transmitting the fundamental message of music in such a way that its power of creating sensibility and stimulating reflection does not become lost, and music is not reduced to ‘pleasantness’ as a commodity. Art means investigating at life’s boundaries, at its existential borderlines. Musicians and performers must continually be researchers, facing the repertoire from new perspectives, continuously disclosing the unknown.

Sonja Dierks comes back to the concept of ‘truth’ by exploring one of the main themes of Adorno’s philosophy: the link between music and language. By stating that music is not a language, she postulates that the coincidence of what we call language and what we call music is located between both: one could imagine a fragile process of transgression in this. Adorno’s theory of reproduction focuses on this moment; he emphasizes that “musical reproduction is the copy of a non-existent original”. Only the actual interpretation, the performance of a composition, guarantees its truth. One may read a score like a book, without any idea

of interpretation. But one cannot make music without interpreting it. The process of reproduction forces the performer and the recipient in one direction, which is the truth of the work.

Starting from Adorno's idea of art as a *chance* of 'truth', according to his critique of science as ideology, and from his idea of an immanent historical openness of the 'authentic' work of art, Mário Vieira de Carvalho also analyses the complex framework within which Adorno approaches the problem of musical performance. Concepts such as those of 'meaning', 'mimesis' and 'idiom' developed in Adorno's posthumous work throw new light upon other concepts which play a central role in Adorno's critical theory, namely, those of 'mediation', 'tradition', and 'history'. As in Benjamin's philosophy of history, in which "brushing history against the grain" is postulated, the key to *making music* resides, one could say, in performing "against the grain". The 'cool reason' of music analysis, the false consciousness of idiom or style as ideology, the *continuum* of musical tradition as a kind of academic conformism are called into question.

The 'unity of the arts', as regards opera and drama, is examined by Pedro Boléo. He focuses particularly on Adorno's concept of 'phantasmagoria', taken from Marx and Benjamin. Adorno refers to the Wagnerian method of hiding the procedures of production in the outward appearance of the 'product' (the work), suggesting its 'naturalness'. On the contrary, 'montage', by emphasizing the procedures or the very means of production and breaking with the 'organic' conception of the work of art, appears as a critique of 'phantasmagoria'. However, Adorno also criticizes the method of 'montage' and postulates its historical neutralization. By reconsidering Adorno's critique of 'phantasmagoria' under the perspective of Nietzsche's criticism and other more recent contributions on art and fetishism, Boléo concludes that such a critique is crucial to understanding Adorno's aesthetic thought, particularly as regards the 'avant-garde' or the so-called New Music.

After almost a century of modern and avant-garde music – according to José Júlio Lopes – a kind of dissolved *pathos*, a feeling of exhaustion of the means of expression, the end of originality and authenticity, a crisis of *poiesis* and *aesthesis* have been reached. On the one side there is what one might call the 'musical correctness' of today's musical thinking, in the sense that Adorno's warning about 'regression' seems to be confirmed by an ever-lower threshold of tolerance of the 'common ear'... On the other side, Adorno's critique of the culture industry has been transformed into a *vulgata* for 'enlightened' thinking on music and cultural management (mixed with some neo-liberal statements and enterprise management techniques), used by an international corporation

of ‘universal aesthetic curators’ in concert halls and foundations to legitimate a full commissioning programme for living composers. Between these two trends, the weakness of present musical thought is perhaps a symptom of a general failure of a critical thought that has lost its provocative power. A critical reconsideration of Adorno’s way of thinking may be helpful in order to rethink music, its historical, aesthetic, social and political relations, and also to understand its central role in the redefinition of the arts system.

António Pinho Vargas explains the ‘sedimented’ use of many aspects of Adorno’s aesthetic theory of music by twentieth-century composers, and, at the same time, the substantial lack of attention given to some of his late texts. There has been use and abuse of some radical “formalistic” statements by Adorno, ignoring his very complex philosophy as a whole. The discourses of the ‘modern artist’, seeking legitimacy, and the arsenal of arguments used by post-serial composers of the second half of the 20th century, in order to institutionalize their ideological domination, have their origins here. Related to this reception of Adorno’s thinking, academic compositional teaching in most countries of the Western world is also responsible for the anachronistic dominance that this tendency still has in the field of contemporary music festivals in Europe. If one accepts that Adorno was, at the same time, the ‘last identity thinker’ and the ‘first heterogeneous thinker’, one can use this forgotten part of his philosophy to show this process.

If one tries to relate ethics and aesthetics in Adorno’s thought, one has to bear in mind that, in the philosopher’s vision, the work of art, with its contradictions, constitutes a way to make apparent the ‘right life’. This is the starting point of the paper by Jean-Paul Olive, which at first defines the most important categories in the philosopher’s ethics: a) suffering as a bad relationship between subject and object, related to domination over nature and interiorized by the subject; b) the particular and the singular as modes of persistence of difference in a world governed by a totalitarian rationality; c) aloofness and tact as positions of resistance that refuse, profoundly, to surrender to the logic of identity. In the second part of the paper, Olive examines the way in which, thanks to immanent analysis and the micro-logical method, Adorno constructs a musical aesthetic in harmony with these ethical categories. The work of art appears as a complex of tensions, as a non-violent synthesis. Particular attention is given to the works of Mahler and Berg, which occupy a central position in Adorno’s musical thought.

The blurring of lines between aesthetics and ethics is also object of Paula Ribeiro’s paper, in which Strauss’s operas *Salome* and *Elektra* and the subsequent transformations observed in his musical discourse are

discussed. Starting from the notions of ‘transgression’ and ‘disorder’ as originally negative ones and simultaneously positive aesthetic axioms, she discusses the notion of ‘truth’ in art. Adorno’s main essays and comments on Richard Strauss are examined as narratives of modern art, in which ‘truth’ is related to disorder, transgression, chaos, and anxiety.

Tilo Wesche argues that the key to understand Adorno’s transition from philosophy to art lies in that which he calls *Sprachcharakter* (language-character or speech-character). According to Adorno, through its language-character the work of art leads us to begin thinking; by being spoken to by the work of art. In this sense the work of art can be called the beginning of understanding. The question of why we seek for truth is therefore to be approached from the explanation of the language-character of art. From Adorno’s perspective, a work of art could be seen as an alternative to that kind of rationality that collapses into mythology. Thinking, to which the work at first leads, does not, therefore, have a given validity as though it were empowered by nature. With regard to “Music, Language, and Composition” (MLC) the relation of music and its language-character is discussed from a theoretical point of view and illustrated in a more detailed fashion by reference to Adorno’s fragments of *Beethoven; The Philosophy of Music* (BB).

The relation of Adorno’s aesthetic theory to the philosophy of language is also explored by Paulo Ferreira de Castro. In his paper the somewhat unexpected convergence between certain aspects of Adorno’s thought and the epochal ‘linguistic turn’ of philosophy, embodied in the work of Wittgenstein, is brought about. By outlining some links between both directions of thought, the paper takes as its focus Adorno’s and Wittgenstein’s attitudes towards the ‘unspeakable’ – as well as the related question of the crucial role assigned to art, and especially to music, in their respective philosophies.

The link between Adorno’s philosophy and postmodern thought is considered from another perspective in Angelo Martingo’s paper. Knowing that Lyotard’s reflections on art are seminal to his theorizing of postmodern thought, and that Adorno’s proposal of a *musique informelle* is the result of a critique of the post-war musical avant-garde, elements of art criticism that inform both are set out. Accordingly, Adorno and Lyotard converge in their critique of a totalizing thought, and both demonstrate the potential of art as an instrument of social criticism.

Finally, Robert Hullot-Kentor claims that the impulse to quote Adorno is motivated just by what is unquotable in Adorno’s work. Referring to the student rebellion from the sixties, Hullot-Kentor argues that Adorno was misunderstood by the students who attacked him in his last years and that this matter provides an opportunity to reflect on the

relation of Adorno to Marx. Adorno is and is not a Marxist, but this paper asserts that part of what makes Adorno a Marxist is just what was so disappointing to the students in what they wanted from Marx. Hullot-Kentor goes on to discuss Adorno's critique of quotation in the essay on Stravinsky in *Philosophy of New Music*, and concludes with Adorno's interpretation of the unpardonable sin as the question of historical despair. No sentence of Adorno's is quoted in the paper.

*

The essays collected in this volume were originally presented at an international conference in commemoration of Adorno's centenary, organized by the Research Centre for Aesthetics and Sociology of Music (CESEM) at the New University of Lisbon (December, 2003). Unfortunately, a number of difficulties, including that of finding support for the different phases of this publication, contributed to a delay, so that its final appearance has only now become possible. Only Adorno's bibliography and quotations were updated, according to new translations of his works into English which have been published in the meanwhile. A system of abbreviations is provided in order to facilitate the identification of the works quoted. The whole bibliography appears at the end of the volume.

A final word about the criteria for publication: the aim was to give voice to very different approaches, including those of younger researchers, thus recording the understanding of the reception of Adorno in this particular place and time.

August 2008

Mário Vieira de Carvalho

Adorno's Conception of Expression, and the Relationship between Music and Philosophy

Rodrigo Duarte

In no other philosopher of the twentieth century is the relationship between philosophy and music so clearly identified as in Theodor Adorno, and my hypothesis in this paper is that the concept of “expression” is perhaps the most fruitful to show the proximity between these two important realms of human culture. A further aim of this paper is to demonstrate that, for Adorno, “expression” is inextricably related to his conceptions of “truth” and “authenticity”.

1. Adorno's conception of artistic expression

It is interesting to note that the word “expression”, invoked in the title of this paper, originates in the realm of general aesthetics, and designates one of the most basic tasks, as well as procedures, of art. As a matter of fact, since the foundation of aesthetics in the eighteenth century and particularly in Kant's *Critique of Judgment*, “expression” has becomes more and more a key concept in the philosophy of art in general. In the *Third Critique*, “expression” appears frequently and in at least one passage the use Kant makes of it anticipates the meaning the word acquired in contemporary philosophy of art. I am referring particularly to section 51, where Kant discusses the division of the fine arts (*Von der Einteilung der schönen Künste*): here he defines “beauty” in general as “expression of aesthetic ideas” (“*Man kann überhaupt Schönheit [...] den Ausdruck Ästhetischer Ideen nennen*”), distinguishing nevertheless two origins of beauty: in the fine arts and in nature. In the former, the idea is created by a concept of the object; in the latter “the mere reflection of what an object may be is enough to waken and communicate the idea of which that object is considered the expression” (*Critique of Judgment* § 51, Kant, 1990: 175).

In Hegel's *Aesthetics*, “expression” is used several times with a similar meaning to that of Kant's *Third Critique*, but with the important

difference that, since for Hegel the natural beauty does not have the same importance as it does for Kant, this concept applies itself only to works of art. For Kant, the content of a work of art is always *mind*, which means that the correct form of an aesthetic construct is the one that achieves the best *expression* of that spirituality intended to embody something considered beautiful: “the task of the work of art is to reach the object in its universality and to eliminate in its external phenomenon everything which for the expression of the content would remain extrinsic and indifferent” (*ibid.*).

In contemporary philosophy of art, as I have already pointed out, expression becomes a current concept (see Hegel, 1989: 217), and Adorno is no exception in considering it as of great importance for his aesthetics. Indeed, I would say that expression assumes an enormous importance not only for Adorno’s aesthetics but also for his philosophy as a whole. And this concept appears for the first time very early in his philosophical development. Already in the *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, as Horkheimer and Adorno discuss the way in which culture industry appropriates the aesthetic conception of *style*, the idea of *expression* appears as an artistically ordered manifestation of human suffering, characterizing the important difference between style inside culture industry and outside it (DA: p.103: GS 3: p.151f.). The latter case, a typical feature of the *authentic* work of art, must be understood as a dialectic relationship of the historical position of artists and their deviations in what was expected of them in terms of aesthetic form. The great artists were never those who embodied a wholly flawless and perfect style, but those who used style as a way of hardening themselves against the chaotic expression of suffering, as a negative truth. The style of their works gave what was expressed in that force without which life flows away unheard. Those very art forms which are known as classical, as exemplified in Mozart’s music, contain objective trends which represent something different to the style which they incarnate. As late as Schönberg and Picasso, the great artists have retained a mistrust of style, and at crucial points have subordinated it to logic¹.

This early consideration of aesthetic expression, which in the *Dialectic of Enlightenment* is subordinated to the notion of style, is later developed by Adorno as a key concept in his aesthetics in general. The same idea, concerning the relevance of giving voice to suffering, appears in one of the most important sections of *Aesthetic Theory*, “Semblance and expression”: here, expression means a procedure that aims at displaying human misery and which polarizes artistic creation in a world

¹ See, for instance, Eliot Deutsch (1996) particularly chapter 3: “Art is expression” (pp.18-29).

in which cheerfulness becomes at least problematic if not impossible, since happiness would be “beyond expression” (*Seligkeit wäre ausdruckslos*, AT: p.145; GS 7: p.169). Although the *constructive* moment in the forming process of art is very important to Adorno's aesthetics, he points out that the expression of suffering in works of art is the product of a mimetic procedure through which those deepest layers of human experience can finally come to light in an object, such as an work of art, that has in *appearance* its greatest *raison d'être*. This engenders a conflict between the character of appearance of the work of art, ultimately related to its form, and the impulse to express what is latent in a kind of general social consciousness, which is potentially dangerous to artistic form: “The unfolding of art is that of a *quid pro quo*: Expression, through which non-aesthetic experience reaches most deeply into the work, becomes the archetype of everything fictive in art, as if at the juncture where art is most permeable to real experience, culture most rigorously stood guard to see that the border not be violated” (*ibid.*)².

It is important to say that the aforementioned mimetic procedure does not coincide with its conventional meaning, of reproducing or copying something: here it means the act of making something similar to the self, which describes this movement of a work of art towards the external experience it wishes to express. This indicates that the mimetic procedure imitates neither the feelings of a generic individual, nor those of their concrete author. Nevertheless, in the act of making something external analogous to the author's ego the mimetic procedure achieves a kind of *objectivity*, although the danger of some degree of the very reification against which mimesis was to fight cannot be totally set apart.

In the same passage, Adorno suggests that aesthetic expression functions as a balance to this danger, since it helps to point out that mimesis is an archaic act through which no knowledge can be achieved and it adds a critical element to the *objectification* of mimetic procedure, that would be certainly absent, if the original impulse were not to be *expressed* in an artistic way. In an essay dedicated to the Czech musician and writer Hermann Grab on the occasion of his death, Adorno (1949) says: “He who still would like to rescue sensitivity must merge into artistic expression, for the sake of its very truth, something strange, caustic” (GS 20.2: p.465),³ which could be seen as an application of his

² *Die Entfaltung der Kunst ist die eines quid pro quo: der Ausdruck, durch den die nichtästhetische Erfahrung am tiefsten in die Gebilde hineinreicht, wird zum Urbild alles Fiktiven an der Kunst, wie wenn an der Stelle, wo sie der realen Erfahrung gegenüber am undichtesten ist, Kultur am rigorosesten darüber wachte, dass die Grenze nicht verletzt werde.*

³ *Wer überhaupt noch Sensibilität hinüberrettete, muß dem künstlerischen Ausdruck um dessen eigener Wahrheit willen ein Fremdes, Ätzendes beimischen.*

idea concerning both the imperative of being critical and the relationship of artistic expression to something non-aesthetic.

The above-mentioned tension between mimesis and *expression* does not mean that the relation of latter conceptualization is not problematic: Adorno insists that, though expression be an essential element of art, there is on the one hand a kind of “positivistic allergy” to it; on the other hand, as also happens to other important aesthetic concepts, the facts resist firmly their conceptualization, since they work in the opposite way to that of conventional theory. For this reason, expression has for Adorno an important mediating role between the conceptual and the non-conceptual element also in art, but perhaps in a more general meaning, as we shall see. For him, expression places on the horizon something “trans-subjective”, since it has to do with that moment of knowledge in which there was not yet any polarization between subject and object, although it cannot be understood as a religious or theological standpoint; Adorno argues resolutely that expression is essentially secular, for its knowledge happens inside the subject-object polarity as a process of the “mind acting for itself”, in the Hegelian sense of the locution. This important section for the understanding of expression in art can be summarized in the following passage: “Aesthetic expression is an objectification of the non-objective, and in fact in such a fashion that through its objectification it becomes a second order non-objectivity: it becomes what speaks out of the artifact not as an imitation of the subject. Yet precisely the objectification of expression, which coincides with art, requires the subject who makes it and – in bourgeois terms – *makes use* of his own mimetic impulses. Art is expressive when what is objective, subjectively mediated, speaks, whether this be sadness, energy or longing. Expression is the suffering countenance of artworks” (AT: p.146; GS 7: p.170).⁴

2. Adorno’s conception of expression in music

Having identified some features of Adorno’s conception of aesthetic expression in general, it would be helpful to discuss in what measure this conception applies either to art as a whole or to some specific kind of art,

⁴ *Ästhetischer Ausdruck ist Vergegenständlichung des Ungegenständlichen, und zwar derart, daß es durch seine Vergegenständlichung zum zweiten Ungegenständlichen wird, zu dem, was aus dem Artefakt spricht, nicht als Imitation des Subjekts. Andererseits bedarf gerade die Objektivation des Ausdrucks, die mit Kunst koinzidiert, des Subjekts, das sie herstellt und seine eigenen mimetischen Regungen, bürgerlich gesprochen, verwertet. Ausdrucksvoll ist Kunst, wo aus ihr, subjektiv vermittelt, ein Objektives spricht: Trauer, Energie, Sehnsucht. Ausdruck ist das klagende Gesicht der Werke.* (Emphasis of the Editor).

taking into consideration the peculiarities of this concept as applied to music. From my point of view, "expression" applies equally well to art in general and to its concrete modalities. Although, as we shall see, it seems to be true that the origin of Adorno's idea of expression resides in music itself, this concept throws some light on other types of art, such as architecture, painting, sculpture and literature. In fact, it is not unusual to see Adorno comparing two or more artistic realms, and his concept of expression functions sometimes as an element that allows that very comparison.

In his essay "Functionalism Today", for instance, Adorno compares the elimination of ornaments in the architecture of Adolf Loos, the literature of Karl Kraus and musical composition of Arnold Schoenberg, pointing out that in these three cases the common source for the economy of means in the work of art is its organization in terms of the dialectical relationship between expression and construction. Bearing in mind the claim of the *avant-garde* that an ornament can be considered a sign for the permanency of bad subjectivity, that should be overcome, Adorno (*Funktionalismus*, GS 10.1: p.377) declares that the kind of expression which modern painting and music seek has nothing to do with the excess of power of a synthesizing ego, but with the search for a non-subjective language.⁵

Nevertheless, the critique of subjectivity in the arts cannot be considered as an invariable element in Adorno's aesthetics, since, as we shall see, some of the opponents of the Critical Theory of Society, including positivism of all kinds and Heidegger's fundamental ontology, have in common precisely the refusal of any subjective point of view. For this reason we find in Adorno, besides the recognition that subjectivity cannot be viewed in the twentieth century as it was in the nineteenth, also a sympathetic relationship with it, as if we could not eliminate the subject while it remained a potential victim of the administered world; and authentic works of art reflect this fact in the remainder of subjectivity they insist on showing. The case of music is, for Adorno, particularly typical of this remainder, since "the pure essence of music is itself turned into a subjective performance. The scars that result are accompanied by expression, ferments of an idiom made of convention that is by turns affirmed and negated. The parodistic element – something eminently

⁵ "Both arts become schemes of a non-subjective Language" (*Beide Künste werden Schemata einer nichtsubjektiven Sprache*) (Cf. MuM; GS 16, p.635). There are many passages in Adorno's work in which the dialectic of expression and construction is considered, as also in his approach to the musical composition (cf. VW: 34-35; GS 13: pp. 32-33; and *Kriterien*, GS 16: pp.188-189).

mimetic and thoroughly similar to language – is inseparable from such musical hostility to language” (MLC: p.120; GS 16: p.657)⁶. That “subjectivity” of music, which implies a natural nearness to expression, has its origin, according to Adorno, in the fact that, unlike the visual arts and even literature, the art of sounds does not have a realistic object, that could be “expressionistically” deformed, being naturally “expressive”, even when it maintains a big distance from any kind of Romanticism; for him, “the pure sounding of a musical note or a chord brings expression continuously with it” (Adorno, 1969, GS 18: p.663)⁷. Similarly Adorno claims that “in music even non-expressiveness music becomes expression” (FML: p. 6; GS 16: pp.255)⁸, which endorses what I said about the music as the possible origin of his concept of expression applied to art in general.

In fact, in his essay on Mahler, Adorno argues that expression in music is not expression *of* something determined, which can be confirmed by the fact that *espressivo* is an indication for the performance of a musical piece, without any explicit designation of anything (*Mahler*, GS 13: pp.169f.). As we saw in the case of expression applying to art in general, and still more emphatically to music, there is not any object that can be “expressed” by a musical piece, but its expression tends to refer to the human condition as a whole, which, as described for expression as a general aesthetic concept, is one of suffering and of sorrow. For Adorno, it has something to do also with the artistic range of the works: “In music one would only have to compare the quality of sad pieces and the impotence of joyful works of whatever kind” (cf. *Sacred Fragment*: p. 235; GS 16: p.462).⁹

The fact that light music exhales powerlessness does not imply, however, that serious and “expressive” music has nothing to do with a sense of the powerlessness of individuals in contemporary society. On the contrary, Adorno points out in *Philosophy of New Music* that Schoenberg’s music of the expressionistic period elaborates pulsational conflicts, whose sexual origin is by no means hidden, in a way, in which the pain involved

⁶ *Das reine Sein der Musik wird so selber zur subjektiven Veranstaltung. Die Narben, welche diese hinterläßt, führen Ausdruck mit sich, Fermente eines Idioms aus bejahter und wiederum negierter Konvention. Das parodische Element, und damit ein eminent Mimisches, durchaus Sprachähnliches ist solcher musikalischen Sprachfeindschaft unabdingbar.*

⁷ *...das pure Aufklingen eines Tones, eines Akkords führt stets etwas von Ausdruck mit sich.*

⁸ *... noch Ausdruckslosigkeit wird in Musik zum Ausdruck.*

⁹ *...man braucht nur in der Musik die Bilanz zu ziehen zwischen der Qualität trauernder und der Ohnmacht wie immer auch freudiger Stücke.*

in is not softened and it is properly “expressed” by his works, and “in the expression of anxiety, as ‘forebodings’, the music of Schoenberg’s expressionist phase bears witness to this powerlessness” (PhNM: p.37: p. GS 12: p. 47)¹⁰.

This seeming contradiction concerning the relationship of “expressive” music towards the feeling of powerlessness in the contemporary world points out to a rather ambiguous evaluation of expression by Schoenberg and the other members of his school. Adorno claims that for them the transformation of music’s expressive elements into “material”, which took place across the whole history of music, reached the 20th century in so a radical manner, that a too-explicit stress in the expressive procedures became impossible, acquired an aura of something past, in spite of the near relationship to expression displayed by Schoenberg in his earlier compositions (PhNM: p.19; GS 12: p.27).

It is possible that the afore-mentioned ambiguity towards expression has something to do with Schoenberg’s overcoming of his free atonal phase; although the compositions of the dodecaphonic period were not really distant from an expressive conception of music, he seemed to aim at reaching a balance between “subjective” and “objective” elements in his composition. Adorno (*Schoenberg*, GS 10.1.: pp.163f.) sees this musical development of Schoenberg’s in terms of achieving a deliberate musical expression of “coldness”, which tries to neutralize the ideological potential of “warmth” through the establishment of a language that is beyond the human one: for the first time Schoenberg’s warmth transforms itself into the extreme of coldness, whose expression is the expressionless. Later he directed a polemic against the people who demand “animal warmth” from music; his claim, that music says something that is possible to say only through music, projects the idea of a language which is not similar to human language.

I think it would not be wrong to approach the relationship between warmth and coldness and the specific “language” that comes from it in terms of the dialectic movement between expression and construction, which we saw above as a feature of all avant-garde arts from the beginning of the 20th century. Adorno identifies that feature not only in Schoenberg, but also in his former pupils Berg and Webern (*Berg*, GS 13: p.331).

In fact, according to Adorno, not only Schoenberg’s school, but also its antithesis, in Stravinsky and his followers, held expression as a problem. The difference between the two trends of modern music is that, while the latter refused from the beginning every kind of expression, the

¹⁰ *Im Ausdruck der Angst, als “Vorgefühle”, bezeugt die Musik aus Schönbergs expressionistischer Phase die Ohnmacht.*

former, as I have attempted to show, tried to establish a kind of connection between expression and the absence of it: “A critical relation to expression now characterizes all responsible music. Schoenberg’s school and Stravinsky won this relation by following divergent paths, though even after the introduction of the twelve-tone music the former did not establish it as a dogma” (PhNM: pp.131-132; GS 12: p.162).¹¹

Nevertheless, when Adorno says that Schoenberg’s school did not want to refuse expression “in a dogmatic way”, it means that Stravinsky indeed wished to extirpate expression from musical composition. For Adorno, it is clear that, while the former reflected the question of expression very indirectly, on account of the fact that its “carrier”, the individual, was threatened with extinction, Stravinsky’s musical composition reflected so immediately this threatening process that some suspicion arises concerning his connivance in it. According to Adorno, not only Stravinsky’s neoclassical period, in which the target of writing “objective music” is very explicit, but also in his first, “primitivistic”, phase there already occurs a drastic reduction of “subjective” aspects associated with expression: “Not only are the civilizatory taboos brought to bear on expression in music, but a medium that to date has lagged behind civilization. At the same time, the negation of expression takes account of the fact that the social substratum of expression – the individual – is condemned...” (PhNM: p.131; GS 12: p.162).¹²

The afore-mentioned “connivance” of Stravinsky’s music is also reflected in the fact, that, since expression as expression of suffering criticizes, even if in an indirect manner, the *status quo*, the extirpation of it means ultimately a conformity with the adverse conditions of the “administered world”. For Adorno, it is inadmissible that musical writing can come to subscribe to oppression, and for that reason he prefers clearly the way of Schoenberg and his followers, who assumed the risks of anachronism involved with dealing, even in a critical way, with expression in their musical composition. As for Stravinsky’s seeking of “authenticity” in the musical writing, the judgment of Adorno is well known: the product of it, transposed to music, is a kind of hebephrenia, i.e., a specific type of schizophrenia, that starts usually at puberty and is

¹¹ *Das kritische Verhältnis zum Ausdruck ist aller verantwortlichen Musik heute gemein. Auf divergenten Wegen haben es die Schönbergsschule und Stravinsky gewonnen, obwohl jene auch nach der Einführung der Zwölftontechnik es nicht dogmatisierte.*

¹² *Nicht nur werden die zivilisatorischen Tabus über den Ausdruck in der als Medium bislang hinter der Zivilisation zurückgebliebenen Musik vollstreckt. Es wird zugleich Rechenschaft davon abgelegt, daß gesellschaftlich das Substrat des Ausdrucks, das Individuum, verurteilt ist...*

characterized by foolish mannerisms, senseless laughter, delusions, hallucinations, and regressive behaviour. The link of that "aesthetic sickness" with the abolition of expression is, for Adorno, evident: "Hebephrenic indifference, which does not allow itself any expression, has a correlative in a passivity that is there even where Stravinsky's music presents restless activity" (PhNM: p. 132; GS 12: p.163).¹³

It is interesting to take into account that these features of Stravinsky's compositions constitute an example given by a genius of something that, according to Adorno, had been in the air since the beginning of the twentieth century. Not only in the general condition of life in later capitalist society is there a prejudice against subjectivity, and expression as its aesthetic correlative: almost all musical production has a tendency to become "objective", trying to avoid any danger of reflectivity. This surely reaches so called "popular music" as one of the most common products of the culture industry, but Adorno shows himself to be particularly concerned about the pedagogical movement of the *Musikanten*, that aimed to establish artificially a kind of "authenticity" in the musical scene and for this reason presented itself as an alternative to the "inauthentic" mass music. For Adorno, nevertheless, Stravinsky achieved much better and with undeniable fantasy what the Musikanten-movement did with no outstanding competence, i.e., to extirpate the expression of musical writing: "What could be something external, expressionless, decays to the level of the *Musikants*; music as absolute language becomes normal language. The utopian moment and its negative form, the expression of suffering, are extirpated from it by means of violence" (*Hindemith*, GS 17: p.246).¹⁴

This trend acquired an almost irresistible strength because there is a suitable presupposition in society: a corresponding eagerness to eliminate any sign of subjectivity and individuality (beyond the ideology of individualism, which has more to do with consumption than with autonomy or freedom). An interesting contribution to understanding that feeling appears in Adorno's "typology of hearing" from *Introduction to the sociology of music*, particularly in the exposure of the features of hearing guided by resentment. Here Adorno declares that "subjectivity, expression, is to the *ressentiment*-hearer the same as promiscuity and he

¹³ *Der hebephrenen Gleichgültigkeit, die auf keinen Ausdruck sich einläßt, entspricht Passivität auch dort, wo Strawinskys Musik rastlose Aktivität vorstellt.*

¹⁴ *Was ein Äußerstes sein könnte, das Ausdruckslose, sinkt ab ins Musikantische, Musik als absolute Sprache wird zur normalen Sprache. Das utopische Moment und seine negative Gestalt, der Ausdruck von Leiden, wird ihr durch verfügende Gewalt ausgetrieben.* – Cf. also Adorno (*Kunst*, GS 10.1: p.440).

cannot stand the thought of it” (ISM, GS 14: p.189).¹⁵ The consideration of that social context of hearing music takes the discussion beyond the realm of aesthetics, leading to some aspects of Adorno’s social philosophy, of which I would like to take into account the very concept of expression, only slightly modified to be appropriate in this field.

3. Expression in Adorno’s social philosophy

“Expression” in the sense of the general and social philosophy is a central theme in Adorno’s mature thought, particularly in *Negative Dialectics*. But it is interesting to begin with a quotation from his text on Siegfried Kracauer, in which he mentions the origin of his own conception of expression:

Without being totally conscious of it, I perceived for the first time the moment of expression in philosophy through Kracauer: someone to say what is important for himself. Whatever in this moment is contrary to strictness, to objective coercion of thought, remained behind thereafter. As I was confronted with that for the first time in the philosophical work of the university, so it appeared to me for a considerable time as an academic fact, until I discovered that, under the tensions in which philosophy has its being, that between expression and compulsoriness is perhaps the central one. (...). What, however, drove him [Kracauer] to expression was an almost unlimited capacity for suffering: expression and suffering are closely related to each other. (Kracauer, GS 11: p.389).¹⁶

Although, as we have seen, discussion concerning expression began very early in Adorno’s philosophical development, it is in his mature work, *Negative Dialectics*, that we find his final point of view of it. Despite the purposes of this work, which range from the criticism of epistemology to a non-conventional philosophy of history, it is undeniable that *Negative*

¹⁵ *Subjektivität, Ausdruck ist dem Ressentiment-Hörer zutiefst eins mit Promiskuität, und den Gedanken an diese kann er nicht ertragen.*

¹⁶ *Ohne daß ich mir davon hätte volle Rechenschaft geben können, gewährte ich durch Kracauer erstmals das Ausdrucksmoment der Philosophie: sagen, was einem ausgeht. Das diesem Moment konträre der Stringenz, des objektiven Zwangs im Gedanken, trat dahinter zurück. Wie ich erst im philosophischen Betrieb der Universität darauf stieß, so dünkte es mir lange genug akademisch, bis ich herausfand, daß unter der Spannungen, an denen Philosophie ihr Leben hat, die zwischen Ausdruck und Verbindlichkeit vielleicht die zentrale ist. (...) Was aber bei ihm [Kracauer] philosophisch zum Ausdruck drängte, war fast unbegrenzt Leidensfähigkeit: Ausdruck und Leiden sind miteinander verschwistert.*

Dialectics shows a considerable influence of Adorno's aesthetics. The fact the *Aesthetic Theory* was published posthumously only in 1972 and *Negative Dialectics* was published in 1966 does not invalidate this interpretation, for two reasons. On the one hand, the leading ideas of the *Aesthetic Theory* had already been present in several of Adorno's works since the end of the forties and the beginning of the fifties, such as *Philosophy of New Music*, *Prisms*, *Without Model (Ohne Leitbild)* and *Notes on Literature*. On the other hand, as the editors of *Aesthetic Theory* declare, Adorno had already begun to dictate its first version in 1961, interrupting it occasionally precisely to write *Negative Dialectics* (AT: pp.461ff.; GS 7: pp.538ff.). The afore-mentioned influence of Adorno's aesthetics on his *Negative Dialectics* is connected to the authentic work of art's ability, by means of its formal and mimetic features, as we have seen in a previous section of this paper, to give voice to human suffering. According to Adorno, the "mimetic" dimension of the aesthetic procedure, when operating within philosophy, also avoids a premature understanding of the object and by means of that temporary suspension of judgment helps to overcome ideological delusion and, as a consequence, comes closer to the truth. Here we meet the idea, typical of *Aesthetic Theory*, that the non-exteriority between what is said and the form in which it is said, is a way of reaching a much higher level of understanding of present reality, and thus is also a way of resisting the ideological pressures of the dominant system:

The need to lend a voice to suffering is a condition of all truth. For suffering is objectivity that weighs upon the subject; its most subjective experience, its expression, is objectively conveyed. This may help to explain why the presentation of philosophy is not an external matter of indifference to it but immanent to its idea. Its integral, non-conceptually mimetic moment of expression is objectified only by presentation in language (ND: p.17f.; GS 6: p.29).¹⁷

This page of *Negative Dialectics* is one of the most emphatic defences of the necessity of an expressive moment in philosophical writing in history, and before we come to discuss the close relationship between music and

¹⁷ *Das Bedürfnis, Leiden beredt werden zu lassen, ist Bedingung aller Wahrheit. Denn Leiden ist Objektivität, die auf dem Subjekt lastet; was er als sein Subjektivstes erfährt, sein Ausdruck, ist objektiv vermittelt. Das mag erklären helfen, warum der Philosophie ihre Darstellung nicht gleichgültig und äußerlich ist sondern ihrer Idee immanent. Ihr integrales Ausdrucksmoment, unbegrifflich-mimetisch, wird nur durch Darstellung – die Sprache – objektiviert.*

philosophy, it would be helpful to follow Adorno's argumentation a little further. It continues to work out a critique of the modern conception of the philosophical system and its influence on contemporary thought. What best characterizes the philosophical system goes in the opposite direction to the point of view of proximity between the content of a proposal and the way in which it expresses the isolation of the form of thought of its matter, either subordinating the latter to the former, or the opposite. Examples of the first case are the 17th century philosophical goal of creating formal languages, such as Descartes's *mathesis universalis* and Leibniz *characteristica universalis*, in which the "perfection" of the logical form would enable them to approach all aspects of experience, disregarding the nature of its object. For Adorno this tendency was not corrected by the 18th century conception of systems, in German Idealism for instance, since, according to it, nature was regarded almost always without considering its peculiarities and the character of non-identity of the object. The consideration of the latter is the first requirement of a negative dialectics and its ability to regarding the aspect of non-identity of things is a direct function of its incorporating the aesthetic component into the philosophical discussion, in a word, to introduce *expression* in it.

The immediate way to do this, according to Adorno, is to rehabilitate rhetoric as a natural way to express something in philosophical discourse (ND: pp.55f.; GS 6: pp.65f.). For him the condemnation of rhetoric is rather a consequence of the preponderance of positivism, and it can be rescued from its bad reputation by having in mind the fact that its supposed disregarding of the object did nothing worse to truth than the ideology which condemned it. Besides this immediate way of introducing expression in philosophy, there is, particularly in *Negative Dialectics*, an ensemble of statements which points out the relationship between the correct method of philosophy and the procedure for creating an work of art, especially for composing a piece of music: "Philosophy serves to bear out an experience which Schoenberg noted in traditional musicology: one really learns from it only how a movement begins and ends, nothing about the movement itself and its course" (Cf. ND: p. 33; GS 6: p.44).¹⁸

The point of view mentioned in this quotation becomes more explicit as Adorno refers to Max Weber's use of the word "composition" of concepts to designate the method which avoids the "forest of definitions" at the beginning of a theoretical investigation, constructing the meaning of the notions while the text is being written: "He [Max Weber] is indeed

¹⁸ *An Philosophie bestätigt sich eine Erfahrung, die Schönberg an der traditionellen Musiktheorie notierte: man lerne aus dieser eigentlich nur, wie ein Satz anfangen und schließe, nichts über ihn selber, seinen Verlauf.*

looking only at the subjective side, at cognitive procedure; but the 'compositions' in question are apt to follow similar rules as their analogue, the musical compositions. These are subjectively produced, but they work only where the subjective production is submerged in them" (ND: p.165; GS 6: p.167).¹⁹ The idea that the success of works of art depends on the disappearance of subjective aspects in them refers to the aesthetic concept of expression with which I dealt in the two previous sections of this paper. To confirm the role of musical expression in the kind of philosophy advocated by *Negative Dialectics*, I quote from an important paragraph of its introduction:

Philosophy is neither science nor the "cogitative poetry" to which positivism would degrade it in a stupid oxymoron. It is a form transmitted to those which differ from it as well as distinguished from them. Its suspended state is nothing but the expression of its inexpressibility. In this respect it is a true sister of music. (ND: p.109; GS 6: p.115).²⁰

Before concluding, I would like to sketch the relationship of the concept of expression, as here characterized, to those of truth and authenticity, as I indicated in the introduction to this paper. As for the relationship between expression and truth, the most immediate link is the fact, already pointed out in this paper, that expression, when applied to philosophical discussion and writing proves to be a powerful antidote to dominant ideology, and once more one may find in *Negative Dialectics* many passages about it. Some of them have in common the fact that they choose fundamental ontology as a paradigm of untruth in the philosophy of the 20th century, and its most significant fault is linked to a wrong attitude towards expression. According to Adorno, "language becomes a measure of truth only when we are conscious of the nonidentity of an expression with that which we mean. Heidegger refuses to engage in that reflection" (ND: p.111; GS 6: p.117).²¹

¹⁹ *Er [Weber] hat dabei freilich bloß die subjektive Seite, das Verfahren der Erkenntnis im Auge. Aber es dürfte um die in Rede stehenden 'Kompositionen' ähnlich bestellt sein wie um ihr Analogon, die musikalischen. Subjektiv hervorgebracht, sind diese gelungen allein, wo die subjektive Produktion in ihnen untergeht.*

²⁰ *Philosophie ist weder Wissenschaft noch, wozu der Positivismus mit einem albernem Oxymoron sie degradieren möchte, Gedankendichtung, sondern eine zu dem von ihr Verschiedenen ebenso vermittelte wie davon abgehobene Form. Ihr Schwebendes aber ist nicht anderes als der Ausdruck des Unausdrückbaren an ihr selber. Darin wahrhaft ist sie der Musik verschwistert.*

²¹ *Sprache wird zur Instanz von Wahrheit nur am Bewußtsein der Unidentität des Ausdrucks mit dem Gemeinten. Heidegger weigert sich jener Reflexion.*

Also in the *Jargon of Authenticity*, Adorno (1964f.) points out that not only Heidegger, but all his “school”, transform something that is only intended (*ein Intendiertes*) into something existing, as if it were the *being* without any tension towards the subject, in a way, in which its truth is simply supposed. In this case “the expression is enough in itself” since it does not have to incur the risk of expressing something different from itself.

It is interesting to notice also that this criticism against ideological authenticity has much to do with the relationship which I have indicated between music and philosophy. For Adorno, the Heideggerian attitude towards the expressive moment in philosophy has in common with Stravinsky’s “allergy” to musical expression the fact that both wanted to reduce to zero the participation of the subject in each of their activity’s fields.

The direct expression of the inexpressible is void; where expression dominated, as in great music, its seal was evanescence and transitoriness; and it was attached to the process, not to an indicative “that’s it”. Thoughts intended to think the inexpressible by abandoning thought falsify the inexpressible. They make of it what the thinker would least like it to be: the monstrosity of a flatly abstract object.

In this manner, Adorno suggests that Heidegger and his followers do in philosophy a job comparable to that of Stravinsky (and his school) and that the “social basis” of both is the diffused ideology of the late capitalist society, that has in the culture industry its most developed branch and its leading activity of social control oriented towards the masses. On the other hand, expression originating in the arts, and particularly in music, when correctly applied to philosophical writing, constitutes a way to avoid the ideological concept of authenticity and to come nearer to the truth, understood not as a previously given domain, but as theoretical exercise, in which the possibility to overcome oppression is always and newly confirmed.

Reading History in the Ruins of Nature: Images of Truth, Mortality and Reconciliation in Adorno's Schubert Interpretation¹

Max Paddison

‘The idea is a monad – that means briefly: every idea contains the image of the world.’ Walter Benjamin, *The Origin of German Tragic Drama* (1928).

I. Introduction

In *Aesthetic Theory* Adorno writes: “Like the experience of art, the aesthetic experience of nature is that of images.” (AT: p.87; GS 7: p.103).² If we accept Adorno’s claim straightforwardly as meaning that our experience of phenomena, including art and nature, is inescapably mediated through images that are historical in origin, it follows that the interpretation of both art and nature consists in the deciphering of the historical images that characterise our experience. A further implication in Adorno’s claim is that such images are not merely the projection of an isolated aesthetic subjectivity, but that collectively meaningful images are involved which are a product of their historical contexts and which are also part of the material of art itself. But, as a close analysis of Adorno’s interpretative essays shows, it is not simply a matter of deciphering works of art as if they were self-evident images of something else and as if they were directly available as such to a neutral language of interpretation. The images presented by our experience of art works are complex, ambiguous and indirect, and their articulation and re-configuration is already an inseparable part of the process of critical interpretation itself. Criticism is thus not only a matter of the *interpretation* of images, but

¹ An initial version of this article was first delivered as a paper at the conference *Adorno’s Schubert*, organised by the Centre for Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities at King’s College Cambridge, in February 2003.

² *Wie die Kunsterfahrung ist die ästhetische von der Natur eine von Bildern.*

itself involves the *construction* of images, and as a consequence each of Adorno's own interpretative essays also constitutes a complex image constructed in this sense.³ Through its dialectical relationship to its object – the work of art – interpretation itself takes the form of a literary image. It is significant that Adorno on occasion refers to the essays themselves as “dialectical images”, as in his late essay “Strawinsky. Ein dialektisches Bild” (1962) (QuF: pp.145-175; GS 16: pp.382-409). or “allegorical images”, as in his essay “Schubert” (1928) (GS 17: pp.18-33). Indeed, because of the gestural and physiological aspects of such images, particularly in the case of music – the German term *Bild* can also mean picture, portrait, or likeness – he sometimes goes further and calls them “physiognomies”, as with his book *Mahler. Eine musikalische Physiognomik* (1960) (GS 13: pp.149-320) and his essay “Zur Physiognomik Křeneks” (1964c) (GS 17: pp.109-113). Such images are intricate and multi-layered, and constitute a context or complex of meaning (*Sinnzusammenhang*). Seen in this way the interpretative image is a cipher which in a very real sense contains within itself all that is needed for its own deciphering. But what is the role of conceptualisation in this? If the image is the representation to ourselves of the phenomena of empirical reality, then interpretation is dependent on conceptualisation to decipher the image and throw into relief its dominating idea. The following observation by Walter Benjamin (1977: p.48), clearly central to Adorno's thinking, is relevant in this respect: “Through their mediating role concepts enable phenomena to participate in the existence of ideas. It is this same mediating role which fits them for the other equally basic task of philosophy, the representation of ideas.”

What I address in this essay is a particular relationship between the aesthetic experience of art and that of nature through a focus on the mediating concept of lyrical subjectivity, with reference to Adorno's article on Schubert – one of his most poetic texts, and one that is dominated by the image of landscape. My approach is partly philosophical, in that I deal with the concepts of nature, the sublime, and

³ I am deliberately avoiding use of the term “metaphor” here. This is in part because Adorno himself largely avoids using the term, and in part because it sheds little light on what Adorno means by the term “image” (*Bild*). For Adorno, the concept of *Bild* involves the construction of a complex and multi-layered image much in the way that a picture or painting is “constructed” in a very material sense. The play of these material elements between and against each other may of course be read as metaphors. The important point is, however, that Adorno is drawing on a rather different approach to the reading of imagery – that of the allegory. In this the influence of Walter Benjamin is strongly evident, in particular in the “Schubert” essay under discussion here.

subjectivity, and also partly literary, in that I analyse the manner in which Adorno seeks to construct a poetic image of nature as landscape in relation to the intense lyrical interiority of Schubert's music. Starting from an exploration of the conceptual traces left by Georg Lukács and Walter Benjamin in Adorno's early essay, emphasising concepts of nature, history, transience (*Vergänglichkeit*), decay (*Zerfall*) and mortality, I put forward an interpretation of Adorno's ciphered and often obscure text which also suggests certain deeply embedded and elaborately coded literary, musical and philosophical references. What emerges from my analysis of Adorno's allegorical image of mythic landscape in Schubert is the extent to which it is constructed through establishing elective affinities on the one hand with the language of the sublime in Kant and especially Goethe, and, on the other hand, with the language of modernist fragmentation. Adorno claims that the image of nature to be found in Schubert's music and in the poems he chose to set in his *Lieder* is the projection of historical subjectivity as lyrical inwardness on to the 'physiognomy of nature', and in this lies its truth content (*Wahrheitsgehalt*). It is this claim that I investigate here, through an analysis of the motifs that make up the literary image of landscape that constitutes Adorno's Schubert essay.

II. Historical Context

Adorno was twenty-five when his essay on Schubert was published in 1928. While he later acknowledged its importance for his development, he was also critical of what he came to see as its shortcomings, admitting in the Preface to *Moments musicaux*, the Schubertian-titled collection of essays in which it was republished in 1964, that he let it pass 'in spite of much in it that is awkward and clumsy', and that "the philosophical interpretation proceeds too directly through neglecting the technical-compositional facts."⁴ He also comments on "the crass incongruity between its high claims and tone and what is actually achieved", and goes on to say that "much remains ... abstract, in the bad sense of the term".⁵

⁴ My translation. See original German: *Als erste umfangreichere Arbeit des Autors zur Deutung von Musik ließ er ihn passieren trotz manchen Unbeholfenheiten, und obwohl die philosophische Interpretation allzu unmittelbar, unter Vernachlässigung der technisch-kompositorischen Tatbestände, sich vorwagt.* Theodor W. Adorno, "Vorrede", *Moments musicaux* (1964) (GS 17: p.10).

⁵ My translation. See original German: *Kraß ist das Mißverständnis zwischen dem großen Anspruch, auch dem des Tons, und dem Erfüllten; vieles bleibt ... schlecht abstrakt.* (GS 17: p.10).

The essay is characterised by the density of its poetic rhetoric, unusual even for Adorno, and also, as we have seen, by its extreme abstraction, to the extent that it does not really discuss any of Schubert's music in concrete terms. What is of particular interest, however, is precisely the way in which Adorno experiments here with ideas not yet fully absorbed, and how he sets out, inspired by his mentor, Walter Benjamin, to construct a densely-layered allegorical image to mark the occasion of the centenary of Schubert's death, with the aim of reassessing the composer's significance in the context of the overwhelming effect of Beethoven's absence.

The Schubert essay belongs to a group of writings with which, at first sight, it has little in common. This includes essays on contemporary composers in the 1920s – Schoenberg, Berg, Webern, Bartók, Hindemith, Eisler, and Weill, together with his interest in Surrealism; his correspondence with the composer Ernst Křenek on the concept of musical material; his first book, *Kierkegaard: Konstruktion des Ästhetischen*, which, although it appeared in 1933, was actually written in the late 1920s and submitted in 1930 as his *Habilitationsschrift*; and finally, two papers from the early 1930s which summarise his theoretical position up to that point – his inaugural lecture in the Philosophy Faculty at Frankfurt University, “Die Aktualität der Philosophie” (1931), and a lecture he gave at the Frankfurt chapter of the Kantgesellschaft, “Die Idee der Naturgeschichte” (1932). What links these diverse projects is a common philosophical and theoretical underpinning. The dominant influences at this time are Georg Lukács in his pre-Marxian work, especially *Die Theorie des Romans* (The Theory of the Novel) (1916), and Walter Benjamin in his book *Ursprung des deutschen Trauerspiels* (The Origin of German Tragic Drama), which Adorno knew in advance of its publication through his frequent discussions with Benjamin in the late 1920s (the book was completed in 1925, and published in 1928, the same year – significantly – as Adorno's essay on Schubert).

In his Preface to *Moments musicaux* Adorno provides an indication of the extent to which his early writings from the 1920s and the first few years of the 1930s are important for our understanding of his mature writings, in spite of what he later perceived as their inadequacies. Indeed, he even goes so far as to say that “his later effort was centred on the correction of such shortcomings”, and to that extent they constitute a vital element within the totality of his thinking.⁶ It is also interesting in this

⁶ My translation. See original German: *Keine andere captatio hätte der Autor vorzubringen, als daß seine spätere Anstrengung zentriert war in der Korrektur solcher Mängel; insofern sind sie ein Moment seines Denkens selber.* (GS 17: p.10).

context therefore to consider the concepts of nature and history, already so dominant in these early writings, from the perspective of the same motifs in the late and unfinished *Aesthetic Theory*. It is notable that the idea of the ‘image’, as the literary device for assembling the constellatory elements that characterise his approach, persists into his late work. The concept of ‘landscape’ (*Landschaft*), however, so central to the Schubert essay, and which provides the frame for its distinctive dialectical image, never again occupies such a focal role in Adorno’s writing, in spite of an occasional reappearance. But perhaps one reason for this is that no other composer evokes such imagery for Adorno, transfixed as Schubert’s music is between lyrical intensity and mythic detachment. At the same time, however, the Schubert essay is as much about Beethoven as it is about Schubert – or rather, it is about Beethoven’s absence, the traces left by Beethoven in the landscape of Schubert’s music. Interestingly, Adorno contrasts Beethoven with Schubert in this respect. In the fragments of his Beethoven book he argues that: “From a comparison with any instrumental piece by Schubert ... we can conclude that Beethoven’s music is *imageless*. ... Where his music contains images, they are images of the imageless, of demythologization, of reconciliation, never those which lay claim to unmediated truth within themselves.” (BB: p.163; NS I,1: p.235).⁷

III. Theoretical Context

The image of landscape which pervades Adorno’s Schubert essay, and which is such a striking aspect of its poetic opening, is at first sight perhaps not so puzzling. On one level it clearly evokes the romantic but tragic figure of the wanderer traversing the bleak landscape of *Die Winterreise*, and thereby the relationship of interiority to the external world, of subject to object – dialectical motifs common enough throughout Adorno’s writings, and here applied to Schubert as the most paradigmatic representative of lyrical subjectivity. It is the lyric impulse, after all, to see its own image on the face of nature – lines in Wilhelm Müller’s poem ‘Der stürmische Morgen’ (No. 18 from *Die Winterreise*) encapsulate this perfectly as intense subjectivity projected on to the physiognomy of nature: “Mein Herz sieht an dem Himmel/ Gemalt sein eignes Bild” (“My heart sees in the sky/ its own painted image”).⁸ Furthermore, Adorno’s landscape

⁷ *Am Vergleich mit jedem Instrumentalstück Schuberts ... läßt sich entnehmen: die Musik Beethovens ist bilderlos. ... Wo seine Musik Bilder kennt, sind es Bilder des Bilderlosen, die Entmythologisierung, der Versöhnung, nie solche die an sich, unvermittelt, mit dem Anspruch von Wahrheit stehen.*

⁸ Wilhelm Müller, ‘Der stürmische Morgen’, *Die Winterreise*, No.18.

is clearly an image of the characteristic structural features of Schubert's music, and in particular the relationship between the lyric moment and the larger formal conventions within which it appears in Schubert's instrumental music. Adorno would certainly have had passages like the following from Lukács's *The Theory of the Novel* in mind when writing that "it is in this way that the contribution of the subjective and the objective to the lyrical, which forms Schubert's' landscape, becomes newly defined".⁹ Lukács (1971: p.63) writes:

In lyric poetry, only the great moment exists, the moment at which the meaningful unity of nature and soul [spirit] or their meaningful divorce, the necessary and affirmed loneliness of the soul becomes eternal. At the lyrical moment the purest interiority of the soul, set apart from duration without choice, lifted above the obscurely-determined multiplicity of things, solidifies into substance [content]; whilst alien, unknowable nature is driven from within, to agglomerate into a symbol that is illuminated throughout. ... Such moments are constitutive and form-determining only for lyric poetry; only in lyric poetry is the subject, the vehicle of such experiences, transformed into the sole carrier of meaning, the only true reality ... And nature, bereft of its 'senseless' autonomous life as well [as] of its meaningful symbolism, becomes a background, a piece of scenery, an accompanying voice; it has lost its independence and is only a sensually perceptible projection of the essential – of interiority.

This is illuminating, in that it clearly shows the source of Adorno's thinking on the intimate connections between the lyric moment and the experience of nature. However, on closer inspection things are by no means straightforward, and Adorno's opening image still remains strangely resistant to interpretation, certainly in any direct sense of obvious correspondences. The cipher seems to need a key beyond the enticing imagery of Wilhelm Müller's *Winterreise* poems, even as illuminated by Lukács. We find further clues in Walter Benjamin on nature, history and the landscape in relation to the Baroque *Trauerspiel*. Benjamin (1977: p.92) writes: "what is peculiar about the baroque enthusiasm for landscape is ... not the antithesis of history and nature but the comprehensive secularization of the historical in the state of creation." The historical is collapsed into a state of mythic nature, into its eternal cycle of birth, decay, and death. History *becomes* nature, and history-as-nature is seen from the perspective of redemption and reconciliation

⁹ My translation. See original German: *Damit wird der Anteil des Subjektiven und Objektiven am Lyrischen, das Schuberts Landschaft ausmacht, neu bestimmt.* (GS 17: p.19).

(*Versöhnung*). In the most significant part of this passage, Benjamin suggests that: “History merges into the setting [i.e., the landscape]. ... The image of the setting ... becomes the key to historical understanding.” (Ibid.: p.92). And in another version of this same idea, now emphasising the concepts of allegory and the ruin, he writes: “the allegorical physiognomy of nature-history ... is present in reality in the form of the ruin ... [whereby] history has physically merged into the setting” (ibid.: pp.117f.). This theoretical position dominates Adorno’s thinking in the Schubert essay, as indeed it does all his writing from the late 1920s and early 1930s. The nub of this comes early in his discussion of Schubert, and, as this passage clearly indicates, it could have come straight out of Benjamin and Lukács. As Adorno formulates the theory:

The image-maker unveils the image. But the image of truth stands always within history. The history of the image is its decay: of the appearance, the semblance of truth [Zerfall des Scheines von Wahrheit], of all that it contains, of what the image means in itself, and a stripping of the covers to reveal its transparency to the truth contents that are the meaning of the process of decay itself, and which only emerge in their purity in its decay. Now, the decay of the lyrical structure is in particular the decay of its substantive subjective content. The subjective contents of the lyrical work of art consist solely of its material contents [Stoffgehalte].¹⁰

It is significant here that Adorno uses the term *Stoff*, and not his more usual term *Material*. We have little choice but translate *Stoffgehalte* as “material contents”, but by *Stoff* (“stuff”) Adorno means the material “in itself”, as found, unshaped, cultural materials/contents not necessarily of musical origin (even though in certain respects this appears to contradict aspects of his theory of musical material as it was emerging at the same time in his correspondence with Ernst Křenek in the late 1920s). He normally uses the word *Stoff* critically and negatively, as opposed to *Material*, which is handed down, historically pre-formed material.¹¹ Here, I suggest, he means “bits of reality”, as when he writes elsewhere in the essay: “The substance of the lyrical is never something manufactured: it

¹⁰ My translation. See original German: *Der Bildner enthüllt das Bild. Das Bild von Wahrheit aber steht allemal in Geschichte. Die Geschichte des Bildes ist sein Zerfall: Zerfall des Scheines von Wahrheit all der Gehalte, die es von sich aus meint, und Aufdeckung seiner Transparenz zu den Wahrheitsgehalten, die mit ihm gemeint sind und rein erst in seinem Zerfall hervortreten. Der Zerfall des lyrischen Gebildes nun ist der Zerfall seines subjektiven Gehaltes zumal. Die subjektiven Gehalte des lyrischen Kunstwerkes sind durchaus nur seine Stoffgehalte.* (GS 17: p.19).

¹¹ See my *Adorno's Aesthetics of Music* (Paddison, 1993: pp.64-107).

consists of the smallest possible cells of actual objectivity, of which it remains an image long after the large structures of such objectivity no longer hold sway.”¹² It is the intensity of subjective interiority projected on to the faded cultural images of objective reality. When nature is the object of this projection, it is not nature “in itself”, whatever that is, but rather Lukács’s concept of “second nature”, understood as what he called in *The Theory of the Novel*, “a charnel house of long-dead interiorities” (Lukács, 1971: p.64). To reiterate, “nature” is in reality “history”, those projected images of subjective origin that are now taken as “objective”, the thing itself. That is to say, nature is *mediated* history/culture. Adorno’s Hegelian concept of mediation (*Vermittlung*) is fundamental here. Furthermore, I suggest that ‘truth content’ (*Wahrheitsgehalt*) for Adorno is the recognition of this historical content of subjectivity behind the behind the appearance, the semblance (*Schein*) of nature, but from the perspective of redemption, of reconciliation, by which he means its recovery as memory and understanding – ultimately, perhaps, as hope. A telling passage occurs in Adorno’s Kierkegaard book, on which he was working immediately after the Schubert essay: “No truer image of hope can be imagined than that of ciphers, readable as traces, dissolving in history, disappearing in front of overflowing eyes, indeed confirmed in lamentation. In these tears of despair the ciphers appear as incandescent figures, dialectically, as compassion, comfort, and hope.” (KB: p.126; GS 2: p.179).¹³ The compelling ending of the Schubert essay corresponds directly to this passage, and merits citing here in full:

*In the presence of Schubert’s music tears spring from our eyes without first consulting the soul: they flow not metaphorically but tangibly within us. We cry without knowing why, because we are not yet as this music promises; we cry in the unnamed happiness that his music only needs to be as it is in order to assure us that we shall also be like this one day. This is music we cannot read, but it holds up to our blurred, overflowing eyes the ciphers of ultimate reconciliation.*¹⁴

¹² My translation. See original German: *Die lyrischen Gehalte werden nicht erzeugt: es sind die kleinsten Zellen der seienden Objektivität, als deren Bilder sie stehen, nachdem die großen Formen objektiven Bestandes in ihrem autoritären Recht längst verfielen.* (GS 17: p.20).

¹³ See original German: *Aber kein treueres Bild der Hoffnung ließe sich denken als das der echten, in Spuren lesbaren, in Geschichte blassenden Chiffren, die dem überfluteten Augen entschwinden, in dessen Weinen sie sich doch bewähren; dem Weinen der Verzweiflung, darin dialektisch, als Rührung, Trost und Hoffnung leibhaftig in Lichtfiguren erscheinen.*

¹⁴ My translation. See original German: *Vor Schuberts Musik stürzt die Träne aus dem Auge, ohne erst die Seele zu befragen: so unbildlich und real fällt sie in uns*

IV. Images

The landscape described by Adorno in the opening page of his essay on Schubert has a mythical, primeval quality. High mountain peaks surrounded by clouds, the rumble of thunder, distant stars, bottomless chasms in the rocks leading deep into the earth, nocturnal shadows, faint starlight, smoking craters, glowing magma, all suggest the stasis of time stood still, a mythological past outside history, and the eerie calm which comes in the aftermath of a cataclysm. The scene has a constructed, architectonic character, nature “broken open” by an eruption, and to that extent a “ruin”. This is also, of course, time made space. As Benjamin (1977: p.92) has put it with reference to the allegory: “chronological movement is grasped and analysed in a spatial image”. It is an image of space bounded by heaven and earth, a vast spherical space which can be rotated on its axis and turned upside down, its motifs remaining intact. The image belongs to the visual and plastic arts, and a threshold is crossed in more than one sense in the opening lines of the essay: “He who crosses the threshold between the years of Beethoven’s death and Schubert’s will shudder, gripped by a sense of awe [*Schauer*] like someone might feel emerging into the painfully diaphanous light from a rumbling crater, recently formed and still cooling ...” (Benjamin, 1977: p.177). Adorno was clearly taken with Benjamin’s observation in the *Trauerspiel* book, citing Carl Horst, that allegory is said “always to reveal a ‘crossing of the borders of a different mode’, an advance of the plastic arts into the territory of the ‘rhetorical’ arts ... And ... such violation of frontiers brings the former closer to music.” (Benjamin, 1977: p.177).

A further connection of great significance in interpreting Adorno’s image is one that he makes subliminally with the Kantian sublime (*das Erhabene*). The spectator gazes on the scene of a frozen cataclysm, and experiences not only a shiver at its coldness, but the aesthetic “shudder” (*Schauer*) and awe described by Kant when talking of the experience of the sublime in his *Kritik der Urteilskraft* (Critique of Judgment, 1790): “Thus any spectator who beholds massive mountains climbing skyward, deep gorges (*tiefe Schlünde*) with raging streams in them, wastelands lying in deep shadow and inviting melancholy meditation, and so on is indeed seized by *amazement* bordering on terror, by horror and a sacred thrill –

ein. Wir weinen, ohne zu wissen warum; weil wir so noch nicht sind, wie jene Musik es verspricht, und in unbennanten Glück, daß sie nur so zu sein braucht, dessen uns zu versichern, daß wir einmal so sein werden. Wir können sie nicht lesen; aber dem schwindenden, überfluteten Auge hält sie vor die Chiffren der endlichen Versöhnung. (GS 17: p.33).

shudder (*Schauer*)”.¹⁵ In the 1960s Adorno wrote on the concept of *Schauer* in his *Aesthetic Theory*, making the connection again with Kant:

Under patient contemplation artworks begin to move. To this extent they are truly after-images of the primordial shudder in the age of reification [Vergegenständlichung]; the terror of that age is recapitulated vis-à-vis reified objects. (AT: p.106; GS 7: p.124).¹⁶

This connection with the latent sublime and the springing up of ancient terrors amidst the reification of the modern age clearly indicates the continuing influence of the Surrealism of the 1920s on Adorno’s thinking – something which undoubtedly contributes also to his 1928 Schubert essay.¹⁷ Furthermore, he goes on to trace the link with the sacral evident also in the Kantian sublime when he suggests that “[t]here is a correlation between the fleeting appearance of prehistoric deities at their cult locations and the principle of permanence in the appearance of works of art.” At the same time, also implied here is the childlike awe and ‘shudder’ faced with the god-like power of nature that has apparently produced this upheaval, as the spectator “finally catches sight of those clouds in their eternal course so near to the mountain and yet so far above his head”.¹⁸

Thus, while it is at first sight an empty, uninhabited landscape, there are nevertheless strong presences: there is, of course, the spectator through whose eyes we see it, and the sense of a setting as *Schauplatz*, a stage set prepared for action; and there are the mythic figures who dominate the scene even by their absence – Zeus and Prometheus. Indeed, the image is distinctly Baroque in its emblematic character, its simultaneous evocation of the Romantic landscapes of Caspar David Friedrich and the mythic landscapes of Greek antiquity notwithstanding.

¹⁵ Immanuel Kant (1987: p.129) (trans. modified). See original German: *Die Verwunderung, die an Schreck grenzt, das Grausen und der heilige Schauer, welcher den Zuschauer bei dem Anblicke himmelansteigender Gebirgsmassen, tiefer Schlünde und darin tobender Gewässer, tiefbeschatteter, zum schwermütigen Nachdenken einladender Einöden u.s.w. ergreift ist ...* (Kant, 1957: X, p.359).

¹⁶ See original German: *Der geduldigen Kontemplation der Kunstwerke geraten sie in Bewegung. Insofern sind sie wahrhaft Nachbilder des vorweltlichen Schauers im Zeitalter der Vergegenständlichung; sein Schreckliches wiederholt sich vor den vergegenständlichten Objekten.*

¹⁷ I am indebted to Lydia Goehr for drawing my attention to this connection, which deserves an essay in its own right.

¹⁸ My translation. See original German: *... um endlich, nah dem Berg schon und dennoch weit über seinem Haupte, die ewigen Wolken in ihrer Bahn zu erkennen* (GS 17: p.18).

And yet, in spite of its calm stasis, it is also a fleeting moment that Adorno seeks to capture, characterised by its transience: that brief period between the deaths of Beethoven and Schubert. In spite of its appearance of eternity, however, the landscape is nevertheless in the very process of passing away, the image of molten magma rapidly petrifying into something fixed and reified. Adorno's approach hinges on Benjamin's insight that "[t]he word 'history' stands written on the countenance of nature in the characters of transience." (Benjamin, 1977: p.177). That is to say, the historical becomes fixed – reified – and appears as "nature". Nature, which is normally taken to represent that which lies outside history, eternal, unchanging, is seen here by Adorno (1932b, GS 1, p.358) as "the other side of the phenomenon: nature itself is seen as transitory nature, as history".¹⁹ This is Benjamin's concept of 'natural-history', formulated succinctly by Gillian Rose (1978: pp.37-38) as follows:

Benjamin argues that Greek tragedy and Baroque Trauerspiel are each determined by their time in the sense that they present the predominant myth of the time. ... The myth comprises the history of the significance which the society of the time has given to nature, and, as a myth, presents that significance as eternal. Benjamin calls this Naturgeschichte (the history of nature).

Benjamin (1977: 213) had himself commented on the similarities between the Baroque and the Romantic in this respect, and had identified "the musical philosophy of the romantic writers, who have an elective affinity with the baroque, and whose voice ought to be heeded here". Adorno responds to this affinity. His setting is visualised through drawing on the poetic rhetoric of Schubert's contemporaries among German Classical and early Romantic poets, in particular Goethe.

V. Correspondences

I suggest that a key to the landscape described by Adorno at the opening of the essay is to be found in Goethe's poem "Grenzen der Menschheit" – a text also in fact set by Schubert (D 716).²⁰ Goethe wrote

¹⁹ See original German: ... so gibt sich hier die andere Seite des Phänomens: Natur selber stellt als vergängliche Natur, als Geschichte sich dar. (GS 1: p.358).

²⁰ I should make it clear that Adorno nowhere mentions Goethe or his poem "Grenzen der Menschheit" in his Schubert essay, and that what I put forward here is my own speculative interpretation of the imagery employed in the essay based on my analysis of the literary motifs of which it is built. I was therefore surprised to read in the opening lines of Chapter 4 "Late Landscapes" of Michael Spitzer's book *Music as Philosophy: Adorno and Beethoven's Late Style* that Adorno's

the poem sometime between 1778-1781. I cite it here in full in order to give a flavour of its atmosphere, and I follow it with a rough prose translation in English:

Grenzen der Menschheit²¹
 Wenn der uralte/ Heilige Vater
 Mit gelassener Hand/ Aus rollenden Wolken
 Segnende Blitze/ Über die Erde sät,
 Küß ich den letzten/ Saum seines Kleides,
 Kindliche Schauer/ Treu²² in der Brust.

Denn mit Göttern/ Soll sich nicht messen
 Irgendein Mensch!/ Hebt er sich aufwärts
 Und berührt/ Mit dem Scheitel die Sterne.
 Nirgends haften dann/ Die unsichern Sohlen,
 Und mit ihm spielen/ Wolken und Winde.

Steht er mit festen,/ Markigen Knochen
 Auf der wohlgegründeten,/ Dauernden Erde,
 Reicht er nicht auf,/ Nur mit der Eiche
 Oder der Rebe/ Sich zu vergleichen.

Was unterscheidet/ Götter von Menschen?
 Daß viele Wellen/ Vor jenen wandeln,
 Ein ewiger Strom:/ Uns hebt die Welle,
 Verschlingt die Welle,/ Und wir versinken.

Ein kleiner Ring/ Begrenzt unser Leben,
 Und viele Geschlechter/ Reih'n sich dauernd
 An ihres Daseins/ Unendliche Kette.

Schubert essay "is obviously inspired by ... famous settings of Goethe poems such as *Grenzen der Menschheit*" (Spitzer, 2006: p.71). There's nothing obvious about it at all, of course, as the motifs are obscure and ambiguous. Michael Spitzer, a colleague of mine at Durham University, was working on his book while I was preparing the original version of this essay as a research paper delivered at King's College, Cambridge in February 2003. He has agreed to acknowledge my research as the source of his information on Goethe's "*Grenzen der Menschheit*" in any future edition of his book, and to correct any misunderstanding that might arise from his passing reference to this material.

²¹ J.W. Goethe, *Gedichte* (s.d.: pp.322-323).

²² Schubert sets "tief" instead of "true" at this point. This could be because the vowel sits better with the voice in this register. A more likely explanation, however, is that it is simply a misreading resulting from the circulation of poems in handwritten copies within Schubert's reading circle. I am grateful to Richard Bruce for his comments on this point.

Prose summary: From rumbling clouds [*aus rollenden Wolken*] the primal sacred father [Zeus] serenely sows lightning [*segnende Blitze*] over the earth [*über die Erde sät*] from his relaxed hand [*aus gelassener Hand*], while we mortals, with childlike awe and terror [*kindliche Schauer*], can only kiss the hem of his garment. Were we to try to measure ourselves against the gods, and attempt to raise ourselves up to touch the stars with our brow [*und berührt mit dem Scheitel die Sterne*], we would lose our footing and become the playthings of the clouds and the wind. We must stand upon the solid, enduring earth, where we are raised up and then cast down by the waves of an eternal river [*ein ewiger Strom*] which issues from the gods, and into which we sink. A little ring encircles and limits our lives, and countless generations join the unending chain around his Being.²³

When juxtaposed with the poetic description of the mythic landscape which opens Adorno's Schubert essay, interesting correspondences emerge (I use a deliberately quite literal translation, designed to emphasise the connections between the Adorno and Goethe passages, with shared terms also given in German):

He who crosses the threshold between the years of Beethoven's death and Schubert's will shudder, gripped by a sense of awe [ergreift ein Schauer] like someone might feel who emerges from a rumbling crater [aus rollendem ... Krater], recently formed and still cooling, into the painfully rarified and diaphanous light and becomes aware of dark trceries of vegetation against a background of the lava figurations of these wide, exposed peaks, finally to recognise – close to the mountain and yet high above his head [weit über seinem Haupte] – the eternal clouds [die ewigen Wolken] in their course. He steps out from the abyss into the landscape which surrounds it and makes its bottomless depths uniquely visible, in that it bounds it with the overwhelming silence of its horizon, and in readiness absorbs the light that shortly before had been struck by blazing magma [glühende Masse]. While Schubert's music may not in itself always contain the power of restless Will that arises from the centre of gravity of Beethoven's [inmost] nature, the fissures and shafts with which it is riven lead to the same chthonic depths in which that Will has its origins, and make manifest the daemonic image that the act of practical reason was able to master again and again; but the stars that make his music visible [die Sterne ... die ihr sichtbar machen] are the same ones towards whose unattainable appearance [nach deren unerreichbarem Schein] the striving hand grasped [die eifernde Hand griff]. So with Schubert, discussion must, in the strict sense, be of landscape. (GS 17: p.18).²⁴

²³ My summary.

²⁴ My translation. See original German: *Wer die Schwelle zwischen den Todesjahren*

“Grenzen der Menschheit” was set by Schubert some forty years later, in 1821, for bass/baritone, and the song has certain affinities with another of his settings of the early Goethe, “Prometheus” (D 674), which dates from 1819. While Goethe’s poem “Grenzen der Menschheit” is well known, Schubert’s song is not particularly so. Schubert’s setting combines a solemn, detached and somewhat unsettling serenity with the awesome sense of the inevitability of fate and of the limits of our earthly existence. The song itself has interesting features which merit more detailed attention and space for discussion than is available here, where my focus is largely on the imagery of Goethe’s poem. I should at least point out that generically – and this piece, like so much of the composer’s music, does not easily fit our preconceptions of the typical Schubert song – it belongs to the tradition of the solemn ode, reminiscent of aspects of Sarastro’s music in Mozart’s *The Magic Flute*, or of the Masonic Funeral Music. Although Adorno doesn’t refer directly to the Goethe poem and doesn’t mention this song at all in the “Schubert” essay, when he writes of the Adagio of the *Wandererphantasie* that “the intimation of death ... is alone the gateway to the underworld down into which Schubert is leading us”,²⁵ then it is difficult not to think of the solemn tone of his setting of “Grenzen der Menschheit” as also infused with the “affect of death” (*Affekt des Todes*), as he puts it: “– for the affect, or intimation of death is reproduced as after-image in Schubert’s landscape, sorrow over mankind, not suffering with it”.²⁶

Beethovens und Schuberts überschreitet, den ergreift ein Schauer, wie ihn ähnlich empfinden mag einer, der aus rollendem, aufgestülptem, erkaltendem Krater ins schmerzhaft feine und weiß behangende Licht kommt und vor den Lavafiguren der schutzlos gebreiteten Höhe dunkler Pflanzengespinnste gewahr wird, um endlich, nah dem Berg schon und dennoch weit über seinem Haupte, die ewigen Wolken in ihrer Bahn zu erkennen. Aus dem Abgrund betritt er die Landschaft, die jenen umgibt und seine bodenlose Tiefe einzig sichtbar macht, indem sie sie mit der gewaltigen Stille ihrer Lineatur umzieht und in Bereitschaft das Licht empfängt, dem blind zuvor die glühende Masse entgegenschlug. Mag immer Schuberts Musik nicht in sich selber die Macht des tätigen Willens enthalten, der vom Schwerpunkt der Beethovenschen Natur sich erhebt: die Schlinde und Schächte, die sie durchfurchen, leiten in die gleiche chthonische Tiefe, in der jener Wille seinen Ursprung hat, and machen ihr dämonisches Bild offenkundig, das die Tat der praktischen Vernunft je und je wieder zu meistern vermochte; die Sterne aber, die ihr sichtbar leuchten, sind die gleichen, nach deren unerreichbarem Schein die eifernde Hand griff. So muß strengen Sinnes von Schuberts Landschaft die Rede sein. (GS 17: p.18).

²⁵ My translation. See original German: *Der Affekt des Todes ... ist allein das Tor zur Unterwelt, in die Schubert hinabgeleitet* (GS 17: p.29).

²⁶ My translation. See original German: – *denn der Affekt des Todes wird in Schuberts Landschaft nachgebildet, die Trauer über den Menschen, nicht der Schmerz in ihnen –*. (GS 17: p.29).

The comparison between the Goethe poem and the language of Adorno's opening page is striking on two counts, both of which are characteristic of Adorno's lifelong method and, I would argue, provide significant clues on how to understand this passage. Firstly, Adorno takes the imagery and rhetorical style from a well-known source – in this case Goethe – and employs it, in a montage or mosaic-like manner, to create his “setting”. Secondly, he inverts it, both in terms of individual motifs and in terms of the whole scene. Given the spatial and visual character of the scene evoked at the opening of the essay, both these processes occur simultaneously – Prime and Inversion together, so to speak.

The language is Goethe's, but the motifs are inverted. Zeus, who casually, from rumbling clouds, sows lightning upon the earth to bless us mortals and simultaneously to warn us not to overreach ourselves, excites in us “childlike awe and shudder” (*kindliche Schauer*). The spectator of Adorno's landscape in the Schubert essay is also gripped by awe, by this “shudder”, as he/she emerges into the scene of Promethean upheaval. But instead of the relaxed hand (*mit gelassener Hand*) of Zeus, (*der uralte,/ Heilige Vater*), appearing from the Olympian rumbling clouds (*aus rollenden Wolken*) to send a lightning bolt, it is the outstretched, striving hand (*die eifernde Hand*) of Beethoven/Prometheus, raising itself from the earth, from the rumbling crater (*aus rollendem ... Krater*) and daring to challenge the stern warning of the gods (*Denn mit Göttern/ Soll sich nicht messen/ Irgendein Mensch*). The volcanic eruption that has transformed this landscape, with its rapidly petrifying lava figures and rumbling crater, has come from the molten depths of the earth, hence chthonic, not from the Olympian heights of the gods. Goethe/Zeus cautions humanity not to raise itself up to try to touch the stars (*Hebt er sich aufwärts/ Und berührt/ Mit dem Scheitel die Sterne*). Beethoven/Prometheus strives towards the unattainable eternity of the stars and fails – in the sense in which Adorno's modernist reading of Beethoven “in reverse”, from the perspective of the avant-garde, sees his authenticity: that is, as heroic failure in the face of the impossibility of achieving totality in an early-modern world, already characterised by the collapse of totalising world-views. Truth, as conception of the whole, of totality, is now only to be found in the part, the fragment – this is the sense of the most famous of Adorno's inversions, when he turns Hegel's “The True is the Whole” (*Das Wahre ist das Ganze*) into “The Whole is the False” (*Das Ganze ist das Unwahre*).²⁷ This, suggests Adorno, is the setting

²⁷ The most familiar examples of this occur in Adorno's *Minima Moralia*: his inversion of Hegel's dictum “Das Wahre ist das Ganze” (Hegel, *Phänomenologie des Geistes*) as “Das Ganze ist das Unwahre” (Adorno, *Minima Moralia*), the turning of Nietzsche's reference to philosophy as “die fröhliche Wissenschaft” into “die traurige Wissenschaft” (Adorno, “Dedication”, *Minima Moralia*).

occupied by Schubert, wandering in this still, tranquil landscape in the aftermath of the transformation wrought by the violent, primal upheaval of Beethoven's Promethean efforts.

VI. Concluding Remarks

Adorno claims that art, as something made through the domination of nature, seeks an identity with nature, as something apparently given, something already existent, free, and not made. The art work, as historically mediated artefact, stands in for nature, offering the seeming immediacy of mythic, timeless nature itself, and promising a vicarious experience of freedom not available in the actual social reality of its own historical period. In dealing with nature as an object of aesthetic experience, we are really dealing with historical images of nature, the *appearance* of nature – that is to say, mediated nature, not nature directly, not nature as the site of the reproduction of life, of violent death, the law of tooth and claw, nor nature as *physis*, as the laws of science. On the one hand this constitutes the ideological character of the concept of nature, nature as the projection of historical-social needs, as mythology, and as a screen to conceal vested cultural interests under the cloak of objectivity (as, for example, the political use made of images of “nature” and “the natural” by nationalist movements in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries to claim legitimacy for “natural roots” in blood, soil, folk and community). On the other hand, however, it also points towards the emancipatory character of the aesthetic experience, suggested by art's emulation of nature, not least in the sense of opening on to something that has not yet been “identified” and rationalized – indeed, for Adorno the truth of nature is that which has not yet been identified: the non-identical (*das Nicht-Identische*). It is for such reasons that these kinds of historical images of nature could be seen as ciphers, encoded not so much in words and the rationality of concepts but more so in a mimetic language of gestures within the closed world of artistic form. “As a human language that is both organizing as well as reconciled, art wants once again to attain what has become opaque to humans in the language of nature” writes Adorno in *Aesthetic Theory* (AT: p.99; GS 7: p.120).²⁸

There is much to criticise in this early experiment of Adorno's, not least that he is profligate in his use of the image, the topos of landscape, to the extent that it remains as a constant backdrop to his thinking in the

²⁸ See original German: *Als verfügende sowohl wie versöhnte Sprache von Menschen möchte Kunst abermals heranreichen an das, was den Menschen in der Sprache der Natur sich verdunkelt.*

Schubert essay, and thereby risks meaning everything and nothing. However, the significant feature of Adorno's Schubert landscape, its pervading motif, is the idea of fragmentation. The many references Adorno makes to "fragmentation" elsewhere are usually either in connection with modernism and the avant-garde, or with the late style of Beethoven and others like Mahler. In this essay he takes Schubert into this discourse, and in this case fragmentation signifies something different. There is a sense in which Schubert, as presented here by Adorno, is seen to stand outside "the historical dialectic of musical material" (as he later suggested briefly, and without any elaboration, does Satie; the case of Berg also comes to mind as a composer given a kind of special dispensation within Adorno's larger historical scheme, a scheme within which he does not really fit). The fragmentation of Schubert's music needs certainly to be understood within the concept of "rupture", which is to say as the idea of a "rupture between self and forms" (*der Bruch zwischen Ich und Formen*) put forward by Lukács in his *The Theory of the Novel*. The large-scale forms (for Lukács the novel, and for Adorno, in his discussion of Schubert, sonata form), have become reified, to the extent that a rift opens up between the seeming objectivity of formal conventions and the expressive needs of the subject. In the case of modernism, this leads to a fragmentation of form itself. In the case of Schubert, the reified forms continue their eternal round, as a kind of appearance or semblance (*Schein*) of eternal absolutes, as "nature" petrified, like the lava figurations of the distant mythic mountain landscape. It is within this that Schubert's isolated subjectivity wanders, momentarily illuminating fragments of this landscape with its intense lyric interiority. And yet, even these illuminated moments also have a crystalline and detached objectivity about them. Both the lyric moments and the reified large-scale forms reveal their transience, their status now that of fragmented ruins merging with the landscape itself. It is, however, the recognition of the transience of both within the unique landscape of Schubert's anti-organic music which releases what Adorno calls these "images of truth". But, writes Adorno: "The dialectical liberation of the real contents of Schubert's music was only accomplished *after* Romanticism, a period to which he himself hardly belonged".²⁹ Inspired by the Baroque *Trauerspiel* and its allegorical projections, Adorno, like Benjamin, reads history in reverse. His reading of Schubert is not only in the light of the middle and late period Beethoven, but also from the perspective of modernist fragmentation.

²⁹ My translation. See original: *Die dialektische Befreiung der eigentlichen Gehalte Schuberts vollzieht sich nach der Romantik, der er selber kaum jemals blank zurechnet* (GS 17: pp.20-21).

What Schubert also succeeds in doing, according to Adorno, is to present in musical terms an image of mortality. His music fixes the transience which is an aspect of our experience of nature, and gives it a kind of crystalline permanence, which, like the cycle of nature itself, reminds us of our own impermanence and mortality. It reveals the historical as well as the mythical in nature, the ruin in the landscape, and the illumination of dead nature by intense subjectivity, the lyrical moment. It contrasts with attempts to characterize nature by its unchanging permanence and stasis outside history, as he argued that both Wagner and Stravinsky had sought to do, or to represent nature in music through a mimesis of nature as unmediated objectivity in a state of permanent change and flux, as he argued that Debussy had tried to achieve.³⁰ The truth of art, in Adorno's terms, lies in the bringing to speech of mute nature: it is not, however, an a-historical nature as eternal archetype or myth, nor is it a nature of unmediated accessible objectivity. It is an image of nature which is itself the projection of that which has been historically repressed and seeks emancipation. To say that Schubert's music simply represents lamentation misses the point. The music evokes lamentation in us because it shows us the irreconcilable split between our situation in reality, which is that of the transience of all things in the face of our own mortality, and the possibility of redemption and reconciliation, which seems to be promised in the experience of Schubert's music.

³⁰ See Albrecht Wellmer (1997) for an illuminating account of Adorno's underestimation of this tendency in musical modernism.

The Truth-Finding Role of Interpretation in the Present Abundance of the Musical Repertoire – Concerning the Necessity of a Critical Music Aesthetics

Otto Kolleritsch

The following thesis might be easily supported: Music aesthetics emerges all the more as the repertoire of music abundantly increases and “the absolute” disappears more and more between the claws of an economically-dictated world, just like culture itself. The early romanticists – the brothers August Wilhelm and Friedrich Schlegel, Novalis, Ludwig Tieck, Friedrich Schleiermacher – named this “absolute” (we can also call it truth), about which they more than dreamed, to be grasped at by means of art, especially by music, at least to be approached time and again. The latter does not seem completely impossible, and critically set in motion the aesthetics of the 20th century, notably, to be precise, by means of an “aesthetic theory” founded on the “critical theory” of the so-called “Frankfurt School”; this is to allude to the man who argued philosophically and musically in both of these disciplines in the most differentiated and knowledgeable way. As Thomas Mann (1990: p.173) writes about Theodor W. Adorno, in his “Genesis of Doctor Faustus”, “this strange character refused to make the career choice between philosophy and music all his life. He was more than certain to pursue the same principles in both of these divergent fields. His dialectic cast of mind and his social philosophical tendency combine with musical passion in a way that, although not particularly unique today, is founded in the problems of his times”. “Philosophy, which once seemed obsolete, lives on because the moment to realize it was missed” (ND: p.3; GS 6: p.15)¹ – this is how Adorno starts his “Negative Dialectics”. This sentence applies to music to an even greater extent as it is by nature of its existence bound a priori to a temporary realization and one to be constantly started anew. Music must be *played, interpreted*. Terms which mean the same, but at the same time more than the common usage suggests. What is expressed

¹ *Philosophie, die einmal überholt schien, erhält sich am Leben, weil der Augenblick ihrer Verwirklichung versäumt ward.*

here is that Adorno did not want to limit his aesthetics to a discussion of works, but rather to connect it to an aesthetics of reception.

“Critical Theory” was described in quite simple words by Max Horkheimer (1969) in his obituary for Theodor W. Adorno, 13 August 1969: “The basis of critical theory is the belief that we cannot depict what is good, what is absolute. We can only denote what we suffer from, what needs to be changed. Adorno’s reflection on the music by Richard Strauss represents an example of this. Things do not remain as they are; they receive a stamp of the search for truth. As Adorno (*Strauss II*, GS 16: p.575f.) writes, the “anti-metaphysicist” Strauss, “unlike his mentor Nietzsche,” does not accuse

*metaphysics as ideology, nor does the music of Strauss add traces of suffering from futility. His sounds are like multi-colored fish in the water, enjoying their mere being. Expression adheres to what is presently depicted and renounces the ideal once followed by great music, when it would have preferred creating the absolute from a productive fantasy [...].*²

Time and again we meet the term “message substance” (*Botschaftssubstanz*) in hermeneutic discussions of music or a similar one which may be connected with the other term “relational situations” (*Beziehungsbefindlichkeiten*). But what is the “substance of the message” of a musical work? It focuses on what is possible by means of human power, by means of the potency of feeling, of being involved. Richard Wagner’s Senta shows what she is capable of, how she is able to think beyond her life. She loves Erik, but she also thinks of self-realization in her life (therein lies the reason for stage direction, that is, to set in motion in a piece what is alive within music). Senta loves Erik but she also wants to be herself. Great pieces are always up to date when they do not become lost within the “general” (*Allgemeines*) – Adorno would call it a “bad general” (*schlechtes Allgemeines*) – and adapt themselves there uncritically. From this perspective, “home” (*Heimat*) appears to me a rather dangerous word. Or “nature”, when it is used as an umbrella category to neutralize problems in art. As such, “nature” plays its role in uncritical aesthetics. Wagner, for example, is not interested in nature. It took the arts a long time to free themselves from it. Wagner wishes to

² *Weder jedoch verklagte der Antimetaphysiker, wie sein Mentor Nietzsche, Metaphysik als Ideologie, noch ist dem Straussischen Ton auch nur die Spur des Leidens an ihrer Vergeblichkeit beigemischt. Seine Klänge tummeln sich in bloß Seienden wie buntschillernde Fische im Wasser. Der Ausdruck hält sich ans jeweils Abzubildende und sagt dem Ideal ab, dem einmal große Musik nachging, als sie aus produktiver Phantasie am liebsten das Absolute erzeugt hätte...*

express what happens within it but not what it is externally – “Good Friday enchantment”, “forest weaving”. It is now up to interpretation to reflect upon all this. Related to “message substance” or likewise enclosed in it, these “relational situations” among human beings play an essential role, particularly for music, for its expressive potential. – What does “relational situation” mean? One should read the *Wahlverwandtschaften* by Goethe and deal with Mozart’s *Così fan tutte*, with Mozart’s *Don Giovanni*, with Kierkegaard, and then the fields of meaning of a reflection-oriented music making may become visible. If we look at history, we will see that reflection increasingly became a means of orientation for the artist the more complex the artistic medium became with regard to compositional techniques, in connection with new areas in various spheres of life. Not only for the so-called creative artist, but also for the performing artist (the difference cannot really be drawn). In particular, one must be careful that the difference between creating and re-creating does not become enforced by structural models as provided by musical life, and even education. Scholarly immersive reflection extending beyond the merely musical prevents the economically utilized reification (*Verdinglichung*) of music. This is why research at universities of the arts, in music high education in general, must be an indispensable part of all study programmes. Much remains to be corrected, to be anchored in the consciousness in a different way, different from the general (“bad general”) consciousness. This makes it possible to position the artistic within the European context by making the indispensability of research for the arts explicit, and whose impact, as a result, can be reconstructed in musical practice. This kind of research must be developed and it is of particular importance to do so together with other countries of the European Union. Thus, art may find its path into European politics and establish a role which it has hardly played at all so far. It is essential that it does play a role there just like the humanities. It must become clear, and this should be the centerpiece in European university landscapes, that the artistic is part of the knowledge universities have to deal with. The economic insignificance of the artistic has placed it in its present marginal position within European politics.

The historical orientation of the 19th century, to be continued in the 20th and 21st centuries, created a rich repertoire for a newly defined culture of reproduction. In the aftermath, this resulted in cultural-industrial processes. As Adorno diagnosed them, for music’s dialectics a culture of reproduction by means of interpretation must emerge for the sake of its further existence.

In his novel, significantly entitled *The Loser*, the Austrian writer Thomas Bernhard describes the career of a young piano student who,

attracted by Horowitz' reputation, participated in a piano course at the Mozarteum at the Salzburg Festival (cf. Kolleritsch, 2001). There he met Glenn Gould and from then on the public impact of this extraordinary pianist became the model for his own career. He, the "loser", going by the name Wertheimer in the novel, did not respond to the pressure of public musical life with reflection but with adjustment, which he chose as his strategy of success. He was, as the writer describes him, "an unrelieved emulator, he emulated anybody he thought was better off than he was" (Thomas Bernhard, 1991: p.93). His declared goal was to become "the piano virtuoso who proves his mastery to the musical world year in, year out, until he keels over" (*ibid.*: p.86). The book does not deal with music; it avoids any musicological, philosophical, aesthetic reflection on music. There is no description of the way Glenn Gould played the *Goldberg Variations*, with the exception that he was always perfect; there is not even an allusion to music or its way of being played. Only, as part of the papers read after Gould's performance at the Salzburg Festival, "that no pianist had ever played the Goldberg Variations so artistically" (*ibid.*: p.4). It is a musician's novel, transmitting the de facto non-deal with music, the message of its inexistence, namely, that it no longer exists in its emphatic sense within the network of cultural industry, having become something unnecessary to be discussed any longer. As Adorno put it, "To the extent that art corresponds to manifest social need it is primarily a profit-driven industry that carries on for as long as it pays, and by its smooth functioning it obscures the fact that it is already dead" (AT: p.24; GS 7: p.34)³.

And in his *Dialectic of Enlightenment* Adorno says, "Every phenomenon is by now so thoroughly imprinted by the schema that nothing can occur that does not bear in advance a trace of the jargon [...]" (DA: p.101; GS 3: p.149)⁴. Bernhard's book *The Loser* may be read as a powerful depiction of Adorno's theses. Seen as such, the end of the protagonist, "the loser", is as the epigraph announces at the beginning of the novel, a "suicide calculated well in advance [...], no spontaneous act of desperation." However, this obliteration of Bernhard's is not to be taken literally, nor is Adorno's famous sentence that there can be no more poems after Auschwitz.

On the basis of self-reflection the first-person narrator, together with

³ *Soweit Kunst dem sozial vorhandenen Bedürfnis entspricht, ist sie in weitestem Maß ein vom Profit gesteuerter Betrieb geworden, der weiltläuft, solange er rentiert und durch Perfektion darüber hinweghilft, daß er schon tot ist.*

⁴ *Alles Erscheinende ist so gründlich gestempelt, daß nachgerade nichts mehr vorkommen kann, was nicht vorweg die Spur des Jargons trüge...*

Glenn Gould and the “loser”, the third person in this Salzburg group, gets involved with a critical statement. Reflecting on everything he, the writer Thomas Bernhard (1991: p.10), says about himself, “Most artists are ignorant of their art. They have a dilettante’s notion of art, remain stuck in dilettantism all their lives, even the most famous artists in the world.” And he labels the shortcoming, the interpreters’ mistake, responsible for their repertoire’s loss of significance, when he says, continuing reflecting about himself – and it sounds like a suggestion for therapy in the future: “I have developed the art of perceiving the same thing over and over as something new, developed it to a high, absurdly high skill, neither Wertheimer nor Glenn had that skill” (*ibid.*: p.41).

A level of dialectic reflection flickers here in the light of an accumulation of images of thought pressing forward, which, as Manfred Frank (1988: p.210) describes them, begin “to terminate the tangible world [...], transforming the shaped world into an unshaped one [...], a world of figures, numbers, functions and exchange values”. Accordingly, we can read Robert Musil’s diagnosis in his *Man without Qualities*, “Reality itself and as such tends to abolish itself”, incorporating “the same thing over and over again as something completely different.” Though the connotation of this quotation may be negative, within the context of Bernhard’s book, “developing it [interpretation] to a high, absurdly high skill” is the essence of the art of interpretation, I would say, and it is perceived as perspective in order to preserve the musical repertoire from being “disposed of by history” (Kolleritsch, 2003: p.12).

Musical production needs reproduction. This is an indissoluble constellation of the dependence of the one on the other. That scores may also be read without being transformed into sound, is par excellence of marginal importance for their existence, even if integratively necessary; this is essentially only of additional scholarly importance with reference to theoretical analysis. Only through interpretation can reproduction, in its indissoluble interplay with production, be able to fulfill the existential function awarded to it – “Song is Being” as Rilke says (1980: p.488).

In 1956 Adorno wrote one of his most frequently quoted text passages concerning the question of interpretation in *Music and Language. A Fragment*. At first glance this text seems to be misleading as it distinguishes between “understanding language” and “making music”, at second glance, however, it seems revealing, in fact not only with respect to Adorno’s *Theory of Musical Reproduction*, published as late as 2001.

To interpret language means: to understand language. To interpret music means: to make music [...]. This is why the idea of interpretation is not an accidental attribute of music, but an integral

part of it. To play music correctly means first and foremost to speak its language properly (FML, QuF: p.3; GS 16: p.253).⁵

This passage might mean that Adorno associated hermeneutic interpretation with language only, withholding it from music, if it were not for the sentence that proper speaking of the language of music must be “first and foremost” apostrophed. Consequently, the philosophical emphasis on correct playing may speak at the same time of an approach towards a correct life and simultaneously of a life free from manipulation. The pianist Eduard Steuermann, a student of Busoni and Schoenberg, became Adorno’s warrantor.

I met Steuermann through Berg in 1925 and took piano lessons from him; our friendship has lasted to this day. Words cannot begin to adequately describe all that I owe him. When he pointed out the motivic relationship in the b-minor capriccio by Brahms, which I had overlooked and therefore neglected in playing, I became fully aware of the importance of analysis as a basis for the correct reproduction of music, analysis that articulates knowledge about the music to be interpreted (1964b, GS 17: p.313).⁶

Whenever Adorno connects the tone of truth with adequate musical interpretation, Eduard Steuermann appears as a foil through, who for him “in a false life led a correct one”, and was a “secret righteous person of music”. Adorno’s text *After Steuermann’s Death* of 1964 is a historically concretizing commentary on almost everything that Adorno stated theoretically with reference to interpretation. Steuermann was, as Adorno (1964b) writes,

impregnated with the conception of the new music of the Second Viennese School. Right from the beginning the latter also dealt with the relationship towards older music, and revolutionized musical interpretation in general. The pianists of the epoch, Schnabel and

⁵ *Sprache interpretieren heißt: Sprache verstehen; Musik interpretieren heißt: Musik machen [...]. Darum gehört die Idee der Interpretation zur Musik selber und ist ihr nicht akzidentell. Musik richtig spielen aber ist zuvörderst, ihre Sprache richtig sprechen.*

⁶ *Durch Berg bin ich 1925 mit Steuermann bekanntgeworden und nahm bei ihm Unterricht im Klavierspiel; die Freundschaft dauerte mit großer Kontinuität bis zu diesem Tag. Worte reichen nicht heran an das, was ich ihm verdanke. Als er mich auf einen Motivzusammenhang im h-moll-Capriccio von Brahms aufmerksam machte, den ich übersehen und darum beim Spielen vernachlässigt hatte, wurde mir ganz bewußt, wie sehr die bis zur Analyse artikulierte Erkenntnis darzustellender Musik die Voraussetzung ist für richtige Wiedergabe.*

Erdmann not excepted, were never before closer to its great production (GS 17: p.312) [...] Such experience of modernity pulls traditional music into it; this has long been a powerful field between the compositional now and here and that particular generality [the “obsolete generality” of tonality] (GS 17: p.313f.). Steuermann’s urge to break up the frameworks of conventional consciousness and to bring to light what is hidden was omnipresent (GS 17: p.315).⁷

Interpretation is a constantly changing dialogue with the present. Even with Adorno a classicist gesture breaks through when he sees in Schumann’s “eight bars” [*Achttaktern*] an example of “what was measured precisely in the 19th century and turned out to become meticulously consolidated” (*Strauss II*, GS 16: p.565).⁸ Almost 20 years ago the physician, psychoanalyst, archeologist, professor of electronic music, writer, composer and conductor, Giuseppe Sinopoli – he died on 20 April 2001 on the conductor’s stand of the German Opera Berlin during the Nile Act in Verdi’s *Aïda* – added a commentary to his interpretation of the oddly neglected C-Major Symphony by Robert Schumann with the Vienna Philharmonic (in fact a brilliant essay, no longer available today). Sinopoli (2003: p.9) says,

It was time to judge the music of the 19th century no longer as a matter of themes and forms, to evaluate it merely as a degree of its technical, theoretical and abstract congruencies with those standards, more or less great, with more or less success. [...]. It would finally be about time to no longer constantly sign charters for the sublimation of the body by the “depths” of the mind. The body has abysses much more frightening than those of the mind, and tragic memory gaps or bridges between unusually associated areas are something our present time has to meet unceasingly.

For interpretation is of importance what happens subconsciously. In its constellation the subconscious sphere is, however, not simply available

⁷ *Steuermann wurde ... imprägniert mit der Konzeption der neuen Musik aus der zweiten Wiener Schule. Die betraf von Anbeginn auch das Verhältnis zur älteren, und wälzte die musikalische Interpretation überhaupt um. Kein Pianist der Epoche, Schnabel und Erdmann nicht ausgenommen, war näher an deren Produktion. [...] Solche Erfahrung der Moderne reißt die traditionelle Musik in sich hinein, die längst ein Kraftfeld war zwischen dem kompositorischen Jetzt und Hier und jener Allgemeinheit [überalterte Allgemeinheit der Tonalität] ...Allgegenwärtig war in Steuermann der Drang, die Verschaltungen des Konventionellen Bewußtseins zu durchbrechen, dem Verdeckten ans Licht zu helfen.*

⁸ ... *das Abgezirkelte, das im 19. Jahrhundert zum zwanghaft Peniblen sich verfestigt habe...*

for the interpreter. It must develop its authenticity. Authenticity is also essential for the audience, provokes its curiosity, may carry and attract it, and is all the more stronger the more antennas it may use for sensing life in its diversity, guided by the intellect, a specific knowledge of the musical matter, complex education beyond it and sensitivity. Although the latter is indispensable, sensitivity as *espressivo rubato* must not be generalized as the only beatific bridge in the differentiated amount of the repertoire in question, in spite of a complete generation of role models of interpreters whom we could enumerate – even if the *espressivo rubato* seems to replace superficially “musicality” for the actual unfamiliarity with the piece of music (Klein, 2003).

The encounter with music, music that came into existence earlier and is chronologically closer, touches permanently the borderline of the present through its compulsive performance by the musician that transforms it into sound. This must be stressed as the advantage of the indissolubility of production and interpretation of music. Music needs the interpreter for its actual existence. His/Her task is to be a constantly new seeker at the respective cutting edge of actual life. It is not possible to separate aesthetically the new from the old for interpretation. In the “heavy current of the present” the latter, the older, as the Austrian writer Ingeborg Bachmann (1993: p.61) says, “has a precious second life [...], just like the new truths, the old ones can be aroused by music, confirmed and pushed forward”. Autobiographies are hidden in the music of the past which may explain our own, just like music of our times, which, as for instance Adorno contends with reference to Steuermann, opens our ears for a deeper listening of the seemingly well-known, a listening also related to truth. Even if music tends towards reverie as an escape from reality (this makes it pleasant, and in fact it is!), its kind of reverie, however, is one that does not move out of reality but moves deeper into it, departing from its surface.

The present is not what is the most progressive, or, expressed more mildly, a present state. “[...]the riddle that the problem of art sets us”, as Hans-Georg Gadamer (1986: p.46) puts it, “is precisely that of the contemporaneity of past and present”. In consequence, interpretation is not to be replaced by objectivistic standards of “performances” or “reproductions”.⁹ History is experienced from the perspective of the present and must be constantly discussed anew. The works do not appear as documents; neither are interpretations to become documents. In his

⁹ Hans Pfitzner, Paul Hindemith, Rudolf Kolisch dealt with such matters. Names that one would hardly associate with an otherwise common denominator (see Klein 2003: p.111).

fragmentary notes concerning a theory of musical reproduction Adorno (TMR: p.166) notes, “Each artwork is a monad; there is no all-embracing scheme for mastering the problems”.¹⁰

The process that brings to light the material of a history of musical interpretation needs historical and aesthetic reflection. It is also suggested by current trends in musical performance: Ensembles of New Music, Ensembles of Early Music, the latter increasingly specialized in the 19th century. This compact presence of what may be reproduced, what is at disposal for interpretation and how this literally becomes a work, needs hermeneutics. It is to be understood, as R. Klein (2003: p.113) says, “as an original area of a musicology devoted to artistic work.”

As for theatre, it is the idea of the reduced myth which is taken up hermeneutically by the present. Twice it is an addiction: The addiction to power in Wagner’s *Ring*, the addiction to passion, to eroticism in Mozart’s *Don Giovanni*, in consequence basic experiences historically interspersed by the present by means of so-called updated staging. This expresses a moment of precision lending plasticity to the relationship between the present and history. According to Gadamer, it permanently evokes open processes of solutions to the riddle of “contemporaneity of past and present” posed by art. Basically this applies to musical interpretations just as well and explains the task and the duty of musical interpretation in general: not to believe in a single one yet found correct, rely on it, confirm it, but not to expel from history the existential reasons of what is artistically performed, transforming the artistic into the present, always taking on new perspectives rather than expelling it from history or developing metaphysical categories while at the same time neutralizing it.

Wagner believes the myth to be the ideal material for poets because it stores the essential basics of the human being for a dialogue connecting to the present. The cultural historian Agnes Heller (2002: p.20) refers to Kierkegaard. Using different terminology, he calls these basics of human being “idea”. And he asks, “How can this idea become concrete?” His answer “[...] in such a way that it is interspersed with the historical”. And we should add: as well as with the respective new. By connecting what is happening on stage, for instance with Wagner or Mozart on the opera stage, with musical interpretation in general, Agnes Heller (*ibid.*: p.21) says, “One can never play music without considering oneself an actual historical individual with personal and temporal experiences.” In his letter addressed to Thomas Mann Adorno poses the question – and the agent of critical theory is touched upon, “Isn’t your complete oeuvre a

¹⁰ *Jedes Kunstwerk ist eine Monade: es gibt kein übergreifendes Schema für die Bewältigung der Probleme.*

single entanglement of the earlier with the later, a single but straightforward negation of averagely normal life in between?” (Adorno / Mann, 2002: p.16).¹¹

The entanglement of the “earlier with the later” and the “negation of averagely normal life” could also be seen as a criteria for the artistic itself, the interpretative artistic no less than the productive artistic. It testifies to the indispensability of the integrative closeness of both, it does not separate them, but unifies them, going beyond the averagely normal and negating it at the same time while wishing to recognize the essential.

When we call upon the necessity of a philosophy or an aesthetics of interpretation, the following question is generally provoked: Where is the work? Is the work, the creation, no longer to be seen as a priority? Is the composer to be obscured within a cult of interpretation? The point is, however, not to restrict the importance of interpretation but instead to take seriously what is in fact the musical reality. On the other hand, it has not been understood that a philosophy of music may not be developed from the mere perspective of the work, as production and interpretation depend on each other and a philosophy or aesthetics of interpretation may just the same not meet the requirements of music-making, in fact an essential part of such a philosophy or aesthetics, without being work oriented at the same time.

Here, in his posthumous fragmentary notes, Adorno seems to have set a theoretically apostrophed backlog emphasis. Earlier and per se Adorno was, however, the philosopher not only of musical works. If the fragment of the reproduction theory were not at hand, one would hardly miss it, not only as it may be deduced from his writings, among them a great number of extraordinary music critiques. Adorno, the composer and interpreter as well as a very good pianist, did not separate composition from interpretation according to the good old historical tradition. It would have been contradictory to his aesthetics! He was critically oriented with regard to musical life in its completeness and to everything happening in it: to what extent it changes the works, how they start to become meaningless products and what interpretation should be aware of in order to prevent the works from degenerating. This would entail the premisses for a philosophy of interpretation or aesthetics of interpretation and a history of interpretation for all areas as created by the performance situation – also by means of electronic media.

¹¹ *Ist nicht Ihr ganzes oeuvre eine einzige Verschränkung des Frühen mit dem Späten, eine einzige bestimmte Negation des mittleren normalen Lebens dazwischen?*

“Once and for all / it is Orpheus, when there is song,” reads the 5th sonnet of “Sonnets to Orpheus” by R. M. Rilke (1980: p.489). In the majority of the overflowing repertoire of the present musical life Orpheus has been expelled from song. His existence – “song is being” – by means of an “unshaped world” instead of a “shaped one”, by means of a “world of figures, numbers, functions and exchange values”, rather in a destroyed than in a proper state, in an artistically productive sense. This may be changed by artistic work bound to reflection in education and by the audience, who, as may be observed, reacts positively when it is not treated by mere non-artistic confection, but by one dispersed with reflection, in order to rescue it for the sake of its Orpheus-like being.

The following conclusion seems to be appropriate:

Cultural-industrial reification (*Verdinglichung*) of music, as Adorno diagnosed it, is met with scholarly reflection with respect to practical realization in performance. Even if music cannot abandon marketing, it must follow the premiss that the “message substance” of music is to be transmitted in such a way that its power, stimulating sensitivity and reflection, does not get lost in a style of complaisance fostering better sales. Making art means working at existential border lines. Musicians, interpreters, must be seekers time and again. The “prize” is to be given to those who are not only the best players, but who are the best seekers at the same time, in order to take care of the musical repertoire, a repertoire that is highly culturally relevant, created by the mental power of the artistic, which is not to be disposed of on the “debris of history”.

Translated by Ingeborg Harer

Musical Writing and Performance

– About Adorno's Theory of Musical Performance

Sonja Dierks

The question as to whether music can be understood is not as harmless as it may at first appear. What, after all, does one understand when hearing music? And how does one understand? Come to think of it, can anyone claim to understand anything about music, without being able to make music? Reading music with understanding is probably only achieved once an inner voice awakens and attaches itself to the text of notes. And in such a case, precisely because one only hears in one's mind what is recorded in writing, one will often enough be transported into a certain mood. But this mood has nothing to do with the inner voice, which offers a provisional rendering only, and this latter can hardly (if at all) compete with an actual performance. Music is in the first instance sound, not language. Silent reading cannot replace music; and yet to read music is more than merely to mutely follow the track of notes.

If you ever wish to be sad, read a musical score. I do not mean the music, I mean the words. (Thomas Pynchon, 2002: 309).

What is music in its simplest form? An act of supplication, an appeal to a figuration of the Great Other. (Slavoj Žižek, 1998: 157).

Both quotations, though differing greatly from one another, nevertheless clearly describe what occurs when one attempts to establish a mutual relationship between music and language in order to establish both the similarity and the difference between these two systems. That it should, of all things, be in reading a musical score, i.e. in silently reconstructing musical writing, that one can fulfill one's heart's desire to be sad; that, while silently bending over a musical score, one should, on the basis of this score, read words that make one sad, that is Pynchon's point. It is not the music itself that saddens, but rather its signs of notation, incorporated in a musical score, which put us in a melancholy mood.

Žižek approaches a different problem. The question what music is in

its simplest, most basic form is not aimed at the reading or deciphering of music. Music as an “act of supplication”, that’s to say music being performed is oriented towards something beyond itself, other than itself. In attempting to determine what music is, Žižek writes of the speech act of supplicating or appealing, and hence approaches the question from the angle of producing or generating music. Music, in being sound, refers to or orients itself towards something which it is not and cannot be, but which for that very reason it seeks to approach or approximate. Pynchon is interested in the moment of reading music, and Žižek in the act of performance. But both of them, when reflecting on music, by their choice of words imply language. Why? Apparently one cannot avoid associating music with language as soon as one attempts to determine what music really is.

Adorno, in contrast with the two authors quoted above, remains adamant in his efforts to determine the exact nature of music: music is no language, he maintains (TMR: p.90). Granted, music resembles language (he continues), but literally to take music for a language based on intentionality is misleading. According to Adorno, music and language share an aspect, which, however, manifests itself in different ways in music and language respectively (TMR: p.90). What this aspect is, Adorno does not tell us. The similarity of music and language is hence based on something that cannot easily be determined. Neither in his sketches nor in the draft of his *Theory of musical reproduction*, which will form the subject of what is to follow, does Adorno explicitly address this aspect. However, if one closely follows the flow of Adorno’s argument, it soon becomes apparent what he is aiming at in differentiating the similarity of language and music down to the last ramification: Adorno is aiming at what he calls writing. Musical writing, to be precise.

Music and language

In his *Fragment on Music and Language* (FML; GS 16: pp.251-256), which incidentally was to become a substantial integral part of the “Theory of reproduction” (TMR: p.118), Adorno writes that, in relation to music, the distinction between music and language is complicated, insofar as language and music are in a mutually tense relationship within music itself. To put it differently: Music is not a sign system.

It is by distancing itself from language that its resemblance to language finds its fulfilment. (FML, p.6; GS 16: p.256).¹

¹ *Ihre Sprachähnlichkeit erfüllt sich, indem sie von der Sprache sich entfernt.*

There is something in music by which it becomes comprehensible as language, but only as one subject to other laws than those governing the languages that are spoken and written. Something that is the inherent logic of the language of music, and which makes it similar to the kind of language that designates, signifies and judges. Itself orientated towards an intentional language, music is imbued with intentions, which do not, however, carry meaning as the intentions of verbal language do, but instead remain uncompleted, and for that reason are all the more in need of interpretation. The discontinuation or breaking-off of intention is precisely what characterizes the semiotic character of a work of musical art; this, however, does not make it a language to be understood like a verbal language. Adorno's essay on "Music, Language, and Composition" (MLC, in EoM: pp.113-126; GS 16: pp.649-664) therefore states:

Music distances itself from language by absorbing its peculiar strength. (MLC: p.122; GS 16: p.660).²

What precisely does this imply in relation to the interpretation of music?

The notes relating to the book on Beethoven contain a paradoxical statement: "We do not understand music – it understands us" (BB: p.xi; NS I.1: p.15).³ Is it possible that music understands us more perfectly than we understand ourselves? Adorno appears to hypostatize music in outlining its hermeneutical status in comparison to language, whereas we normally assume the latter to be our primary way of relating to the world by speaking and by making ourselves understood as communicating beings. Perhaps Adorno commits this act of hypostasis inadvertently, because the musical work to him is primarily a time-based work, i.e. a work evolving in time, which makes music the performing art *par excellence* in relation to other art forms.

Musical interpretation

Whereas interpreting a literary text, be it a poem or a story, means working in and with language, musical interpretation for Adorno primarily means performing a piece of music, more precisely the practical consummation of the score set down in writing. The objective of musical interpretation is on the one hand the precise reading, analysis and

² *Musik entfernt sich von der Sprache, indem sie deren eigene Kraft absorbiert.*

³ *Wir verstehen nicht die Musik – sie versteht uns.* – Incidentally, Tiedemann did not include this note in the first part of his edition of the *Fragmente und Texte* ("Fragments and Texts") of the *Beethoven-Book*, but quoted it in his introduction instead.

interpretation of the score, and on the other hand the performer's mimetic practice, which aims to reveal the specific nature of the individual piece of music. In this sense the concept of interpretation is ambivalent, combining a hermeneutical and an empirical orientation. It refers to the study and analysis of the individual work, as well as to its empirical performance. As an autonomous form, interpretation for its part cannot be considered in isolation from the work's history.

The interpretation, which joins the text, is what in fact makes the text a text. As every musical interpretation accepts its commitment, in the strictest sense of the word, to the text being interpreted, so the latter becomes authoritative, becomes a text, solely by interpretation. (TMR: p.239).⁴

Musical writing

To interpret music and to enact a performance means to retain what is language-like in the general sense, but to keep in check what is language-like in particular, so that the individual quality of the work may emerge. The term "text" is applicable only if the music was from the outset conceived with a view to being committed to writing (notation). The score notation, as opposed to linguistic notation, gains textual character the moment it becomes the symbol of the music-to-be-performed. The term "musical writing", however, in contrast to the term *écriture*, refers to something approaching the truth of the work, which has to be produced anew with every interpreting performance of the work. This is what sets the *Theory of musical reproduction* apart from the *Aesthetic Theory*. In other words:

The true interpretation is the perfect imitation of the musical writing. (TMR: p.83).⁵

Whereas Adorno, in the *Aesthetic Theory*, as well as in the texts "On some relations between music and painting" (MuM, GS 16: p.628-642), "Music, Language, and Composition" (MLC: pp.113-126; GS 16: pp.649-664), by the terms "writing" and *écriture* understands the inherently ambivalent structure of the work of art, the term "musical writing" refers

⁴ *Die Interpretation, die zum Text hinzutritt, macht diesen überhaupt erst zum Text. Wenn jede musikalische Interpretation an ihren Text aufs strengste sich gebunden sieht, so wird dieser verbindlich, zum Text, einzig durch Interpretation.*

⁵ *Die wahre Interpretation ist die vollkommene Nachahmung der musikalischen Schrift.*

to something else. In the *Aesthetic Theory*, Adorno conceives of the work of art as an enigma, in the sense that it enforces the answer in the code of its inherent logic. Its purpose is the defined-ness of the undefined. The works have their own inherent purpose. They have no positive purpose, their purposefulness legitimizing itself exclusively in their enigmatic character. This in turn relates to the notational character of the work of art, in the sense that the latter's answer (proposed solution) to the enigma is not revealed abruptly and immediately, but only through the medium of philosophy. The enigmatic character of the work of art, however, survives the (individual) interpretation and gives rise to the latter's recurrent engagement with the work of art. Simply put, works of art have to be interpreted because they cannot speak.

...all artworks are writing, not just those that are obviously such; they are hieroglyphs for which the code has been lost, a loss that plays into their content. Artworks are language only as writing. If no artwork is ever a judgment, each artwork contains elements derived from judgment and bears an aspect of being correct and incorrect, true and false. (AT p.165; GS 7: p.189).⁶

In relation to a common characteristic of painting and music, the term "writing" refers to the fact that both speak through the nature of their respective mediums. But they speak as creations that are crafted down to the last detail, and their notational character resides precisely in this deliberate and pervasive formedness. The inherent character of the works alone, and not the supposed fact that they convey information infused into them as an underlying message, is what bestows on the works the character of writing. A writing, however, that cannot be separated from their temporality:

*If today – as the term *écriture* indicates – painting approaches writing this simply means that, like all other subcutaneous elements in present-day art, the latent temporality breaks to the painting's surface; perhaps because the painting is no longer up to it. It abandons the illusion of absolute timelessness, along with other illusions. Writing is something timeless as an image of something temporal (MuM, GS 16: p. 633).⁷*

⁶ *...alle Kunstwerke sind Schriften, nicht erst die, die als solche auftreten und zwar hieroglyphenhafte, zu denen der Code verloren ward und zu deren Gehalt nicht zuletzt beiträgt, daß er fehlt. Sprache sind Kunstwerke nur als Schrift. Ist keines je Urteil, so birgt doch ein jegliches Elemente in sich, die vom Urteil stammen, richtig und falsch, wahr und unwahr.*

⁷ *Nähert heute, wie der Terminus *écriture* es anzeigt, Malerei sich der Schrift, so*

However, that the body of music should manifest itself in – of all things – what Adorno refers to as “musical writing”, that is the striking aspect of his *Theory of musical reproduction*. In order to grasp more clearly what Adorno is aiming at when he speaks of “musical writing”, I retrace the principal stages of his argument as it unfolds.

Firstly, it must be understood that the dual character of music resides in the fact that it is transmitted as both sound and writing. Music requires interpretation, i.e. the exertion – ever to be performed anew – to reconcile these divergent elements. Performing music is essentially about the interpretation itself, not about what it means. Interpreting music is therefore on the one hand imitating what the musical score contains, i.e. imitating this one particular language, which the performer first has to learn, rehearse and practice in order to speak it or, in other words, to play it. On the other hand, this language of music cannot be compared to the language that formulates propositions, generates concepts, and distinguishes between meanings. It only resembles language inasmuch as it remains alien to language, and inasmuch as its inherent essence is to say something, and yet not to say what this “something” is. Like any other art form, music does not allow itself to be tied down to anything it [supposedly] wishes to tell us. Rather, it presents us with an enigma, which every interpretation anew needs to unlock.

The mimetic nature of music

This observation hints at the mimetic nature of music. When Adorno says that true interpretation means perfectly imitating the musical writing, while and by reversing the notation, this means that the work in the true sense only comes into being through its interpretation and present performance. Before the performance the notation is merely a memory-support for the musical interpretation, which perforce falls into oblivion when the work is being performed. To put it more precisely: By virtue of the mimetic nature of interpretation the composedness of the composition comes to life once more, it is being imitated by the performer. Put differently: By means of interpretation the work is back-translated into the state it held before it became a musical text: sound, or rather a quite

besagt das nichts anderes, als dass, wie alles Subkutane in der gegenwärtigen Kunst, die latente Zeitlichkeit im Bild durchschlägt; vielleicht weil das Bild ihr nicht länger gewachsen ist. Es gibt die Illusion der absoluten Zeitlosigkeit mit anderen Illusionen preis. Schrift ist ein Zeitloses als Bild von Zeitlichem. – Klee’s paintings, in particular, are cited by Adorno as examples of the “fragmentary, hieroglyphic” character of pictorial écriture (Cf. AT: p.165; GS 7: p.189f.; MuM, GS 16: p.635).

specific conception of sound. But in order for this to happen, the performer must grasp the musical idea of the work. In the best-case scenario, this idea emerges in the course of performance as the work's compelling element.

Seen from yet another angle: To do justice to the musical text after it has been analysed, rehearsed, and learnt by heart requires a substantial amount of subjective imagination on the part of the performer. Failing this he cannot do justice to the matter. But the fact that the musical work can at all be interpreted and performed in a binding way as this one particular, individual work is to be attributed not so much to the performer, but rather to the mutual relationship of music and writing within the work. The musical text is more than the score, it is rather the mutual relationship between music and writing being put to work. And it is only by virtue of the fact that the interpretation executes whatever lies at the bottom of this text as its music-writing-relationship that the performance of the work attains an achievement, which among all art forms pertains to music alone: the revelation (*Aufscheinen*) of truth through sound.

True interpretation

If, in aiming to define what is particular to the musical text, Adorno confidently believes that there is more to the score than its simply being the encoded, written fixation of the musical notes, then this can be explained by the fact that writing itself is the mimetic essence of the musical text, i.e. the very thing Adorno calls "musical writing" (*musikalische Schrift*). The difficulty for the performer is that he has to do justice to this particular quality of the work, and this can be plausibly imagined only as "re-enactment" (*Nachvollzug*). For the work to be heard as interpreted, and not merely as arbitrarily played in a desultory way, re-enactment in performance is required. The "musical writing", or rather its mimetic essence, is what is being re-enacted and performed, and this is the case because the musical writing of the work that is being interpreted and performed, itself imitates music. Put more succinctly: "If the notation (*Notenschrift*) imitates the music, then the performance has to imitate the writing." (TMR: p.80).⁸ Only by a performance which redeems the interpretation of the musical text as an imitation of its mimetic essence, can the musical writing be imitated as one which evaporates at the very moment of its performance. In this sense, Adorno's statement that

⁸ Wenn die Notenschrift die Musik nachahmt, muß Aufführung die Schrift nachahmen.

musical reproduction is the “reconstruction of a virtual original that is being imitated” (TMR: p.243)⁹ is not aimed at the technical performance of the work; rather, when he speaks of reproduction as the reconstruction of a virtual original, he is concerned only with the “where-towards” or the “towards-what” (*das Woraufhin*) of the interpretation of the work. This “where-towards” or “towards-what” is the true interpretation, and thus the absolutely irredeemable aspect of the present performance. It is the ideal of the work, projected anew by each subsequent performance. The problematic aspect of this turn of phrase is that, since the works are on the one hand embedded in the history of their own interpretations, and on the other hand constitute a site where this very history is inherently being contested, the works do not simply remain identical to themselves. They change throughout history in that their form resists change, yet does not remain immutable.

Sign and image

So what precisely does Adorno mean by “true interpretation” in relation to performance or reproduction, and how does this tie in with the idea of musical reproduction in a way that enables “true interpretation” to imitate what lies at the bottom of the work as its “musical writing”?

If one realizes that the score is determined by, on the one hand, its sign character and, on the other, its pictorial character, it is easier to comprehend why Adorno conceives of the idea of musical reproduction as “the copy of an original that is not present” (TMR: p.243)¹⁰. In the image of the musical text is reflected whatever the body of music has left imprinted on this image as its trace. However, the sign retains the mimetic impulse. To read music like a sign language means to imitate it, but to recognize its image means to understand the music.

The musical reproduction does not occur unmediated, but only through reading the signs, i.e. mediated by the mimetic impulses of these signs in the writing, the totality of which make up the image and the enduring part of the work. Adorno’s metaphor for this enduring part of the work is “x-ray photography”, the description of which forms the first part of his notes on the theory of musical reproduction (TMR: p.9). This metaphor expresses the dual character of music, which is both language and mime, and both these sides combine to render the sound visible only at the moment of performance.

⁹ ...die Wiederherstellung eines virtuellen Originals, das nachgemacht wird.

¹⁰ ...die Kopie eines nicht vorhandenen Originals.

Put more simply: Because the musical text is without a signified, it is (and is bound to remain) an enigma. Music that is being played, and no longer being read and rehearsed, is presented by the interpretation concerned as the enigma of the work, which briefly becomes audible before dying down again. Only for an instant does the work radiate its truth, a truth that can be neither known nor named. The principle of its solution is locked up in the work, a principle held back by the work as long as it is not performed. For that reason alone, music – as opposed to painting or literature – requires interpretation, and it does so despite or because of the fact that it speaks by virtue of its nature (*Beschaffenheit*), and not by virtue of its likeness to language.

Sense (*Sinn*)

Musical writing is inscribed into the work as the law of its solution. The process by which this writing is imitated by the interpretation first reveals the true character of the work. Its sound is realized by virtue of the fact that the interpretation deciphers the signs of the musical text, which have combined to form a configuration. There is no uniform musical sense to be extracted by the interpretation. What does exist, are musical signs, whose intentionality assumes significance by being reproduced. By virtue of reading and analysis, the individual sign can combine with others to form a unit of signification. However, this latter is meaningless when compared to words or sentences as they occur in the language of literature. To read music means to dissect it down to its signs, but this dissecting process does not produce anything beyond the notation of this individual work. Taken by themselves the intentions of the musical text are worthless, because they do not signify anything. The essence of musical interpretation is precisely that, in producing the totality of the work, it occasions the concrescence of the form in the work's individual intentions.

Their solution does not spell out the sense of the music, a term which in any event may be used metaphorically only, namely as referring to the total gesture to be reconstructed from the notation. (TMR: p.242).¹¹

¹¹ *Ihre Auflösung ergibt nicht den Sinn der Musik, von dem überhaupt nur metaphorisch, nämlich als dem gesamten aus der Schrift zu restituierenden Gestus zu reden sein kann*

Espressivo

This in turn implies that the musical writing is imbued with the element of realization of what Adorno refers to as *Gestus*. Whereas the musical sense is given to every interpretation as its where-toward and can hence be determined in negative terms only, Adorno uses the term *Gestus des Werkes* (“gesture of the work”) to describe its mimetic essence (TMR: p.250). To hear a relation which makes sense (*Sinnzusammenhang*) has nothing to do with recognizing or understanding a phrase, theme, or motif. What is meaningful is perceived through the sound as the structure of the theme, and what constitutes a relation which makes sense depends on a particular interpretation, and on the analytical approach to the work which that interpretation presupposes. The interpretation needs to transform the signs into imitation, and the image into cognition. Neither of the two, neither sign nor image, exists independently of the other in a pure form, they are intertwined in the musical writing. The “gesture” (*Gestus*) of the work is based precisely on the fact that the latter speaks for the sake of its lack of intention (TMR: p.30). As a constantly recurring example of what precisely Adorno means by this, the term *espressivo* is found in the sketches and in the outline.

To play espressivo means: to imitate the inherent enactment of the music – to exaggerate or overstate the music, more or less in the way one exaggerates when one imitates a face or a voice. (TMR: p.102).¹²

If we now remind ourselves that this inherent enactment can proceed either by voice or through musical instruments, Adorno’s utterance about the *Gestus* of music and its mimetic nature appears in a totally different light.

If the notation and the instrument are indeed the poles of musical interpretation (TMR: p.15), by the mediation of which the latter reveals itself to be a language, the individual signs of which in isolation do not contain any meaning, but in totality constitute the image of the current performance and therefore do “make sense”, then the question arises what music really is if the one pole of the interpretation is the voice.

¹² *Espressivo spielen heißt: den immanenten Vollzug der Musik nachmachen – die Musik übertreiben, etwa so wie man übertreibt, wenn man ein Gesicht oder eine Stimme nachmacht.*

Voice and writing

In the text *Nadelkurven* ("The Curves of the Needle", in: EoM: pp.271-276; GS 19: pp.525-529) Adorno writes that male voices can better be rendered by means of technological reproduction than female voices. Why?

The female voice easily sounds shrill ... In order to become unfettered, [it requires] the physical appearance of the body that carries it. But it is just this body is that the gramophone eliminates, thereby giving every female voice a sound that is needy and incomplete. (EoM: p. 274; GS 19: p.528).¹³

Quite apart from the trite chauvinism revealed in this passage, the devil is in the detail. Adorno's statement refers not only to the simple fact that men and women inhabit different bodies, it also suggests that they inhabit their bodies in gender-specifically different ways: Whereas the female voice cannot be recorded adequately, since it allegedly depends on its body's presence, a male voice carries its body with it when reproduced by technical means. Even then, body and self continue to be one, retaining their joint identity in the reproduced sound. The female voice, however, anchored in the singer's body, loses its body in technological reproduction.

The reader asks himself what exactly Adorno has in mind when he argues thus – apart from the ideological slant underlying his concept of gender difference. A moment's reflection on Callas's voice suffices to establish that, even on CD, it has lost none of its physicality. There is no greater need for Callas than there is for Caruso to return to the stage in order to lend an almost physical presence to the sound of their voices. Then again, nowadays one can never be sure that what one hears is really the body. After all, the Callas voice could owe its impression of physicality to a crackling and scratching noise resulting from the process of technological reproduction (cf Žižek, 2001: p.92).

It should be clear by now that, from Adorno's point of view, no reproduction other than live performance generates art. Neither analogue nor digital recording technology has the capacity to "perform" works of art. The technical medium – and this is the point of Adorno's cultural critique – allows merely for documenting these works and for reproducing

¹³ *Die Frauenstimme klingt leicht schrill... [Sie bedarf,] um frei zu werden, der leibhaften Erscheinung des Körpers, der sie trägt. Die Erscheinung des Körpers eben tilgt das Grammophon und verleiht jeder Frauenstimme den Klang des Bedürftigen und Unvollständigen.*

them by technologically. But by virtue of this capacity for technical reproduction, the work of art loses its status as a work of art. If, however, one realizes in this context how technical reproduction affects and changes the relationship between music and writing, particularly where the technical reproduction of a female voice is concerned, Adorno's characterization of the "true reproduction" as the work's "x-ray photography" becomes plausible.

Formulated not in support of Adorno's statements, but rather in opposition to them, this implies: What we hear when we listen to, say, Callas's interpretation of Carmen on CD, is first and foremost Callas's voice. In other words: Art criticizes itself in the moment of its technically reproduced performance precisely because, by virtue of the technically reproduced Callas voice, the body asserts its presence in the guise of the performer's alienated body. Because what we hear through the voice is more than just the Carmen performance – it is the body of the music. What does Carmen's voice, bestowed on her by Callas, sound like? It sounds tinny, scratchy and shrill. It also sounds loving, tender and gentle. Like the voice of a creature, free and yet not liberated as it emanates from a body that is no longer there, but continues to be audible in this voice. And that precisely is the point: The particular character of the voice, committed to record by means of technical reproduction, communicates itself as what Adorno involuntarily [*"unfreiwillig"*] refers to as "musical writing": in the x-ray photography of the work, through which the sound of this voice's body weaves its trail. Put differently: The sensuous moment of music is in essence no stranger to its abstract moment.

Translated by Richard Bertelsmann

Meaning, Mimesis, Idiom: On Adorno's Theory of Musical Performance

Mário Vieira de Carvalho

Introduction

Already in his famous essay published in 1951, *Bach defended against his enthusiasts*, Adorno took a position against *objectivism* in the performance of Bach's scores. The attempt at restoring ancient performance practices, aiming at making the work of music sound as it would have sounded in its own time, had emerged, in fact, under the influence of a modern idea: Stravinsky's anti-romantic objectivism, according to which one should not search for anything in the notes but the notes themselves, and it would suffice to play them correctly in order to perform the work. Adorno, however, warned: "Never and at any moment is the notated musical text identical with the work; it is, rather, always necessary to grasp, adhering faithfully to the text, what is hidden inside it. Without such dialectics, faithfulness becomes treason" (Adorno, 1951: 149f.).¹ Thus, according to Adorno, *musical sense* (*musikalischen Sinn*) will be never found by a performance which takes no account of this, believing that "it would reveal itself from itself" (*aus sich heraus sich offenbare*), instead of taking it as something "which has still to be constituted" (*ibid.*). If, in this way, the notated musical text raises the question of performance as a problem, that is because it has an enigmatic character: the notated text is, simultaneously, an "insoluble enigma" and "the principle of its resolution", says Adorno in his posthumous work on musical performance. One should plunge (*Versenkung*) into the text, in order to gain the knowledge which is necessary to change the *indefinition* inherent in the notated text into a *definition* also inherent in it, legitimated by the *objectivity* of the work (TMR: p.241). Thus, on the one hand, the work was not identical to the noted text, but, on the other hand, the work

¹ *Nie und an keiner Stelle ist der musikalischen Notentext mit dem Werk identisch; stets vielmehr gefordert, in der Treue zum Text zugleich zu ergreifen, was er in sich verbirgt. Bar solcher Dialektik wird die Treue zum Verrat...*

was the bearer of an *objectivity* which made it possible to legitimate the *definition* of the notated text and the constitution of the *musical sense*. “Objectivity” does not mean, however, reification into the static and the immutable. On the contrary, it means the acknowledgement of the intrinsic historicity of the work, so that there should be no place for the mere relativism of “taste”, “fashion” or *Zeitgeist*. Performance as a problem is analysed by Adorno taking into account just these points: I) The enigma of the notated text; II) The dialectics of its indefinition/definition; III) the constitution of the musical sense; IV) The objectivity of the work of music; V) Its intrinsic or immanent historicity.

I) The enigma of the notated text

Adorno takes the comparison between music and poetry in order to refine his point. Poetry is allowed performance, but does absolutely need it, insofar as, being a field of intentions, it already bore inside itself its form of being, perceived (*sinnliches Soseins*) and evolved across historic dynamics in the tension between linguistic phenomenon and meaning (*Gemeinten*). On the contrary, music, as a paradoxical sign language of the non-intentional, needs something outside it – the performance – which converts (*einlösen*) the signs, but without betraying (*verraten*) the non-intentional moment with the trick of meaning (*Trug von Bedeutungen*) (TMR: p.238). So, the “area of indefinition” of musical notation had to do neither with the trivial idea of what is dead or alive in art, nor with the search for the “intention” of the composer, but with the objective relationship between music and notation. Strictly speaking, *music establishes itself really as a text* only by means of performance (TMR: p.239), and, therefore, the common expression according to which playing is “*making music*” is correct (TMR: p. 242).

So, music being a “non-intentional language” in contrast to poetry (as well as, in general, to the spoken language), the moment of *meaning* in its writing or notated text – that is to say: the difference between *sign* and *designed* – was radicalised into a qualitative rupture (TMR: p.221f.). The enigmatic character of the notated text resulted from this rupture, which was, in turn, a consequence of the non-identity between the musical work and notated text.

II) Dialectics of indefinition/definition of the notated text

The notated text is not, however, less than spoken language as regards articulation and logical consequence. So, the origin of musical

notation should be sought for in another moment – but not merely in the so-called intentional or signification. This different moment is, according to Adorno, the mimetic one. Starting from an historical inquiry, Adorno states that there can be no doubt that “music, as a language, is the only one of the arts which realises the pure objectivation of the mimetic impulse, both free of concretion and of meaning”; so, “music would not be anything but gesture elevated to law”, gesture “above the corporeal world” and, at the same time, “sensorial gesture” (TMR: p.224).² On account of its development as an autonomous art, however, music had “banished into the periphery,” or even transformed into taboo, the mimetic element. But a trace of this would continue to be present where music had submitted to the imperative of its concretion as an object (*Vergegenständlichung*), that is, in musical notation. Consequently, the signs of music were “images of gesture” (*Bilder von Gesten*). But, if gesture is ambiguous (*vieldeutig*) and ephemeral (*vergänglich*), how could it be reified as an image for eternity? Adorno discusses two main points raised by this question.

Firstly, he distinguishes between a musical praxis in which memory is alive and continuously updated, and another one in which there is the beginning of a break with the past, so that there emerges an attempt to fix that past. Notation appeared in order to fix the “mimetic praxis”, when its memory began to disappear. Giving as examples children's spoken language as well as musics of oral tradition, Adorno observes, however, that, “when the past lasts a long time, instead of lagging behind as something which becomes strange for us” its presence is indissociable from its continuous changing: the past lasts a long time dynamically, being updated and changed simultaneously (TMR: p.225f.).³ On the contrary, if it becomes crystallized into something always identical, as a thing (*dinghaft*), then it is already virtually forgotten: in fact, Adorno says, every “reification” (*Verdinglichung*) refers to something forgotten (*ibid.*: p.226).⁴ So, dialectically speaking, the musical notation could be a

² *Kein Zweifel kann aber daran sein, daß Musik als Sprache, allein von allen Künsten, die reine Objektivation des mimetischen Impulses leistet, frei von Gegenständlichkeit wie von Bedeuten, nichts anderes als der zum Gesetz erhobene, der Körperwelt übergeordnete und zugleich sinnliche Gestus.*

³ *Indem das Vergangene weiterlebt, anstatt als Entfremdetes sich abzusetzen, verbürgt seine Veränderung seine Gegenwart.*

⁴ Adorno clears this idea in a letter to Benjamin (29.02.1940), referring to a “theory of reification”: “...every reification is oblivion: objects become things in the moment in which they are seized, without being really present in all their pieces: in which something of them is forgotten” (*...alle Verdinglichung ist ein Vergessen: Objekte werden dinghaft im Augenblick, wo sie festgehalten sind, ohne in allen ihren Stücken aktuell gegenwärtig zu sein: wo etwas von ihnen vergessen ist*) (Adorno/Benjamin: p.417).

support for memory only as the enemy of the forgotten: it tried to recover the forgotten by annihilating it. In a sense, it was not the necessity of an *aide mémoire* that had given rise to musical notation, but rather the disturbance of the natural relationships which *precede* the establishment of memory and its fallibility (when the *now* and the *previous* had not yet been rigidly separated). Precisely this aspect leads Adorno to the origins of musical notation.

According to Adorno, musical notation is related to the emergence of social relationships of domination, as if the transition from the *state of nature* to society had brought – with the regulation of time and the setting up of a pre-established system of categories – the necessity of *disciplining* traditional musical practices as well. Long before having been reached – by means of notation – the total objectivation and, therefore, the autonomization of musical writing as regards *praxis*, the aim of the musical text was, then, not to *conserve*, but to *discipline*. Disciplining had the objective of preventing the community (*Gemeinde*), that is, the dominated people (*unterworfenen Masse*), from modifying, according to their necessity of expression (*Ausdrucksbedürfnis*), what was transmitted by tradition (*das Überlieferte*), and to force them to the sheer repetition of the transmitted (*zwangshafter Wiederholung*), as a school of submission, one could say. This repression of the mimetic impulse, by reifying the gesture, in order that it would be repeated again and again in the same way, is indissociable, according to Adorno, from the process of rationalisation of music (in Weber's sense) and of the signification moment of musical notation (TMR: p.226f.).

In Adorno's view, the notated text has become, therefore, a synthesis of divergent elements, but at the same time, inextricably intertwined: on the one hand, there is there the trace of the mimetic essence of music; on the other hand, there is there also from the beginning an anti-mimetic element, which Adorno defines as the signification and the rational one (*ibid.*).

This homology – observed by Adorno – between the anti-mimetic and the signification or rational elements, has, in my view, an obvious link with Rousseau's thesis of the origin of the languages, following earlier authors such as Du Bos (1719) and Batteux (1746), who considered the language of sounds and the language of gestures as the "dictionary of simple nature", while the spoken language was described as a product of "society" and its conventions. So, one could say, the use of words, as conventional signs, in any act of spoken communication within a social environment, would belong to the sphere of signification and rationality, while the intonations, the melody of speaking, the gestures and physiognomic modifications, as kinds of mimetic behaviour,

would belong primarily to the sphere of feelings and emotions, of the expressivity of the individuals or of a group, as a trace of archaic forms of communication among *human beings in a state of nature*, that is, not yet disciplined by the *social contract*. In the same sense, Georg Knepler (1982), in his inquiries concerning the origins of music, proposes the hypothesis of only one system of acoustic communication, which in the course of the anthropogenesis, had evolved towards two different autonomous systems: that of spoken language and that of music. At the moment, however, in which even music was organised as a system and represented by notated signs, it began to lose mimetic spontaneity and to gain in meaning and rationality (characteristics which bring it close to the spoken language) – and this is exactly what Adorno diagnoses in his thesis about the origin of musical notation: he diagnoses that loss and that gain, as a consequence of the process of rationalisation and disenchantment of the world (*Entzauberung der Welt*) and of the normative or conventional meanings, related to mechanisms of domination of society and nature, issuing from that process.

Just in this sense, Adorno defines music notation as the “Organon of musical domination of nature”, which, however, could not be avoided: only within it – within the musical domination of nature – could freedom, synonymous with musical subjectivity, understood as “a separation from the unconscious community”, mature (TMR: p.228).⁵ For that reason, Adorno speaks of musical performance as an utopia: “by means of the absolute availability” thanks to notation, it is supposed to “recover just what has become unrecoverable because of having made it available” (ibid.).⁶ *Ursprung ist das Ziel*: Origin is the goal: Karl Kraus’s quotation used by Benjamin in his *Philosophy of History* is certainly involved in Adorno’s quotation of Proust’s *Recherche du temps perdu* as “a key for the dialectics of music” until “its own liquidation”. What was at stake was that “music can only develop towards autonomy and its whole expressive variety by means of its graphic mediation”, and that, simultaneously, the graphic mediation or notation, by making music “practicable and available”, reifies it (ibid.).⁷

⁵ *Musikalische Schrift ist das Organon der musikalischen Naturbeherrschung, und in dieser erst ist Freiheit, die musikalische Subjektivität herangereift als Trennung von der bewußtlosen Gemeinschaft.*

⁶ *Dieser Widerspruch schreibt der Reproduktion von Kunstmusik ihre Utopie vor: durch absolute Verfügung das wiederzubringen, was durchs Verfügen selber unwiederbringlich ward.*

⁷ *...[die Musik] konnte zur Autonomie und damit zu all ihrem Ausdruck erst sich entfalten durch ihre graphische Vermittlung, die sie praktikabel, verfügbar macht und verdinglicht.*

The rationalisation, which corresponds, in notation, to the development of the abstract-significational element (exact definition of sound pitch and duration, aiming at the precise control of polyphonic and harmonic structures), represents, according to Adorno, the irruption of intentionality into notation. The process could have not happened by chance, but as a consequence of the Christianisation of music. Max Weber has already made a connection between the intellectualization of European music and Christianity, which had excluded the body from the liturgy: this had become evident in the typical communication system in concert halls, characterized by passive listening in silence and immobility as in a Mass (*Darbietungsmusik* or *presentational music* with *weak feedback* from the audience). Adorno, in turn, sees in this moment of rationalization – that is, the separation of the “spirit” (*Geist*) from the context of a syncretic musical experience, including “gesture” and “movement” linked with sound – primarily a consequence of the rejection or disappearance of “gesture” in the notated text. Gesture (by nature non-intentional) survives in the “visuality” (*Anschaulichkeit*) of musical notation only as an “optically petrified copy”, which evokes its spontaneity (*Unmittelbarkeit*), as nature, as an “ephemeral presence” that is not intended to last long. On the contrary, “eternity is at stake in the intention”: the intention kills music as a natural phenomenon, in order to conserve it, fragmented, only as “spirit”. So, music, by lasting longer by means of the notated text, liquidates its “Here and Now” and loses its mimetic moment. The spiritualization of music (*Beseelung*) is thus linked with the elements of musical meaning introduced into the notation, bringing music near to spoken language, but at the cost of its own homogeneity as music (TMR: p.235).

Thus, the duplicity of music comprises in fact (a) that the notated text is not merely mimetic; (b) that its figurative realization forces music irresistibly towards meaning; (c) that, therefore, in music, mimesis melts with meaning and simultaneously comes from the latter.

The dialectical concept of *mediation* (*Vermittlung*) plays just at this point a role as an opportunity in the “utopian” attempt to recover or, at least, to search for a reconstruction of that homogeneity in the performance. Insofar as both contradictory moments (*mimesis* and *meaning*) had become indissolubly intertwined, and therefore, the process of rationalization by means of the musical notation had also become a means of subjectivity, neither pure meaning nor pure mimesis would ever be possible by using musical notation: the tension between the unequivocal (*Eindeutigkeit*) and the spontaneous (*Unmittelbarkeit*) could not be solved. In this duplicity of musical notation as *mimesis* and *language* resides, according to Adorno, the very problem of performance

– more: there resides its necessity. “How can mimesis become language and, conversely, the sign become image?” (TMR: p.238)⁸ – here is the question at stake, which, in other words, means: how can both elements *mediate* reciprocally?

III) Constitution of the musical sense

Nachahmung (imitation) is the starting point to catch the musical sense. I would like to underline the fact that Adorno speaks just of *imitation*, not of *decoding*. If, on the one hand, it is true that the notated text imitates music, and, on the other hand, that it is able to realize this imitation only by means of the support (*Anlehnung*) of the linguistic intention (by using a system of signs), then the task of the performance consists, in turn, of imitating the notation. This imitation cannot, however, be realized in a spontaneous and immediate way, but rather only in a mediate way, by means of reading the signs: that is, by the mediation of intentionality. By decoding or deciphering the “sense” of music – Adorno says – “sense” has only a metaphoric value: it does not mean *sense* as a result of the syntactic relations of single signs, as in language. It is not this type of decoding of the single intentional moments (the signs of musical notation) that can give the sense of music, but the global gesture recovered or reconstructed from the notated text. In other words: the decoding or resolution (*Auflösung*) of the musical signs, instead of giving the *sense* of music, provides, rather, the elements, on the basis of which the imitation of music can be consubstantiated (*zusammenschießen*). Conversely, by starting from the other dimension of musical notation – the mimetic one – the “expression of the whole” or “global form” will result from a correct sequence of the single mimetic events and movements (*einzelnen Mienen und Bewegungen*) (TMR: p.242).

Confronted, therefore, with the challenge of being “a copy of an unavailable original” (*die Kopie eines nicht vorhandenen Originals*) – thus, one speaks of *making* music –, the musical performance must pursue, as a copy, the two poles of the notated text: respectively, the sign (*Zeichen*), and the image or gesture (*Bild*), so intertwined that only by means of the one we can make sure of the other. To give emphasis to his idea, Adorno defines the most advanced notation in the last centuries of European music as being both a language of signs (*Zeichensprache*) at the level of its particular or single moments, and a language of images or

⁸ ...wie kann die Mimik zur Sprache werden und umgekehrt, wie das Zeichen zum Bild?

gestures (*Bildersprache*), when considered as a whole. Every note and expressive indication must be translated into mental representation (*Vorstellung*) and *sound* as an integrative moment of the imitation of the image of the notation (*Schriftbild*) in its totality (TMR: p.243). But the contradiction between mimesis and meaning does not disappear, because the negation of the original mimesis is contained already even in the dimension of notation as image or gesture (*Bildcharakter*), as a kind of spatialization of time (*Zeitverlauf*): the spatialization of gesture, to make it eternal (*Verewigung*) by means of the image, leads, after all, to the negation of gesture, to its spiritualization (*Vergeistigung*) – and this is the sense in which Adorno, on another occasion, speaks of the score as “sedimented spirit”. By becoming concrete, fixed – in this sense “spiritualized” – the gesture figured in the notation bears the “organizational principle”, the principle of the “domination of nature” (TMR: p.245).

The central thesis of the *Dialectic of Enlightenment* is here latent. The reason which negates itself is the “cool reason” (*kalte Vernunft*) which postulates the separation between body and spirit, which makes the spirit forget its origin in the body, and which represses the natural impulses inherent to human being as a condition for the domination of external nature, but reverting, in turn, to the liquidation of the autonomy of subjectivity. Music would be – one could say – the *chance* of reconciliation of the human being with himself and with nature, perhaps the highest realization of the “emotional intelligence” in the sense of António Damásio, which is precisely the opposite of “cool reason”.

All this converges towards the “insufficiency” of musical notation, imprisoned by this paradox of being the “linguistic sign of the non-linguistic”, “signifying (*Bedeutungsträger*) the non-conceptual”, the “realization of what cannot be realized”, the “fixation of what cannot be fixed”, which, in Adorno’s words (referring again to the *Dialectic of Enlightenment*), makes it the “scar” (*Wundmal*) which gives testimony of the violence that the mimetic impulse has suffered, because of its “unconditional intertwining” (*Verflechtung*) with the process of civilization – and is, therefore, only preserved as an antidote against the “petrification of the world” (*Verfestigung der Welt*) (TMR: p.249). The establishment of the musical sense in performance presupposes the resolution of such a paradox, by transforming the signs into gestures (imitation/*Nachahmung*), and the gesture or image into knowledge (*Erkenntnis*) (*ibid.*: p.250).

IV) Objectivity of the musical work

The gesture of what cannot be reified is contained in the reified musical notation, whereas the antidote to the reification of the world is conserved, as reified, in it – precisely in this paradox resides, according to Adorno, the origin of the historicity of music, its immanent changing over the course of time (*Entfaltung in der Zeit*), which is inherent to the *objectivity* of the works of music. Catching this historicity does not mean postulating the adaptation of the work to the contingency of History, but rather the existence *in the work in itself* of the canon of the interpretation, of the immanent laws (*Gesetzmäßigkeit*) which govern the performance.

However, the key to the “true performance” depends on a third element – the idiomatic one – one of the media of manifestation of the work, in addition to the others already mentioned. It is precisely the relationship of these three media to each other – respectively, meaning, mimesis, and idiom – that makes the evolution of the works in the course of history evident.

V) The intrinsic or immanent historicity of the musical work

The idiomatic element is linked with the notated text just insofar as it is omitted in the latter. It consists of all that, whether signification, or mimetic, which, because of being obvious in the music *praxis*, is absent from notation. It is indissociable from the *Spielweise* (the way of playing) that is dominant within the context in which the work appears or is realized, and also indissociable from the subjectivity of the musician who plays it, and from his/her own performance style. Idiom, one could say, is the context that sustains the work in the historic moment in which it emerges, and/or in which it is performed. To such a context belong pre-established practices and ideas, a specific listening and performance culture, “dominant ways of playing and phrasing” (Adorno), according to which – *analogically* – the *non-problematic character* of the notated text is taken for granted: non-problematic character in the sense of the way in which the notated elements should be understood, or of what is contained in the written signs, in spite of not being represented there in an unequivocal fashion. This level of interpretation is called by Adorno apparently spontaneous; it would be, in fact, *naïve*.

The idiomatic element could be then understood, in my view, as an ideological one, including the obviousness, not called into question in the music milieu, as regards the way of “reading” the signs and of reproducing them in the performance. This context that sustains the work

tends to become “false awareness” or “ideology” concerning the canon of musical performance. Incorporated as such in a musical tradition, it goes back to Mahler’s comment, quoted several times by Adorno: *Tradition ist Schlamperei* (“tradition is negligence” or “ready made” music). Therefore, Adorno postulates that the idiomatic element is that which is criticized by history, history here being understood as the moment in which the *truth* contained in the objectivity of the work (a dynamic objectivity) is drawn out from the ideological tradition which hides or distorts it (TMR: p.264).

While, in the notation, the idiomatic element is ephemeral, the significational one is, in a way, constant. Although the pitch and duration of the notes can change from time to time in their absolute values, these changes do not affect the relations of the sign system. The dynamism of the work, its immanent historicity, manifests itself only by means of the relationship between this element – the significational one – with both the others (respectively, the mimetic and the idiomatic ones). This relationship is coined by negativity, because it indicates the ambiguity of the signs, and because the emptiness of meaning is filled by the variability of the idiomatic element and by the inquiry into the mimetic one. In the dialectic process of historical development of works (which takes place according to the laws that rule that process), *meaning* (the significational element) corresponds, thus, to the “identity of non-identity”.

Idiom is, by contrast, the ephemeral element: it is just this that cannot be written, as such, in the notated text. However, despite being *exterior* to the text, it is the only means of making the text produce sense. Insofar as society and musical practices change, this is the element which is irredeemably lost, for it escapes encoding. In this way, abandoned by the sense which is given to it from the exterior, the notated text becomes problematic. Once the text is deprived of the mediations which transcend it, the possibility of reconstruction of the “gesture” of music (its mimetic element) can only come from the immanence of the text: as if the mimetic moment of the notated text could only result from the death of the idiomatic element, or as if the representation of the musical gesture could only appear with the disappearance of the gestures in the notation in which they should be represented. In other words: the dynamics (*Entfaltung*) of the work would consist in the reconstruction of the idiomatic element from the immanence of the text, and this reconstruction would correspond to the realization of the mimetic impulse, buried in the figured gesture or image (this is, according to Adorno, what survives in the notated text, of neumatic notation). Such a reconstruction could, however, only be possible by means of analysis.

Mahler's comment – "tradition is ready made" – describes, then, according to Adorno, precisely the moment at which the idiomatic element becomes problematic, and has to be replaced by the analytical-constructive one. The latter, in turn, becomes the only means of recovering the mimetic impulse, understood as the gesture of the musical work as a whole. As already mentioned, meaning (the signification-constructive element) leads to the mimetic impulse, and vice-versa. In sum, "tradition is ready made", both when the *dynamical truth* of the work is distorted by the idiom crystallized or *reified* in tradition, and when, in the so-called performances of ancient music, history is simply negated for the purpose of breaking off with tradition, and – here by means of the historical-musicological research – recovering early performance practices, "reconstructing the early ideal of performance" (TMR: p.260), making the dominant idiom of the past live again. Such a restorationist programme is, however, also a programme of ideological restoration, which negates the attempt of capturing the *truth* of the work, notably in the following senses:

(a) The objectivist approach takes the notated text for the work, in a way, in which the ideology of a single moment of European culture (for instance, Stravinsky's objectivism) is reflected.

(b) The modern historicist version brings the risk of sacrificing the truth of the work, in its singularity, to the epochal conventions in which it had emerged: "they say Bach, but they are thinking Telemann", states Adorno in his article from 1951, meaning that true performance liquidates the style. Bach could not be reduced to the conventions of his times. The "cool reason" of the musicological approach was not enough to capture the truth of Bach's works.

(c) The postmodern historicist approach, essentially subjectivist, that is now defended by Harnoncourt (*Was ist Wahrheit?*, 1995), paves the way for aesthetic relativism, insofar as the innermost conviction of the performer becomes the only moment of legitimation. The subjectivity of the musician assumes, entirely, the risk of the performance, by displaying it before the critic and the audience.

These approaches, according to Adorno's theory, are not adequate to apprehend the musical sense of the work, as a condition of the truth of the performance. As regards either a work from the past, or a work from the same context and time of the performer, the problem of the idiom is always present. To escape from this element as ideology, a moment of *Verfremdung* or critical distance – a Brechtian notion invoked by Adorno himself – is needed. Without *Verfremdung*, the moment of knowledge

(*Erkenntnis*) – that is: the analytical-constructive moment, which makes it possible to approach the objectivity of the work and to recognise in it the *non-identical*, its *singularity* (not its mere belonging to an epoch or a style) – could not emerge in a dialectical relationship with the subjectivity of the performer, namely with that dimension of the idiom which is inherent to his individuation as a musician, to his/her *singularity* as a performer, that is to say, to his/her own *Spielweise* (way of playing), which also differentiates the performer from the idiomatic tradition in which he/she has developed his/her own skills and which is dominant in the musical praxis of his/her time. Thus, the objective interpretation of the sense is mediated (*vermittelt*) by the performer's subjectivity, presupposes the *Erfahrung* (experience) of the work in the totality of the relations which go to make it up.

To summarize, then, the key to true performance would reside in this subject-object dialectics on the level of the performer's approach as a condition of apprehending – one could say – another manifestation of the same subject-object dialectics: that which was at the origin of the work as a *Werdendes*, as unfinished (*Unabgeschlossenes*), as bearer of an immanent historicity. The mission of the performance would consist of realizing that immanent historicity against the tradition which conceals it: presupposing the capacity of mastering the analysis (the signification-constructive element), despite the idiomatic element, and the capacity for intuitive perception or experience (*Erfahrung*) of the mimetic element, despite the analysis; presupposing, in a word, the capacity for capturing the elements of music in their antithesis. Just as Walter Benjamin had proposed re-opening the process of history, “brushing it against the grain”, so also Adorno sees the work as *unfinished* and postulates that it can only be discovered in its truth when the performer realizes it “against the grain” – against the “cool reason” of the musicological analysis, against the false awareness of idiom or style as ideology, and against the *continuum* of musical tradition as academism.

Adorno Searching for Wagner: Music, Fetishism, and Phantasmagoria

Pedro Boléo

Preparing a paper always raises the problem of time. This perhaps has something to do with music. Adorno says: “The obvious fact that music is an art of time, which operates in time, means in two senses that time is not evident for music, and that music is a problem for time”.¹ It is with this phrase that Adorno begins an important text, published in 1965, entitled *On certain relationships between music and painting* (MuM, GS 16: p.628). And thus I have also begun.

This text by Adorno is important because it condenses some of his main concerns as regards the new music of his time, as well as develops some essential aspects of his “aesthetics”. But what does this text have to do with my paper, which focuses² on another work by Adorno, written partially at the end of the 1930s and published in 1952, his *Essay on Wagner*? What I will try to show is that this essay indeed raises some questions which are not exhausted by a simple aesthetic, sociological, anthropological, psychological, philosophical or musicological appreciation or revaluation of Wagner and his “music drama” (though all these are present in an intricate way in this text).

This paper does not arrive at an analysis which was intended merely to re-situate Wagner’s work in a quiet place in the history of music (and this could be done by Wagnerians as well as by his detractors, who could converge on a historical “putting in order” based on more or less rigid *a priori* aesthetic criteria). On the contrary, the *Essay on Wagner* “untidies”

¹ *Das Selbstverständliche, daß Musik Zeitkunst sei, in der Zeit verlaufe, heißt in doppeltem Verstande, daß Zeit ihr nicht selbstverständlich ist, daß sie diese zum Problem hat.*

² There are a number of other short texts by Adorno on Wagner (as well as several mentions in other essays) which have also been taken into account. Most important are the following: “Notiz über Wagner” (1933b), “Ernest Newman, The Life of Richard Wagner II” (1938b), “Ernest Newman, The Life of Richard Wagner III” (1941), “Wagner, Nietzsche und Hitler” (1947), “Wagners Aktualität” (1963b), and “Wagner und Bayreuth” (1966b).

Wagner's place in history, emphasizing some less evident relationships with society and politics at the time of Wagner, but also with the present. It does not aim merely to contextualize his work, but, on the contrary, it unties or re-examines some of the historical links traditionally attributed to his music drama (as much in the sense of "before Wagner" as "after Wagner"), seeking, within the works, very often in the fragment, connections either invisible or obscured by that which, apparently, is merely outside them. For Adorno the truth of the works is hidden, and has to be "extracted" in the relationship with alterity, with the Other of art: "Art can be understood only by its law of movement, not according to any set of invariants. It is defined by its relation to what it is not." (AT: p.3; GS 7: p.12).³

The title *Essay on Wagner* would seem to allude to, in the first place, the traditional meaning of a literary essay, an analysis of ideas concerning a specific theme, of limited scope, in this case concerning a name (Wagner), that also serves to refer to a work or a group of works. But, in German, *Versuch*, meaning essay, may also mean attempt, experiment (in a sense that, moreover, also exists in Portuguese and English). *Versuchen* means to experiment, to try, and is not far from a process of experimentation or of seeking (in German *suchen* means, precisely, to seek). It seems to me that it is interesting to examine this element of seeking, of searching, for a Wagner who, if he must be sought, it is because he has, in principle, not yet been found. He appeals for a rediscovery, demands a journey, an investigation into something that is not given immediately.

It "untidies" Wagner also in the sense that it does not proceed to an attempt at abstract evaluations or social correlations "determined from above", which would be, as Adorno says, "indifferent to the tension between the historical causal nexus and the content of the work" (AT: pp.315f.; GS 7: p.359),⁴ a tension that enters, as we shall see, into a close relationship with another tension extant in a work of art, between semblance and reality.

The *Essay on Wagner* develops in a particular way the Adornian concept of "primacy of the object" – as Anne Boissière (1999) describes it – and of a permanent criticism of a reified theory of music analysis which begins only from *a priori* conceptions or epochal contextualizations that, being necessary up to a certain point, omit what, in fact, may give in

³ *Deutbar ist Kunst nur an ihrem Bewegungsgesetz, nicht durch Invarianten. Sie bestimmt sich im Verhältnis zu dem, was sie nicht ist.*

⁴ *Falsch ist...die abstrakte gesellschaftliche Zuordnung von oben her, die gleichgültig ist gegen die Spannung zwischen Wirkungszusammenhang und Gehalt.*

the work itself an indication of its truth content, something which for Adorno is a fundamental problem. Adorno thus finds it necessary to use or to create new categories of analysis. The idea of phantasmagoria is, as we shall see, one of these central categories.

In addition, the essay raises problems which are connected with the debates concerning contemporary music and the “avant-garde” or “new music”, as Adorno calls it, and, therefore, closely connect Wagner’s work with Adorno’s times and, I believe, with our own times. Not in the sense that Wagner’s “artwork of the future” had reached today its full realization (once more we are playing with time), but in the sense that it has become a problem for the present. I shall try to discover how this “search” for Wagner might be made. Why is Wagner a problem?

Let us recall that Adorno wrote his text at the end of the 1930s, a critical period for the history of the 20th century. Nazism was already in Germany and throughout the world much more than a distant threat. Looking at the essay superficially, its most obviously “polemical” aspect resides in the relationship between Wagner and anti-Semitism, which is clearly exposed, even with some characteristics that establish an intimate connection with the rise of Nazism in Germany. The essay opens precisely with the chapter dedicated to “social character”. I quote: “Self-praise and pomp – features of Wagner’s entire output and the emblems of Fascism” spring from “death instinct implicit in the heroism that proclaims itself” (VW: p.15; GS 13: p.13).⁵

Adorno concludes the first chapter with these words: “In the sinister realm of Wagner’s reactionary outlook we find inscribed letters that his work wrested from his character” (VW: p.27; GS 13: p.25)⁶. There is no immediate relationship of cause and effect (author-work), since this relationship is mediated by the specific form of the work (or, rather, of the works). On the other hand, the work never reveals itself completely: what Adorno wants from it or demands of it seems sometimes “forced”, and does not result merely from obvious logical or historical reasonability. He “forces”, in fact, the connections between art and life in order to “extract” (this is an expression used by Adorno and which has to do with this *forcing* from inside) a truth: Adorno seems to do this with full awareness.

In order to escape from the kind of simplistic cataloguing that would petrify or definitively fix a personality or a work, Adorno therefore prefers

⁵ *Eigenlob und Pomp – Züge der gesamten Wagnerschen Produktion und Existentialien des Faschismus – entspringen der Ahnung [...] von der Todgeweihtheit des Heroismus, der sich selbst proklamiert.*

⁶ *Im finsternen Bannkreis von Wagners Reaktion sind die Lettern eingezeichnet, die sein Werk seinem Charakter abtrotzte.*

to dive into the paradoxes and contradictions of both work and personality. And Wagner provides him with good material for this kind of critique.

Wagner himself recognizes some of these paradoxes. One of them has its origin in the much-discussed and always problematic relationship between music and poetry. Theoretically, Wagner tries to resolve the problem, in the text of *Opera and Drama*, with his defence of the total work of art (*Gesamtkunstwerk*). It is in the fusion between music and poetry, in which each one gives to the other what it lacks, that he finds the only possibility of a true musical drama. An unified, whole artistic form must have an artistic expression that communicates directly with the feelings. But, according to Wagner, music cannot only by means of itself achieve this completely; it leaves a great margin of ambiguity and obliges the artistic form to divide itself: to speak to feeling, and to communicate to reason what is not clear. For Wagner, a work may only be a whole and coherent if it manages organically to unite these elements. And for this a musical medium is necessary, which is not only vocal music. The sought unity is given by the orchestra: "The Orchestra, as we have seen, is this compensatory organ for preserving the Unity of Expression" having a balancing function, of levelling the expressive elements and, in Wagner's words, functions as "an almost diaphanous veil of Tone" (Wagner, 1852: p.345). Now, this "almost diaphanous veil" refers precisely to the question of the semblance of works of art, a central question for Adorno. Knowing this very well – too well, one could say –, it is, above all, by means of the orchestra analysis that Adorno develops his idea that in Wagner's concept of illusion the aesthetic appearance "becomes a function of the character of the commodity" (VW: p.90; GS 13: p.86).⁷ In other words, it manifests itself as phantasmagoria: "The medium of Wagnerian phantasmagoria" is "none other than the orchestra" (VW: p.98; GS 13: p.93).⁸

Another paradox, considered by Wagner to be of paramount importance, may illuminate this question somewhat, and clarify more precisely what Adorno understood by phantasmagoria. It is the paradox of genius and communication, developed in an earlier text, in which Wagner (1841: p.137) refers to the "suffering" of the genius. If the genius creator – this is the dilemma – wishes to express what "resonates" most deeply within him, he must be able to communicate it in a way that it may resonate in all humanity, but without compromising his own freedom and expression:

⁷ ...der Begriff der Illusion [...] trifft die unromantischen Seite der Phantasmagorie. In ihr wird der ästhetische Schein vom Charakter der Ware ergriffen.

⁸ ... kein anderes als Wagners phantasmagorisches Medium, das Orchester.

These sufferings no one seeks from sense-of-duty, and whoever could imagine it, his duty necessarily rises from a very different source. One's daily bread, the maintenance of a family; most weighty motors. Only, they do not operate in the genius. They prompt the journeyman, the hand-worker; they may even move the man of genius to handiwork, but cannot spur him to create, nor even to bring his creations to market. Yet that's the point we are discussing, namely how to explain the impulse that drives a man with demon force to carry just his noblest, ownest good to open market. (Wagner, 1841: p.137).

A little further on, Wagner concludes paradoxically that what creates this demonic compulsion “the god-like longing to impart an own interior bliss to human hearts” (*ibid.*: p.138).

The genius, therefore, only “creates”. The basic necessities of life do not affect him, he has genius, which is incomparably greater than all that. But he has “to carry” his creations “to open market” in order to communicate with humankind. Wagner tries to distance himself as far as possible from the figure of the craftsman or the worker. Work is seen as something degrading. For Wagner the artist does not work, because he takes pleasure in his activity and in the act of creating, as well as the result of his creation have the ability fully to satisfy the artist; as though he had no need for any other reward for his “creation” other than his own freedom and public recognition. Wagner’s output thus denies that it results from work (like any other work, like other commodities), and seeks, according to Adorno, to flight “from the banal, by means of which the composer hopes to escape the market requirements of the commodity known as opera. But paradoxically, this flight only leads him more deeply into the commodity” (VW: p.82; GS 13: p.79).⁹ Wagner is dealing with an insoluble contradiction, which is his affirmation as an unique artist, who creates the previously unheard, the exceptional, explores new territories, and wishes his works to be recognized as something absolutely new in a world in which the new is now associated with fashion and convention. Musical drama must appear to overcome all products of operatic conventionalism of its time, even running the risk of isolation and incomprehension. And for this it must present itself as absolutely original, affirm its isolation and hide as far as possible whatever his production has in common with “conventional” works – its mercantile aspect, the fact of being, like the fashionable opera from which it wishes to distance itself, the result of work, socially quite specialized and organized.

⁹ *...die Fluchtbann vorm Banalen, auf welcher der Komponist den genormten Marktanforderungen der Ware Oper zu entrinnen hofft, so führt doch diese Fluchtbann nur um so tiefer in die Ware hinein.*

But, at the same time, for Adorno, it is this “social isolation of the work of art from its own production” that is the “measure of its immanent progress, that of its mastery of its own artistic material”. And he continues: “All the paradoxes of art in high capitalism – and its very existence is a paradox – culminate in the single paradox that it speaks of the human by virtue of its reification, and that it is only through the perfection of its character as illusion that it partakes of truth” (VW: p.84: GS 13: p.81).¹⁰

Adorno could not, it seems, place the question in the terms that Wagner placed it, given his reservations with regard to the notion of genius and his highly radical distrust of “communication” in art or, at least, of an art that must communicate whatever the cost. And he shows that the paradox cannot be expressed as a contradiction between the genius creator and his vital necessity to communicate, which means placing his creations in the world and in the market. It is deeper, and must be sought within the artwork as a paradox between what it hides and what it reveals.

In order to understand this deep contradiction, we must examine the idea of aesthetic semblance in Adorno. Some clues can be found in his *Aesthetic Theory*. On the one hand, artworks as artefacts, products of social work, approach the status of the empirical world, but must at the same time “deny” this world, or, to put it another way, “protest” against this world, and take from it its content. Adorno sees this content as something that settles in the form and creates a semblance. For, on the other hand, the work cannot reject its character of semblance, run the risk of losing this element not intelligible in its totality – this inexplicable (hidden and enigmatic) moment of the work of art, which it needs in order to arrive at a truth.

In a passage from the *Aesthetic Theory*, Adorno says: “They [the artworks] themselves, not just the illusion they evoke, are the aesthetic semblance” (AT: p.134; GS 13: p.155).¹¹ The semblance reveals itself in this way as an inevitably constitutive part of the artworks. The work does not only generate an illusion, but it is semblance: semblance is at the core of these artworks.

During the 19th century, however – and this is crucial –, semblance becomes, for Adorno, phantasmagoria:

¹⁰ *Die gesellschaftliche Abblendung des Kunstwerks gegen die eigene Produktion ist aber auch das Maß seines immanenten Fortschritts, dem der künstlerischen Materialbeherrschung. Alle Paradoxie der hochkapitalistischen Kunst – und ihre Existenz selbst ist paradox – konzentriert sich darin, daß sie vermöge ihrer Verdinglichung vom Menschlichen redet, nur durch die Vollendung ihres Scheincharakters teilhat an der Wahrheit.*

¹¹ *Sie selbst [die Kunstwerke], nicht erst die Illusion, die sie erwecken, sind der ästhetische Schein.*

During the nineteenth century aesthetic semblance was heightened to the point of phantasmagoria. Artworks effaced the traces of their production, probably because the victorious positivistic spirit penetrated art to the degree that art aspired to be a fact and was ashamed of whatever revealed its compact immediateness as mediated. Artworks obeyed this tendency well into late modernism. Art's illusoriness progressively became absolute; this is concealed behind Hegel's term "art-religion", which was taken literally by the oeuvre of the Schopenhauerian Wagner. (AT: p.135; GS 13: p.121).¹²

Adorno shows just how Wagner seeks to resolve this contradiction. Wagner tries to overcome the incoherence present at the moment of aesthetic semblance, between the "how" does the work appear and the "what" it is, by creating phantasmagoria; that is, by proceeding to an "occultation of the production by means of the outward appearance of the product", such that, as Adorno says, "the product presents itself as self-producing". Appearance is not accepted as such, rather "can lay claim to the status of being". Hiding any trace of that which reminds the listener of the conditions or material forces necessary for its production, the artwork appears as "a reality *sui generis* that constitutes itself in the realm of the absolute" (VW: p.85; GS 13: p.82).¹³

The word *phantasmagoria* appears for the first time associated, at the end of the 18th century, with a show of optical illusions based on the use of the magic lantern, developed by Robertson (Etienne-Gaspard Robert, inventor and physics teacher), amongst others. To the technique of projecting images and shadows, phantasmagoria added the possibility of simulating movement (specifically of the eyes or mouth, giving the illusion that the images could speak). Accounts from this time refer to phantasmagoria as something frightening, done in dark rooms, based on the creation of the most perfect illusion possible. Images arose as though from the world of the dead, like the apparitions of ghosts. They possess, therefore, an aspect of terror, strange and frightening, but, at the same time, cause intense fascination, a seduction, stimulating the imagination while also representing a kind of magic trick.¹⁴

¹² *Der ästhetische Schein hatte im neunzehnten Jahrhundert zur Phantasmagorie sich gesteigert. Die Kunstwerke verwischten die Spuren ihrer Produktion; vermutlich weil der vordringende positivistische Geist der Kunst insofern sich mitteilte, als sie Tatsache sein sollte und dessen sich schämte, wodurch ihre dichte Unmittelbarkeit als vermittelt sich decouvriert hätte.*

¹³ *Die Verdeckung der Produktion durch die Erscheinung des Produkts... Das Produkt präsentiert sich als sich selbst Produzierendes... Die Vollendung des Scheins ist zugleich die Vollendung des illusionären Charakters des Kunstwerks als eines Wirklichen sui generis, das im Bereich der absoluten Erscheinung sich konstituiert...*

¹⁴ Concerning phantasmagoria shows (from the Greek *phantasma*, illusion), see

Adorno does not seem to be unaware of this use of the term (although, as we shall see, it was from other sources that he took the idea of phantasmagoria), when he compares Wagnerian phantasmagoria to the effect of distorting mirrors and the optical games of fairs and cabarets. In particular, it means this when he describes the *Venusberg* scene from *Tannhäuser*, as “the phantasmagoria *par excellence*” (VW: p.86; GS 13: p.82). In the kingdom of Venus there is not just only an element of the magic and the fantastic, of illusion, that Adorno compares to a fairy world, but also a “dualism waking and dreaming music” (VW: p.90; GS 13: p.86).¹⁵ Very often, characters in Wagnerian musical drama are in this intermediate zone between dream and reality. They are also characters who seem to be outside time, in a mythical time marked by fate.

Adorno gives several examples of this, such as in *Siegfried*, when Brünnhilde speaks of Siegfried as though she had ever known him. The characters “can function as universal symbols” because they are able to “dissolve in the phantasmagoria like mist” as if they have neither beginning nor end (VW: p.89; GS 13: p.85).¹⁶ They are thus literally separated from time, in order to present themselves as eternal, and to establish an intimate relationship with nature, they themselves appearing as “natural”.

The phantasmagoria of the sacred fire in the *Ring des Nibelungen* (and therefore an attempt to represent metaphorically a natural element) is achieved, according to Adorno, thanks to the hiding of the means by which it is done:

While the manner of its production is completely concealed in its string sections, harmonically, its progression is most ingeniously that of a state of rest. Not only do the constant harmonic changes produce new progressions; at the same time, systematic modulation through the changing surfaces of the different keys makes the music dance round the basic harmonies which remain constant at any given moment, like a fire that perpetually flickers without ever moving from the spot. As a metaphor for fire, the final 60 bars of The Walkyrie provide crucial insight into the nature of phantasmagoria (VW: p.89; GS 13: p.85)¹⁷.

Mannoni (2003), in which may be found, in addition, extensive bibliography on the subject.

¹⁵ ...Dualismus wacher und träumender Musik...

¹⁶ ...weil in der Phantasmagorie ihre Existenz nebelhaft zerrinnt.

¹⁷ Ist in seinen Streichfiguren der Modus der Hervorbringung vollständig verdeckt, so ist harmonisch zugleich sein Fortgang aufs kunstvollste einer im Stillstand: bei stetem Harmoniewechsel werden nicht sowohl eigentlich neue Stufen erreicht, als auf den wechselnden Spiegelflächen verschiedener Tonarten die jeweils

Another technical process typical of Wagnerian phantasmagoria is the elimination of the bass in certain passages, creating an effect which Adorno calls “diminution” (*Verkleinerung*) (VW: p.86; GS 13: p.83). If the bass, responsible for marking harmonic transitions, disappears, there is a temporal side of the music which becomes more undefined. The music at times seems to come from far away, from distant or mythical landscapes. And it creates the effect of a “miniature”, of something which is only understood from a great distance, and which comes to us, therefore, reduced in size. Elsa’s vision, in *Lohengrin*, makes use of a similar procedure, eliminating the bass or giving it to “ethereal instruments such as the bass clarinets or the harp”, as Adorno says. And Elsa indeed sees the knight as a little prince, who appears as though from the sky, whose provenance, in other words, is unknown or hidden.

Diminution is also used to produce the fusion of the parts that had already been attempted in the idea of infinite melody and chromaticism. A total fusion which seems to have produced itself. And time seems occasionally to stop. When Parsifal sets out in search of the Graal he says “I hardly move, / Yet far I seem to have come”, and Gurnemanz replies: “You see, my son, time / changes here to space” (quoted by Adorno, VW: p.88; GS 13: pp.84f.).¹⁸

“The characters cast off their empirical being in time as soon as the ethereal kingdom of essences is entered”, notes Adorno (VW: p.88; GS 13: p.85).¹⁹ The question returns, then, to that of time and of the conflict between dynamism and stasis: a question that Adorno dealt with frequently in texts that refer directly to the most recent music of his time. This is the case, for example, in the essay *Vers une musique informelle*, in which the criticism of Stockhausen’s music, for example, is made mainly on the basis of the problem of stasis in a music which, foreseeing and integrally organizing its parameters, runs the risk of a “loss of tension” between what it conceives of or foresees and the unpredictable element of its flowing in time – so eliminating, in favour of a total pre-organization of elements, the relationship between what comes before and what comes afterwards. As we know, Adorno does not criticize only Stockhausen and integral serialism, but also aleatoric music, which he accuses of a similar

konstanten Grundharmonien durch ein System der Ausweichung umkreist: dem Feuer gleich, das unablässig flackernd nicht von der Stelle sich regt. Als Gleichnis des Feuers geben die sechzig Schlußakte der Walküre entscheidenden Aufschluß über die Phantasmagorie.

¹⁸ “Ich schreite kaum, doch wähn’ich mich schon weit.” [...] “Du sieh’st, mein Sohn, zum Raum wird hier die Zeit.”

¹⁹ Die Personen selber verlieren ihre empirische Zeitstelle, sobald das wesenlose Reich der Wesen betreten wird.

fetishism of the musical material. “In fetishism there is a convergence between the hostile extremes of faith in the material and absolute organization. A *musique informelle* revolts against both” (VMI: p.304; GS 16: p.524).²⁰ In music, a total dynamic would be equivalent to total stasis. But this relationship cannot be fixed or regulated by any aesthetic *a priori*, and neither can it be set up as an absolute rule. It is in the actual works that one may understand what “maintaining the tension” may mean. In any case, what is important here, as Anne Boissière (1999) notes, “is, therefore, above all, the argument of time, that leads to polemics with the *avant garde*”.

To this discussion of contemporary music Wagner is, then, absolutely central. Not obviously because of any cause-effect link with Cage’s or Stockhausen’s music, which, in many respects, are opposed to his, but because Adorno’s criticism of the technical progress in modern music stresses the element of aesthetic regression included in it. Adorno postulates that, just as in new music, Wagner, by working with the most advanced material of his time, falls into what he called the “fetishizing” of that material. Although Wagner did this in search of the “maximum effect” and expression, while the new music apparently sought to flee as far as possible from expression in favour of technical quality, scientific organization, or, in the case of aleatoric music, composer’s self-denial.

The innovations that Adorno sees in Wagner, notably in the realm of timbre and orchestration, but also in what Adorno calls “the emancipation of dissonance”, improve aesthetic semblance just to the point of phantasmagoria, that is, hiding its method of production and introducing an element of falsity in the work of art. Adorno warns against a rigid separation between innovation and regression in musical drama: “... progress and reaction in Wagner’s music cannot be separated out like sheep and goats” (VW: p.47; GS 13: p.46).²¹ This is why he so much likes one of Hans Sachs’s phrases from *Die Meistersinger*, which he quotes once more: “It sounded so old, and yet was so new” (VW: p.70; GS 13: p.67).²² Phantasmagoria is a main process in this close connection between the modern and the archaic. As Adorno says, “phantasmagoria comes into being when, under the constraints of its own limitations, modernity’s latest products come close to the archaic. Every step forwards is at the same time a step into the remote past”. This is so

²⁰ *Im Fetischismus konvergieren die feindlichen Extreme der Materialgläubigkeit und der absoluten Durchorganisation. Gegen beides revoltiert eine musique informelle.*

²¹ *...daß Fortschritt und Reaktion in der Wagnerschen Musik sich nicht wie die Schaffe von den Böcken scheiden lassen...*

²² *Es klang so alt und war doch so neu.*

because the character of phantasmagoria is that of disguise; “bourgeois society only when so disguised does it venture to look the new in the face” (VW: p.95; GS 13: pp.90f.).²³ In a letter to Walter Benjamin, essential to understand the question of art and phantasmagoria, Adorno states tersely that “It is the newest that, as semblance and phantasmagoria, is itself the old” (Adorno/Benjamin: p.143).²⁴

The orchestra is, as we have already seen, one of the chief means of Wagnerian phantasmagoria. Adorno gives some examples, and analyses various procedures used by Wagner. I will not discuss these procedures in detail here²⁵. What is essential to retain is that all these procedures attempt to “simulate” a homogeneity, to “disguise” the connections between elements, to “integrate” differences, to “smooth” the bumps and transitions, to “emphasize” their *naturalness*. Wagner’s contradiction resides, then, in seeking to simulate naturalness and in being obliged to be very artificial in order to do so. The most advanced technical innovation is accompanied by “clouds of smoke”, such as also happened in the “phantasmagoria” shows at the end of the 18th century...

Adorno emphasized, on the other hand, the importance of the emancipation of dissonance and Wagner’s advances in the field of harmony, which could not be analysed in terms of functions, in so far as the dissonant element became basic, and – very frequently – the exception turned into rule. “Uncertainty”, “instability”, “twilight” zones, “dissolution of contours”, here are the terms Pierre Boulez (1981) uses to refer to these “regions in which the certainty of language is annulled”.²⁶ The idea of the “dissolution of contours” seems to be particularly appropriate to the Wagnerian concern with the fusion of all elements in a whole, in a fluid and organic unity. Harmonic ambiguity, which becomes itself a means of expression in Wagner’s music, would be intensively explored by modern composers. In this respect, Adorno states that the processes used by Wagner “become fully comprehensible only in the

²³ *Phantasmagorie konstituiert sich, indem die Moderne unterm Zwang der eigenen Fessel in ihren neuesten Produkten dem längst Gewesenen sich ähnelt. Jeder Schritt nach vorwärts ist ihr zugleich Urvergangenheit. Die fortschreitende bürgerliche Gesellschaft bedarf ihrer eigenen illusionären Verdeckung, um fortzubestehen. Sie wagt dem Neuen anders nicht ins Auge zu sehen, als indem sie als alt es wiedererkennt.*

²⁴ *...das Neueste ist, als Schein und Phantasmagorie, selber das Alte.*

²⁵ See the chapters “Klang” (sound) and “Farbe” (colour) in VW.

²⁶ Boulez does not distance himself enough, however, from the simplistic and reductive idea of a Wagner who was “progressive” as a composer but, “unfortunately”, a mediocre poet and theatre maker: “While the music aims with certainty at the future, the theatre looks obstinately towards the past.”

light of a comparison with the most advanced material of contemporary music from which”, however, “the inexorable presence of the Wagnerian transition has been eliminated” (VW: p.70; GS 13: p.67).²⁷

Adorno shows, therefore, that the new in Wagner similarly turns into illusion as phantasmagoria. Nevertheless, artworks which, conversely, seek radically to deconstruct semblance run the risk of neutralizing themselves, of being delivered to reification. This is one of the points in which Adorno’s criticism of some trends in the “new music” insists: the attempt to overcome at once aesthetic semblance, in a non-dialectic process. A passage from *Aesthetic Theory* may help to shed light on this matter:

Crudely physicalistic procedures in the material and calculable relations between parameters helplessly repress aesthetic semblance and thereby reveal the truth of their positedness. The disappearance of this positedness into their autonomous nexus left behind aura as a reflex of human self-objectivation. The allergy to aura, from which no art today is able to escape, is inseparable from the eruption of inhumanity. This renewed reification, the regression of artworks to the barbaric literalness of what is aesthetically the case, and phantasmagorical guilt are inextricably intertwined (AT: p.136; GS 7: p.158).²⁸

In another, metaphorically very curious passage, Adorno refers, now in other terms, to the paradox of modern art, unsolved and eternally insoluble: “The dialectic of modern art is largely that it wants to shake off its illusoriness like an animal trying to shake off its antlers” (AT: p.136; GS 7: p.157).²⁹ That is, it cannot ever be done completely, however many attempts are made. But semblance and phantasmagoria are not equivalent. Phantasmagoria is defined as “the illusion of the absolute reality of the unreal” (VW: p.90; GS 13: p.86),³⁰ the illusory presented as real, “as the

²⁷ *Ganz verständlich werden sie erst aus dem fortgeschrittensten Material der gegenwärtigen Musik, welche die Stetigkeit des Wagnerschen Übergangs abgeschafft hat.*

²⁸ *Krud physikalistische Prozeduren im Material, kalkulable Relationen zwischen den Parametern verdrängen hilflos den ästhetischen Schein, die Wahrheit über ihr Gesetzsein. Indem es in ihrem autonomen Zusammenhang verschwand, hinterließ es die Aura als den Reflex des in ihnen sich objektivierenden Menschlichen. Die Allergie gegen die Aura, der keine Kunst heute sich zu entziehen vermag, ist ungeschieden von der ausbrechenden Inhumanität. Solche neuerliche Verdinglichung, die Regression der Kunstwerke auf die barbarische Buchstäblichkeit dessen, was ästhetisch der Fall sei, und phantasmagorische Schuld sind unentwirrbar ineinander verschlungen.*

²⁹ *Die Dialektik der modernen Kunst ist in weitem Maße die, daß sie den Scheincharakter abschütteln will wie Tiere ein angewachsenes Geweih.*

³⁰ *...Illusion der absoluten Wirklichkeit des Unwirklichen.* – Adorno quotes Paul Bekker’s analysis opposing Wagner to “earlier romanticism”.

point at which aesthetic appearance becomes a function of the character of the commodity". Or, in another passage: "in the phantasmagoria, Wagner's operas tend to become commodities. Their *tableaux* assume the character of wares on display" (VW: p.90; GS 13: p.86).³¹ This reference to *tableaux* is interesting, in that they indicate another aspect: the criticism of the pictorial tendencies of music and of the Wagnerian fusion of the arts.

This aspect is crucial to understand extensively the *Essay on Wagner*. Wagner's ideal of the fusion of the arts, expressed in the conception of the total artwork, is criticized by Adorno firstly because he sees the fusion of the arts as a threat to the autonomy of art. He defends the difference between the arts, against an artificially constructed totality, at the cost of the particularity of each one. The loss of autonomy in the name of a fusion corresponds to a total domination of the whole over the parts, and Adorno sees in this dilution of the particular one of the greatest dangers for art. Because it is in the particular that the heteronomy of art is expressed. The ideal of expression "at any cost" in the Wagnerian musical drama contradicts the free expression of the particular, which is where truth may be found. It means the sacrifice of the particular and neutralizes the fragment. In contemporary music, Adorno criticizes a similar process, the origins of which lie no longer in the attempt at expression of the subject (of the genius, as Wagner would have said), but in the name of the ideal of objectivity, of a mathematical construct or, as Adorno says in *Vers une musique informelle*, of a "hygienic art". Now, for Adorno, this is precisely what must be avoided: a music totally predetermined in all parameters. According to Adorno, a totality without openness to the unpredictable is not welcome, wherever it came from.

The pictorial tendencies of music are another of Adorno's preferred targets, a historically important question at least from Wagner onwards.³² Nietzsche said, after his break with Wagner, that the latter, as a musician, should be placed among painters. He also criticizes his lack of rhythmic

³¹ *In ihr [Phantasmagorie] wird der ästhetische Schein vom Charakter der Ware ergriffen. [...] ...so tendieren die Wagnerschen Opern in der Phantasmagorie zur Ware. Ihre tableaux nehmen Ausstellungscharakter an...*

³² If "time becomes space", as it is said in *Parsifal*, it is also because what could be understood by listening (sound and time) is now perceived, preferentially, by means of sight. In this regard, Baudelaire's text "*Richard Wagner et le Tannhäuser à Paris*" is exemplary: the visual metaphor (images, visions, colours, apparitions) dominates the text, obviously not by chance. On the reception of Wagner by Baudelaire it is worth paying attention to Lacoue-Labarthe (1991). Adorno deals very thoroughly with this topic – pictorial tendencies in music – as regards the music of Stravinsky, which he attacked in *Philosophy of New Music* and later texts (PhNM, MuM), a criticism which falls upon music that submits itself to a spatial logic and in this way artificially eliminates the problem of time.

feeling, claiming that Wagner's music is "disorder, desintegration, chaos" (Nietzsche, 1911: p.13). Wagnerian phantasmagoria, the hiding of the production process, and all this obscurity of which Nietzsche speaks, defending, against Wagner, clarity and lightness, has to do, not only with development of music in time, but also with spatialization in music. A page from the *Essay on Wagner* may help to clarify the point:

The standing still of time and the complete occultation of nature by means of phantasmagoria are thus brought together in the memory of a pristine age where time is guaranteed only by the stars. Time is the all-important element of production that phantasmagoria, the mirage of eternity, obscures (VW: p.87: GS 13: p.84).³³

The question of time thus cuts through all of Adorno's discussion of modern art.

Nietzsche criticizes Wagner for not being able to create a balanced, sober organic form, but only an exaggeration, an exacerbation of effects and semblance, renouncing the truth. Here Nietzsche and Adorno agree, in a sense. Nietzsche (1911: p.22) refers to Wagner's musical drama as something that grows until it becomes gigantic, as though it were a magnified miniature, a true optical illusion: "The first thing his art places in our hands is a magnifying glass; we look through it, and we no longer trust our own eyes – Everything grows bigger, *even Wagner grows bigger...*" everything seems to be a gigantic illusion, and Nietzsche (*ibid.*: p.36) warns: "everything which has to strike for people as true, must necessarily not be true".

In this respect there is, according to Adorno, a tendency of Wagner towards auto-annihilation, a neutralization of what creates difference in his work. And for Adorno, what creates a difference – the truth content of a work of art – must be sought in the particular, or, rather, in the relationship and tension of the particular with the work as a whole, with the work form.³⁴

³³ *Der Stillstand der Zeit und die vollkommene Verdeckung der Natur durch die Phantasmagorie sind damit zusammengedacht in Erinnerung an eine Archais, die keine Zeit kennt, welche nicht von den Gestirnen verbürgt wäre. Das Moment der Zeit ist jenes entscheidende der Produktion, über das die Phantasmagorie täuscht als Trugspiel der Ewigkeit.*

³⁴ Adorno also places this problem alongside the recurring theme of desire and death, of pleasure and sacrifice, a conflict in which the "pulsing of death" prevailed. Obviously having in mind Nietzsche, who accuses Wagner of being morbid and excessive in his identification of pleasure with suffering, Adorno speaks of a "phantasmagoria of pleasure". In *Tannhäuser*, Wagner saw pleasure as a prison, a weakness, and identified it with sickness. If pleasure was seen as a prison, so the ideal of freedom was used to justify asceticism.

But all these paradoxes of the Wagnerian *oeuvre* are the paradoxes *par excellence* of the modern artist. And here the question of aura, that was left open, emerges. The loss of the aura of artworks is, according to Benjamin, a decisive and distinctive characteristic of the movement towards modernity. Aura is what a work of art possesses uniquely, the here and now of it. Nevertheless, in a world dominated by commodity-form, the relationship of the human being with objects becomes strange and, in a generalized industrial system of reproduction, objects seem to lose this uniqueness, this “truth” that they possessed. Modernity is described by Benjamin as a “world without stars”.³⁵ The new had lost its authenticity, it became inauthentic, a mere repetition of the same. It became fashion and convention. What characterized the 19th century for Benjamin was somnolence, hibernation, numbing, insensitiveness. Nietzsche also speaks of a frozen world... as though time had stopped. This is the course of a world that does not cease to create phantasmagoria.

The idea of phantasmagoria is developed by Walter Benjamin (1939) in his text on Baudelaire, the paradigm of the modern poet. It is there above all that Adorno found the concept. Not only there, of course. Marx had already spoken of phantasmagoria with regard to the commodity fetishism, which has to do precisely with the contradiction of a commodity presenting itself with a double value, a fundamental ambiguity: on the one hand, the value of exchange which makes it equivalent to other commodities; but at the same time, and indissolubly, the value of use which is particular to it.³⁶ Just these categories are implicit in Adorno’s concept of phantasmagoria, as a commodity, in Wagner: it aims “to spirit away its own origins in human labour” but, at the same time, “inseparably from this process and in thrall to exchange value, assiduously emphasizes its use value, stressing that this is its authentic reality, that it is ‘no imitation’ – and all this in order to further the cause of exchange value” (VW: p.90: GS 13: p.86).³⁷

³⁵ See Moses (1996: p.153). Also António Guerreiro (2000), starting from Walter Benjamin, sets out ways to consider some modern phantasmagoria (especially in the chapter “A época e as suas fantasmagorias”).

³⁶ See Karl Marx, *Das Kapital* (Book 1, 1st and 2nd sections). On commodity fetishism (a complex theme that was “in fashion” some decades ago, and now returning in other terms), there are innumerable contributions. See, among others, Baudrillard (1972) and Kofman (1973): both critically discuss Marx’s ideas from quite different points of view.

³⁷ *...nicht bloß seine eigene Genesis in Arbeit beschwörend fortzubannen trachtet, sondern in eins damit, vom Tauschwert beherrscht, geflissentlich seinen Gebrauchswert als echte Realität, als “keine Imitation” pointieren muß, nur um den Tauschwert durchzusetzen.*

This contradiction could not be resolved merely by “lifting the veil” either of the work of art or of the commodity. Alessandro Baricco (2002: pp.15f.) says that it is necessary to follow a detour, to take a longer route, and warns of the need to “resist what may happen when the real becomes ‘all’”. In other words, this difficulty, this tension between semblance and truth, must be present at the heart of the artworks, which may not eliminate this ambiguity: “In the innermost part of all that which in art may justly be called harmonious, survive the absurd and the contradictory.” As we have seen, according to Adorno (AT: pp.128f.: GS 7: p.151), the moment of rationalization is necessary (it is the moment at which there may be “progress” in art), but it may lead to its reification, that is, to the loss of its human side. Conversely, being the human “too human”, being the mimetic impulse or the moment of expression reduced to mere subjectivity alone, this become also reified and the work of art does not reach its truth content. It needs to be organized, but may not lose its enigmatic side. Or, in other words, art must not repress its linguistic character; however, if the work “speaks”, it never does so directly, but by means of enigmas. Baudelaire, for example, is a poet who is aware of this and does not resolve the tension between illusion and truth. He does not resolve this tension in favour of a pure truth waiting to be revealed, being enough to remove the veil. On the contrary, what he considers necessary is precisely the stressing of the strangeness of the work of art by means of “shock”, and not by eliminating its enigmas. Giorgio Agamben (2001: p.88), referring just to the tension between art and commodity, states:

Baudelaire understood that, in order to ensure the survival of art in an industrial civilization, the artist had to seek to reproduce in his work this destruction of the value of use and of traditional intelligibility, which would give way to the experience of ‘shock’: in this way he would manage to make of the work the very vehicle of the inaccessible and build upon this a new value and a renewed authority. This process implied, however, a renunciation in art of the guarantees which enabled it to belong to a tradition, or, rather, a series of places and objects which operate an unceasing continuity between past and present, between the old and the new; the self-negation of art would therefore become the only possibility of survival.

This paradox, already identified by Walter Benjamin with regard to Baudelaire, is the paradox *par excellence* of the modern artist. Wagner’s work embodies the same contradictions of 19th century art, but tries to resolve them in a very different way, that is, by means of phantasmagoria and the related conception of musical drama as *Gesamtkunstwerk*. These contradictions, however, are also present, according to Adorno, in 20th century art, and particularly in 20th century music, as we have seen.

The question of the self-destruction of art is intricately related to another, wider question, and one of Adorno's favourite themes: the process of the emancipation of humanity is the same process that leads to catastrophe – Enlightenment accompanies its own self-destruction. It is not by chance that, in the introduction to the *Essay on Wagner*, the first reference which appears is Horkheimer (1936), co-author of the *Dialektik der Aufklärung*, which is obviously here also at stake.

To conclude, the following excerpt in which Adorno lays out in fragmentary form, under the sign of music, a possible aesthetics or, rather, sets out elements that show the possibility of an aesthetics which does not abandon the idea of time as problem:

The contemporary problem faced by all artworks, how to begin and how to close, indicates the possibility of a comprehensive and material theory of aesthetic form that would also need to treat the categories of continuity, contrast, transition, development, and the "knot", as well as, finally, whether today everything must be equally near the midpoint or can have different densities. (AT: p.135; GS 7: p.156).³⁸

Thus is finished what I began.

³⁸ *Das Problem, wie noch anzufangen, wie zu schließen sei, deutet auf die Möglichkeit einer zugleich umfassenden und materialen Formenlehre der Ästhetik, die auch Kategorien der Fortsetzung, des Kontrasts, der Überleitung, der Entwicklung und des "Knotens" zu behandeln hätte und nicht zuletzt, ob heute alles gleich nah zum Mitellpunkt sein müsse oder von verschiedener Dichte.*

Enlightening New Music Prisms: Towards a Contemporary Critical Philosophy of New Music

José Júlio Lopes

Introduction

This paper argues that we need to re-think new music in today's world. That means that we need to know, in the first place, why today's world is a problem, and, next, what is the current situation of today's new music.

The first issue seems to have an obvious answer. Insofar as we are all contemporaries of today's world, we are experiencing the world in everyday life – and that gives us the feeling that we understand it, because we know it. It looks easy and simple.

But, at the same time that life seems easier and the world more fitted to our needs, we discover the unquietness of a strange situation in which we are not so comfortable: there is a lack of ideas and ideals for the world; there is some will, ignored, to project; there is perhaps some distraction or loss of provocative power of present thinking...

At the same time as we distract ourselves with some very interesting questions and take satisfaction in cultural achievements, the world, in its political, economical and cultural dimension, changes and moves towards a new configuration. And so there arise certain questions that are new for us, and, of course they are strange to Adorno's experience – and also to his grid of thoughts and worldviews.

One of them has to do with a kind of "technological turn" (to use an expression of Foucault) of our era. Another has to do with social and political changes in the structures of society. A third one concerns internal changes in the arts and music.

The second issue is not so clear. Perhaps we should ask first what "new music" is today. Of course there is no easy answer, and briefly, as a first step, I will make reference to a semiotic or linguistic aspect. The expression "new music" shows, at least, a strong need to establish frontiers, to run away from a previous situation, to start anew (in a less

defined field). The expression “new music” loses the symbolic power of the term *avant-garde* or *radical music*, and assumes a different position from the former designation “contemporary music”. “New music” is a weak designation, in fact. It is softer and more open. Open to relativism.

On the other hand, “contemporary” is a term that was connected with time, revealing the symbolic need to identify the more recent musical production that is not commercial and that avoids its reification in the market of cultural goods, different again from *avant-garde* and *radical music*. One might perhaps think that the very designation “new music” is also a symptom of present times, in which thought has been dismissed: avoiding at all cost showing a radical position; avoiding the creation of a closure for music. The fact is that, behind an innocent designation, there is a great deal of ideology. And this is precisely where re-thinking music should begin.

What follows is a mosaic of questions, not seeking answers. The method I will use is a musical metaphor imported from the domain of musical composition. And so, there will be no chronological sequence of events to analyse. The order will be decided specifically for the purpose of this reflection. In other words, we will build a *series* of topics. This will be, as I might call it, a *serial method*, in order to avoid the ambition of solving now with this text all the problems of the world and the many contradictions of new music. So, I will concentrate my efforts on just a few topics and I will try to share with my readers some of the questions that have a strong relevance in my research.

Wagner and the avant-garde

After almost a century of modern and *avant-garde* music, it seems today that we have reached a kind of dissolved *pathos*, an absence of a will to judge, contradictory and ambiguous institutional relations, a feeling that means of expression are exhausted, an undefined orphanage of originality and authenticity, a crisis of *poiesis* and *aesthesis*... This list, in fact, sounds familiar: something of that kind was said after Wagner’s explosion – and he was, as we know, a precursor of the *avant-garde* gesture. And despite Adorno’s view of Wagner and *avant-garde* art, we should rethink both, and also his position.

The post-Wagnerian moment was in fact one of exhaustion – or, at least, a moment in which a strong feeling of arriving at the end of something prevailed. This was on account of the fact that Wagner had indeed extended musical material to an extreme point, and had historically grounded new perspectives and paths to the mechanics of

musical communication. In other words: new musical features and questions in terms of emotional “engineering” and *pathos*. And this, of course, is not just a question that concerns musical technique or musical aesthetics, but also one that concerns political issues and their consequences – or, as one could perhaps say, in modern words: a group of questions that belong more to a philosophy of communication than to cultural criticism (bearing in mind Adorno’s view on this matter).

It was the fact that Wagner *had a lot to say* that made music go further in exploring new means of expression and a new musical rhetoric and language. At this point we should recall Nietzsche’s view, very briefly: for him, language is originally rhetoric, rhetoric being a kind of unconsciousness of language. Language is thus built over a *forgotten* rhetoric, because in myth and in singing, language emerges full of rhetorical effects, as the surface of a rhetoric structure. This is important if we consider music as a language and if we apply all the modern theory of language to music – and so we could speak about speech, acts of speech, meaning, communication. In addition to many other aspects, what concerns Adorno in his work on Wagner’s work is something that today we would call a communication problem: the *phantasmagoria*, the idea of hiding the structure (hiding the orchestra in the pit, for instance), corresponds obviously to communication strategies that are a consequence of an ideological constellation in which art and politics coincide.

As Adorno says, “The emancipation of colour achieved by the orchestra intensifies the element of illusion by transferring the emphasis from the essence, the musical event itself, to the appearance, the sound” (VW: p.98; GS 13: p.93).¹ The problem seems to be the effect of illusion that Wagner creates with his *Gesamtkunstwerk* – the total work of art –, a consequence of his impatience towards anything isolated that lives for itself, in Adorno’s words.

Wagner, as a composer (or should we say, as a creator), was a man who had a *vision* for the world (*Weltanschauung*) – he was contemporary with an era of *visions* – and his works were created to spell out that vision, as a speech, and with a very singular rhetoric. “Music is called upon to do nothing less than retract the historical tendency of language, which is based on signification, and to substitute expressiveness for it” (VW: p.99; GS 13: p.94).² Wagner was a world maker (to quote

¹ *Die Emanzipation der Farbe selbst, welche diesem Orchester gelang, steigert das illusionäre Moment, indem der Akzent vom Wesen, dem musikalischen Ereignis an sich, auf die Erscheinung, den Klang fällt.*

² *Es wird also der Musik nicht weniger zugemutet, als die geschichtliche Tendenz der Sprache, die auf die Signifikation hin, zugunsten der Expression zurückzunehmen.*

Goodman's idea) – like others in his time, like Marx. And he needed a *total work of art* to represent and to express his worldview.

Clearing the way to what would become an avant-garde movement was something that Wagner did not foresee as such. Nevertheless, his theory (and the contradictory and dialectical result from his relation with Nietzsche) enunciated for the first time some topics that would be re-spelled and reworked in the future – by the avant-garde artists at the end of the 19th Century and, more clearly, by the avant-garde of the first-half of the 20th Century. *Das Kunstwerk der Zukunft* is in fact something that avant-garde art started to experiment with, and that the future (I mean, our present) is now offering.

Let us examine this in more detail: the term *avant-garde* originated in the realm of military craft. Applied to the arts, it functions as a metaphor that points to what goes ahead, as in war; those who are in a position in which they can see in the first place, arrive at a determined point before the others, explore unknown territories. The world of the arts was then seen as a battlefield. The same metaphor was used at the same time in the revolutionary movements, and also to qualify the function or role of the Communist Party that Marx and Engels (contemporaries of Wagner) had just founded: it was the avant-garde of the proletarian movement. The man who began using the term was an anarchist, Bakhunin, who, in his exile in Switzerland, after the civil fights in Dresden (where he in fact met Wagner on the barricades), founded a magazine devoted to the arts with this very title, *Avant-garde art*. Although this may seem an historical curiosity or an historical *fait-divers*, there is some power in the exploration of this metaphor. So we may say that in fact Wagner was ahead. He did arrive somewhere before others. He did something new. And here is another important word and concept that another contemporary (and admirer) of Wagner, Charles Baudelaire, would theorize about in depth.

“New” became the touchstone for the modern artist and for modern art. Seeking for the “new” is then the energy that moves art and that gives power to originality. Artists at this time were fully a social and symbolic construction of modernity, inspired by Kant and Hegel, and also modelled by the romantic concentration of self-centred creative awareness. A constellation of individual poetic talents concentrated in one person that was shining like a star – and also producing some stardust, and sometimes *going down to Earth*. Something of a divine origin, that made him aware of a social differentiation and function. There is no full rational explanation for the fact that what we call talent is not common to all men, and is accordingly seen as a gift – something that cannot be explained strictly in human terms. This model corresponds to the

reification of autonomous artists. In his extreme position, the artist attempts to reach originality, authenticity, as a mark of his truth and sincerity as an artist. The “new”, the experimental which it implies, means, for Adorno, that the artist cannot predict the result of his practice. And here resides essentially the paradigm of modernity, meaning a lack of control of the material.

Avant-garde canonized

Adorno considered art to be a form of knowledge, as did Hegel. This distinguishes Adorno’s position from that of many other thinkers, for whom art is finally nothing but a mirror, a reflexive reaction to the world and therefore far-removed from intellectual interest. Just under this point of view illusion becomes, for Adorno, one could say, dangerous. Because illusion hides the frontier between art and the world, and turns the aesthetic experience in an experience in itself distant from a critical experience of *being in the world*.

But avant-garde art has also a certain political allure. Being a radical artistic path, it was seen sometimes as the place of political correctness in art. The avant-garde was even sometimes *left wing art*. Because being radical, the avant-garde was very often against a situation, produced powerful manifestos, had a political rhetoric, and induced shock.

In the meantime, however, avant-garde art has been captured by the institutions. And here we can use hard theory jargon for this phenomenon. In fact, the movement was assimilated by the ideological system that was able to integrate deviation as a norm. And so, radical art became *fashionable*, was to be sold and bought in the market place, was to be legitimated as a bourgeois value, and was to be legitimated by the museums.

The institutionalization of the musical avant-garde was the last blow out of the never-ending aesthetic movements that flourished in the 20th century (see the case of Boulez and IRCAM in Georgina Born, 1994). As we learned from Baudelaire, Benjamin and also, of course, Adorno, this dialectical development of artistic and aesthetic paths is essentially modern. It belongs to what Habermas inscribes in the so-called *modernity programme* (which, in his view is perhaps not yet exhausted). Although the quest for the “new” in art did not end, it is no longer driven by exclusively aesthetic reasons, but it is rather powered by the technological contamination of artistic *praxis* that is dramatically changing musical experience and introducing new forms of musical production and reception – in which art and communication come together to produce a new theory.

Now, when the *boom* of the “modern/post-modern” discussion of the eighties is long gone, we can see that this blow had the effect of clearing the way for a *post-modern* style of thought supported by a new relativism. A new relativism that is critically weak and is grounded on an old and well-known philosophical assertion (rapidly understood and assimilated by *sensus communis*) saying that *taste is not to be discussed*. In short, this leads to what we shall call the “musical correctness” of today’s musical thought³. And it deserves some critical attention as it postulates a relativism that is strange to Adorno’s perspective. In other words, the ever-lower level of tolerance of the *common ear* is now imposing its *deafness* – does this mean that a new regression has set in? Are even well-educated ears becoming deaf?

Another point of view may be taken from Adorno’s thoughts on the culture industry (and its correlatives in a theory of mass consumption of cultural goods). After assimilating a few of Adorno’s ideas (but also Marcuse’s) as a *vulgata* for an enlightened thinking on music and cultural management (mixed with some neo-liberal statements and enterprise management techniques), a mediating and informal instance composed by an international corporation of *universal aesthetic curators* in concert halls, foundations, art galleries, musical institutions, etc., extends its mission to a full programme of commissioning living composers. This is not new. It also happened in the world of fine arts leading to the *museum phenomena* (as we can see in Jean Clair’s “paradoxe du conservateur”) (Clair, 1988).

New music composers who are internationally successful are now considered as in some sort “collected items” of some *imaginary museum of musical works* (Goehr) – some of them are really fashionable and rather transitory, one must recognize. Insofar as art became a socially manifest need, it turns into an enterprise driven by profit, says Adorno.

The reason why one should re-think the strength or symbolic power of the avant-garde gesture has to do with what, in my view, is the weakness of the present situation.

One of the symptoms of the ideological state of the arts today is the peaceful co-existence of old and new forms and configurations of art (mostly imposed by the industry). And, in fact, what is today radically new has a technological radical tone. It is true that, as Adorno points out, art which is radically produced is frequently reduced to the problem of its working-out.

³ On this matter, one should bear in mind that the expression *post-modern* in terms of musical aesthetic theory seems to refer not to a philosophical and historical theme, but rather to both an aesthetic and technical quality to be acknowledge in the compositional conceptual array.

The problem of technology is a political problem. If, according to Adorno, technical rationality is today the rationality of domination, there is, in fact, the need to think about technological changes also in the arts as a problem of domination. Never before has the future of the arts (and of music, in particular) been so dependent on and connected with the development and interest of the industry and the market. That is why one should consider whether there is some space for resistance, and in what terms. And also, one should ask if such a resistance would not be a regressive way (namely, because perhaps *some* Adorno should be reviewed). A discussion on “new music” is needed for all these reasons.

Innovation, in terms of Benjamin’s thought, is connected strictly with the composer’s sincerity, on one hand; on the other hand, today, innovation is technically driven by the needs of industry and also by an utopian project that industry sells to the masses: the dream that each one can be an artist, through technological devices or artistic gadgets made available to everyone everywhere.

Conclusion

The weakness of present thinking about music is perhaps a symptom of a temporary capitulation of philosophy facing the cultural configuration of a new era. It is a general failure of critical thinking that it has lost its power to provoke. Therefore, to enlighten this discussion, Adorno’s criticism and style of thinking must be invoked in order to rethink music, its historical, aesthetic, social and political relations – furthermore, music is now asked to play a central role in the redefinition of the arts system and experience, because of the reconfiguration of the aesthetic and communicational experience on account of an increasingly technological artistic praxis.

The fact that Adorno’s style is contradictory is perhaps one of the main inspirations for a contemporary critical philosophy of new music. Just because of the ideology that is behind this classification, because of so many questions to be asked. A provocative style should raise questions, should namely call into question the established truth in which even modern composers believe (not only modern, of course, but also the so-called post-modern and others) – the apparently definitive and achieved “truth” that the *vulgata* of media industry, in its alliance with the cultural industry, propagates: audiences will be translated into numbers, numbers mean a genuine desire and power, a sort of common taste (*sensus communis*) legitimized by mechanisms of social control hidden behind democratic arguments.

On the Use of Adorno by Musicians

António Pinho Vargas

This communication deals with two principal themes.

Firstly, it deals with the reception of Adorno's writings and their resonance in the field of music. This part of the text is strongly autobiographical insofar as it reflects and accompanies the phases of my studies and of my life as a musician and composer. From this point of view, I began with a suspicion, was able to suggest a hypothesis and finish with a question.

Secondly, I place in a more general perspective the question of *translation*; I will refer to this in my first point, in relation to the different *tempi* of translations of the works of Adorno in various languages, and I will try to raise here the paradoxical necessity for *translation* in relation to musics and their different contexts of existence, in other words, in light of the functioning of hegemonies in the two cultural industries: that of the masses and that of the elite.

About a year ago, a book of mine was published, which included a number of essays on music and aesthetics, amongst which were two essays on Adorno (see Vargas 2002); I will follow closely the main idea of these essays, but add some new hypotheses.

On the reception of Adorno's writings

In the field of aesthetic reflection on music, Portugal has produced very little. We are really very far in time and space from the intellectual excitement which accompanied the publication in 1949 of Adorno's *Philosophy of the New Music*, when some composers who frequented Darmstadt began to study German in order to read this resonant volume, as described by Max Paddison (1993). Portuguese composers write little; I suspect that the majority does not read much, and in any case would not read Adorno. Either they have never read it, or they read it many years ago, or they no longer wish to read it.

There is an academic community, which, in the current situation in this country and many others, is somewhat distanced from the world, in all senses of the word. Even allowing that a Portuguese composer who writes two essays on Adorno is, indeed, an unprecedented *abnormality*, and, in that respect, liable to all kinds of mistrust, one may nevertheless come to the first provisional conclusion: the use of Adorno by musicians is, today, by and large, a non-use, a complete lack of interest. I perhaps exaggerate in this declaration, but exaggeration is the first way of being an Adornian...

My first essay on Adorno was prepared and written between 1999 and 2001, and examined what may be put in the following terms: Adorno's texts were the objects of two kinds of reception: a certain part of them caused tremendous repercussions, while another part of his works was object of an ideological exclusion.

To explain this in more detail, it seems to me that some texts of fragments by Adorno became part of a *vulgate* of current use among artists, composers and musicians, very often accompanied by complete or partial ignorance of their original source or even of their authorship. This first part of my argument has to do principally with my own experience as a pupil of avant-garde composers in the 1970s and 80s in Portugal, and as an attentive reader of books and articles by Adorno and about Adorno that appeared in bookshops at that time¹.

It is this that justifies what Albrecht Wellmer (1983: 249) said, in a phrase which I placed at the beginning of one of the essays to which I have referred:

If the ways of Adornian thought, and even their way of reacting intellectually, have deposited themselves, so to speak, in the spirit of artists, of writers and of intellectuals, the Aesthetic Theory had a less favourable fate in academic aesthetics of literary theory.

Further on, I will endeavour to show that the situation described by Albrecht Wellmer in this article no longer corresponds to the present one in quite the same way, but, in any event, I confess some pleasure in reading the following affirmations by Wellmer, inasmuch as one cannot allow to pass without comment some crass errors on the part of this brilliant thinker:

¹ I refer above all to the French books by Marc Jimenez and Raymond Court, and to the Brazilian translation of the *Philosophy of New Music*. Later I was able to obtain *Quasi una Fantasia*, also in French, *Prisms*, in English, another Brazilian translation of *Dialectic of Enlightenment* and finally the *Aesthetic Theory* in Portuguese.

What will always form an obstacle to the reception of the Aesthetic Theory is not so much its esotericism as its systematic character; the aesthetic of negativity has effectively shown itself to be rigid, Adorno's dubious constructions have proved to be artificial, and his aesthetic judgements betray a hidden traditionalism (ibidem).

In any case, I am not dealing here with criticisms of this kind, which have been very frequent in the Adorno reception.

The second part of the argument – that there is a group of important texts by Adorno which were the object, if not of explicit and conscious censorship, at least of an uncomfortable and hurried reading which placed them in a kind of voluntary oblivion – is similarly linked to my personal experience in that I really read texts normally quoted by others and found in them a much greater complexity than in the vulgate, and some unexpected nuances. And I rounded out the picture with texts that I did not know in the mid-1990s. One might argue that this may derive from my inattention or ignorance, but the simple realization that even today there is still no French translation, as far as I know, of *The Aging of the New Music* – a text that, if translated, would be extremely uncomfortable for the hegemony of the post-serial trend in France – illustrates that it is not merely a question of inattention.²

Indeed, it would have been uncomfortable, at the very least, for the French Boulezians to read, under the prestigious name of Adorno, strong phrases such as “Yet among the intransigent, who would as far as possible like to pursue consequentiality beyond Schönberg, one meets a remarkable mixture of sectarianism and academicism” (ANM: p.101; GS 14: p.149)³ or, even worse, “a blind belief in progress is required not to notice how little progress has been made since the early twenties, how much has been lost, how tame and in many aspects how impoverished most music has become” (ANM: p.96; GS 14: p.144).⁴ And also: “These are school pieces, paradigms. They measure themselves against an invisible canon of the permitted and the forbidden... [...] Already in the first measure the listener senses with resignation that he has been turned

² I have since discovered a French translation: cf. “Le vieillissement de la nouvelle musique” (trans. Michèle Lhomme, Alain Lhomme, Anne Boissière) in: *Rue Descartes*, 23 (1999): pp.113-133.

³ *Bei den Intransigenten jedoch, die womöglich an Konsequenz über Schönberg hinausgehen möchten, stößt man auf eine höchst sonderbare Verbindung von Sektierertum und Akademismus.*

⁴ *Man muß schon einem unbelehrbaren Glauben an den geradlinigen Fortschritt huldigen, um zu überhören, wie wenig seit den frühen zwanziger Jahren fortgeschritten ward, wieviel verlorenging, wie zahm, in vielem auch arm die meiste Musik unterdessen geworden ist.*

over to an infernal machine, which will run its course mercilessly, until fate has completed its cycle and he can breathe again” (*ibid.*: p.112; GS 14: p.162).⁵

On the contrary, IRCAM’s magazine *InHarmoniques* published in 1988 a French version of the article entitled “On the Fetish-Character in Music and the Regression of Listening” actually written in 1938 (F-Ch: pp. 288-317; GS 14: pp.14-50),⁶ but considerably more useful as an authoritative argument for the defensive tactics necessary, in the French context, in face of the attacks launched against Boulez and IRCAM in the 1980s and 90s. This aspect may seem strange to native speakers of English or German, but it is important to realize that French culture was predominant for centuries in Portugal, and only very recently – perhaps during the last two decades – has Anglo-Saxon culture begun to make any impact in Portugal.

Having thus described the situation, I note two things today:

Some of these discourses, entrenched in the vulgate, continue to circulate in society. They cannot be charged exclusively to Adorno, firstly because there echoes in him at times the voice of Schoenberg, and secondly, because there echoes also in Boulez’s writings part of Adorno’s voice. In this respect, one might speak more accurately of a Schönberg/Adorno/Boulez *constellation*.

Each one of these three moments that went to build up the vulgate is particular: The moment of Schoenberg is mainly messianic: someone had to take on this role; it was up to me.

Adorno adds the political and Marxist dimension – particular but Marxist, the Western Marxism of the Frankfurt school – missing in Schönberg, and a belief in the necessary character of the evolution of the world in accordance with historical necessity: “later, when socialism had triumphed”, he states in the celebrated letter to Benjamin on the article “Art in the era of its technical reproductibility”.

Boulez/Stockhausen take away this political dimension essential to Adorno – “this music speaks to them of their miserable condition in the world; this is why they cannot stand it” – and go forward merely with the conviction of the historically necessary character of the evolution of

⁵ *Es sind Schulstücke, Paradigmata. Sie messen sich an einem unsichtbaren Kanon des Erlaubten und Verbotenen... [...] Resigniert merkt der Zuhörer beim ersten Takt, daß er einer Höllenmaschine überantwortet ist, die gnadenlos abläuft, bis das Schicksal sich erfüllt hat und er aufatmen darf.*

⁶ Cf. “Du fétichisme en musique et de la régression de l’audition”, in: *InHarmoniques*, 3 (1988): pp.138-167.

musical language. This is the moment of the immoderate use of the concept of the new, and of scientific jargon as a form of artistic legitimization. Adorno, who, moreover, admired both these composers, had no time for the spirit of the Darmstadt school – sectarian and academic as he says – which sprang up around them.

Some typical phrases of the vulgate were or still are:

1. A historical necessity presides over the evolution of musical material: “Progress means nothing but reaching the meaning of the material in the most advanced state of its historical dialectics” (Adorno, 1930: p.133).⁷
2. Total belief in the exhaustion of tonality;
3. The search for the new and of progress (despite Adorno’s care);
4. Regression of listening as justification for the new place of avant-garde art from 1913 and, especially, from the 2nd avant-garde after 1950;
5. More advanced music, “progressive aspects of jazz at first sight” but if one looks more carefully one understands its reactionary character;
6. Art as non-art, directly connected to the later concept of Lyotard of the unrepresentable;
7. Defence of formalist work on actual musical material against art with explicit political content, such as that of Brecht or Kurt Weil, through the loss of the famous “immanent character” of art;
8. The ideology of “music-itself” based paradoxically on Stravinsky’s formalistic conceptions of the *Poetics of Music* (a fusion which Adorno’s thought obviously does not allow).

Understanding Adorno is not easy. But Wellmer’s phrase that I quoted, “the Aesthetic Theory had a less favourable fate in academic aesthetics of literary theory”, is today no longer applicable. Adorno has been the object of much attention on the part of American and English universities in recent decades, in the wake of cultural studies, of the ideological interest of the feminists Susan McClary and Rose Rosengard Subotnik and of many other theorists, in the realm of the study of the archaeologies of knowledge begun by Michel Foucault.

Much of this material has no place within the range of interests of Adorno himself, but his method (can one speak of this?), stripped or emptied of everything that was Germanocentric or Eurocentric in him,

⁷ *Fortschritt heißt nichts anderes als je und je das Material auf der fortgeschrittensten Stufe seiner geschichtlichen Dialektik ergreifen.*

can be and has been used. But it does not seem to me that it is possible to apply the kind of current reflection and the interest in his thought throughout the world to the social whole in exactly the same way that it was previously applicable to what he wrote and which formed the vulgate. Adorno used to go to Darmstadt, to listen to pieces, to give conferences; he was heard by the composers. Which composers today listen to or participate in such conferences? Can Adorno's degree of irradiation or resonance be the same as before? Can he have achieved the same impact that the Philosophy of New Music had at that time? Can he be achieved now? I do not believe so.

Many composers today reject from the outset the Schoenberg/Adorno/Boulez vulgate. It has become perhaps too easy to accuse Adorno of things that were quite beyond his own responsibility. It is for this reason, I believe, that one may hear the musicologist and contemporary music festival programmer (a model almost extinct, in fact) Harry Halbreich, an important cultural programmer from the 1970s onwards, jointly responsible for this practical hegemony derived directly or indirectly from the vulgate, endeavouring to endorse his own responsibility by saying "Adorno and Stalin are two sides of the same coin".⁸ And, worse still, in the same intellectual direction, writing such things as "Berio, Stockhausen and Penderecki seem to me false values, even imposters, whose very names will be forgotten", as one reads in an open letter by Harry Halbreich included in the second edition of the book published by Benoit Duteurtre (2000: 285-288), *Requiem pour une avant garde*.

On the other hand, the national origins of composers who are regularly present in festivals and programmes have ceased to be almost exclusively French, Germans and Italians, and a few Americans, as was the case until recently. Composers from other European countries are now a frequent presence, but when we read their biographies, the places where they studied and the teachers they had, we see that they had been compelled to enter the cathedrals built by the previous generation of Boulez, Stockhausen, Xenakis and others. Finally, the recent interest, in this area of musical life – the sub-field of contemporary music –, in the music of the former Soviet, Yugoslavian, Korean and Chinese composers, but touching all areas of cultural life (also literature and cinema, for example) seems to me to have two possible meanings: either to show the emptiness (that has meanwhile become apparent) of the long-dominant post-serialist tendency and derivatives, and to find alternatives; or an

⁸ In a conference of European musical Programmers at the Gulbenkian Foundation in Lisbon, 1997.

obvious political opportunism, at times tainted by a barely disguised neo-colonialism and shedding of civilizational responsibility. Certainly, not every case deserves such a hard diagnosis, but I have no doubt of the importance of the factors which I have indicated.

I said before that in the field of contemporary music, the previously united discourse is far more divided. Concerning this, I should like to quote what I wrote in the text for the CD of my opera *Os Dias Levantados*:

There are today two possible forms of fetishism of technique: that of the well constructed and that of the well written, and their current formulas are: "it is beautiful because it is well structured" – an arithmetical fiction against which I have fought all too frequently – or "it is beautiful because it sounds well" – a subjective acoustical fiction. To think that the essential is beyond these formulations comes up against the impossibility of words arriving at the description of an entity – music – which is not entirely caught by them, and places me in a kind of extraterrestriality. The discourses continue, and among them, my own is its known impotence. For that reason I say: in my opinion, the music of Act III, Scene 4 is beautiful. Whoever hears it (now?) may perhaps understand what I should like to say, if I were able to say it (Pinho Vargas, 2004).

If I wrote this, it is because it seems to me undeniable that the empty and anti-intellectual argument as to *what sounds good* has returned with strength, and I believe that it is necessary to go beyond these two opposing and extreme ways, in the bad sense, of thinking about and making music. The subjectivity of a composer's work – the famous Adornian subjective moment – must not be reduced to this poor formulation.

The second conclusion is this: where it seems to me that the discourse derived from the Adornian vulgate survives most strongly is not now limited to the field of contemporary music and its festivals, but rather to the field of journalistic criticism, especially in those subcategories that have emerged in the meantime, the pop and rock journals and newspaper supplements. In particular, the followers of various trends in avant-garde rock use a kind of Adornian manichaeism to stigmatize someone or to justify their predilections. Verbal violence and absolutism of values are managed in a way which recalls Adorno's diabolical virtuosity. This is something that Adorno would hardly have put up with: seeing his arguments vigorously used to defend music he detested.

On the question of translation

In *Essay as form*, Adorno argues that to approach a particular problem by means of an essay implies the creation of a network of possibilities of analysis, and it is in the intersections between the various utterances with which we hedge the subject around that we may arrive at various points of view, and thereby try to catch evanescent reality.

I have spent a good part of this paper discussing the translation of texts, their importance for their resonance in the social whole.

George Steiner (1998: 15-23) says that when a language ends, the world becomes poorer. He derives this conviction from the prominent position that translation occupies in his work: on the one hand, translation as the discovery of “visions of the world” that each language brings with it; on the other hand, the conviction that “translation is, formally and pragmatically, implicit in any act of communication, in the emission and reception of all modes of meaning, whether in the widest semiotic sense or in the most specifically verbal exchanges. Understanding is deciphering. Understanding a meaning is translation”.

I speak of this not with provocative irony in the absence of simultaneous translation in this conference⁹ – though this is an important aspect – but I think more and more of the necessity of a *translation* of the musics which come from the countries outside the dominant centre of western culture. This has to do with the question of the canon and of its establishment, whether as a group of works normally part of the repertory, or as a group of works imbued with an exemplary symbolic value as compositional models – two aspects which do not always coincide – and with the more diffuse canonical practice in the sub-field of contemporary music. I do not know how this new practice of translation might function in a global framework in which hegemonies are maintained even when the opposite seems to be the case. But simply thinking about this, formulating it as a problem, may perhaps change the ideological framework upon which our perception of the world is based. Therefore I continue.

I believe that Adorno did not translate. The music about which he wrote, and above all the music he liked was almost exclusively German or Austrian music, music of the German language. The music of which he spoke and which he did not like were, very often, musics that “spoke”

⁹ International Conference *Expression, Truth, Authenticity: On Adorno's Theory of Music and Musical Performance*, organized by CESEM at Universidade Nova de Lisboa, November 2003.

Russian, French or English. It does not seem to me that this aspect has been sufficiently analysed: the languages musicians speak, the visions of the world they carry with them.

In the current phase of paradigmatic transition, the need for translation has been well emphasized in many areas of the humanities. But in music this claim seems absurd. Is not music, after all, the famous “universal language”? Even though this common place seems unmoveable, the simple fact that the majority of those here present who are not Portuguese has very probably never heard Portuguese music – one exception or another will confirm the rule – proves the point the fact that Portuguese music is not *translated*. Steiner points out that the importance of the discovery of Latin-American literature by García Marquez, Jorge Luis Borges, Mario Vargas Llosa and others in the United States was greatly facilitated by the existence in America of good translators of Spanish. And he suggests that, on the other hand, the relative lack of translations of Portuguese and Brazilian writers has to do with the absence of good translators. In this case the importance of translation is literal.

In music, the question of translation must be seen in a metaphorical way, even if the result is the same: without translation we stand before the silence of *a* music. But even if a music is *translated* on this primary level – if it is played and heard regularly – it is still subject to erroneous readings, as Richard Taruskin (1997) so admirably shows in his book *Defining Russia Musically*. Music requires an effort at full understanding. Usually, musicological examination is strongly marked by the cultural context of the writer. It is this that makes it easy, in a prestigious publication such as *The New Grove*, to affirm that Tchaikovsky has no sense of symphonic development, or that Stravinsky used Russian folk music, without having gone to the trouble to check, as Taruskin has showed us.

It is the vision of the world of the writer, surreptitiously infiltrated into pseudo-scientific criteria of musical analysis, which superimposes itself upon the object analysed, on its particular insertion in a different time and space. Geography has been the science most despised by western musicologists clouded by old and sedimented practices of stylistic history, or exemplary biographies and, more recently, “scientific” musical analysis.

Interest in musical exoticism was the phenomenon that followed the new phase of European colonialism established at the end of the 19th century, just as the “discovery” of composers from the former Soviet Union was chronologically parallel to *perestroika* and the dismantling of

the Soviet empire. Current interest in eastern composers at what is left of the contemporary music festivals still raises a question: which of the two factors of globalization is at work? The integration of the new, via genuine interest, because they are different, or an unconscious method of *showing* in order to maintain the ability to select, the capacity of including/excluding and the power to disseminate?

There is no reply, and possibly no alternative on the horizon. This subject is very complex and deserves, without a doubt, further study and consideration. But I would like to see Adorno analyse this phenomenon. An old man of 100 years of age, if he's still lucid, is usually a fund of wisdom.

Ethics and Aesthetics in the Musical Writings of Theodor W. Adorno

Jean Paul Olive

Because they question the very foundations of social equilibrium and the postulation of a consensus on culture, Adorno's positions are known for their highly provocative character. The philosopher has at the same time been reproached for tending to form a system in a vacuum while he himself worked to combat any systematic thought, but also, on the contrary, of putting forward one of the most elusive of analyses in the complexity of its writing and a method that is fragmentary by choice. Even amongst those who have studied his writings with interest, some have expressed reservations concerning a development – the famous negative dialectics – which criticizes only negatively, never saying, or hardly at all, what would be good, a procedure that weaves its motives in such a constricted fashion that they sometimes seem to work against its own transmission.

However, it is possible that the irritation provoked by Adorno's writings has its origins in precisely the reason for which nothing is ever fundamentally solved, that is to say, the persistence of suffering as a central category of his philosophy. This suffering, Adorno reminds us, is above all physical, perceptible, and that "It is the somatic element's survival, in knowledge, as the unrest that makes knowledge move, the unassuaged unrest that reproduces itself in the advancement of knowledge" (ND: p.203: GS 6: p.203).¹ This suffering, of which we receive deformed images daily, often emptied of their import, is far from having disappeared, thanks to the progress of modernity; the philosopher suspects, rather, that it is the object of a degeneration on the part of society, a degeneration taken as far as the level of rigid psycho-social structures, sometimes summed up in the expression "context of blindness", because, for Adorno, the invisibility of repression tends to become one with its violence.

¹ *In der Erkenntnis überlebt es als deren Unruhe, die sie in Bewegung bringt und in ihrem Fortgang unbesänftigt sich reproduziert...*

To leave this blindness behind presupposes the recognition of this suffering as an initial gesture, because, as Adorno clearly states in *Negative Dialectics*, “The smallest trace of senseless suffering in the empirical world belies all the identitarian philosophy that would talk us out of that suffering: ‘While there is a beggar, there is a myth’” (ND: p.203: GS 6: p.203).² And what is still more provocative is that Adorno is not content with isolating suffering as a somehow empirical fact in reality, but he discerns it also in the very process of the constitution of modern western person’s identity, lodged in the very heart of that which is the basis for knowledge: the relation between subject and object.

Thus, as Bouharima Uttara (1999: p.16) has written, “suffering is lodged at the heart of the cognitive process such as it appears in idealism in general, and in particular in Hegelianism, which sought identity between identity and non-identity”. The movement of reason, while tending to liberate man from myth, establishes itself at the same time as a movement of domination, and results in the full power of the concept which does violence to the object, because in absorbing the particular, it denies it and encloses itself within abstraction. From this point of view, the movement of the concept is, with Adorno, deeply connected to that of the relationship of exchange that in the end governs society, and to reification. Such a relationship of domination is profoundly unbalanced; it provokes pain on the part of the object which is definitively denied in that which makes its singularity as much as it does suffering on the part of the subject, recovered and ignored; in *Dialectics of Enlightenment*, Adorno and Horkheimer had already arrived at this conclusion: “world domination over nature turns against the thinking subject itself; nothing is left of it except that ever-unchanging ‘I think’, which must accompany all my conceptions. Both subject and object are nullified. (...) The equation of mind and world is finally resolved, but only in the sense that both sides cancel out” (DA: p. 20; GS 3: p.43).³

Thus, the utopian horizon of Adornian thought is situated in a hypothetical transcending of this relationship of suffering: “Were speculation concerning the state of reconciliation allowed”, he writes, “then it would be impossible to conceive that state as either the

² *Die kleinste Spur sinnlosen Leidens in der erfahrenen Welt straft die gesamte Identitätsphilosophie Lügen, die es der Erfahrung ausreden möchte: ‘Solange es noch einen Bettler gibt, solange gibt es noch Mythos’.*

³ *...die Weltherrschaft über Natur wendet sich gegen das denkende Subjekt selbst, nichts wird von ihm übriggelassen, als eben jenes ewig gleich Ich denke, daß alle meine Vorstellungen muß begleiten können. (...) Die Gleichung von Geist und Welt geht am Ende auf, aber nur so, daß ihre beiden Seiten gegeneinander gekürzt werden.*

undifferentiated unity of subject and object or their hostile antithesis: rather it would be the communication of what is differentiated. Only then would the concept of communication, as an objective concept, come into its own.” Only then does it seem possible to grasp what a pacific relationship between subject and object would be; peace is then defined by the philosopher as “the state of differentiation without domination, with the differentiated participating in each other” (CM: p.247; GS 10.2: p.743).⁴ We are still very far from such a state, and Adorno detects, rather, during the course of the 20th century, an almost irrepressible social tendency to move ever further from it. He would also, in his philosophical and sociological writings, but also in his musicological work, make an effort always to link the question of suffering to that of truth: “The need to lend a voice to suffering is a condition of all truth. For suffering is objectivity that weighs upon the subject; its most subjective experience, its expression, is objectively conveyed” (ND: p.17f.; GS 6: p.29).⁵

In order to consider this suffering, the accent is placed on the question of mediation; in *Critical Models*, Adorno shows that one cannot conceive the category of subject in that of object, no more, indeed, than the inverse. He adds: “the Ψεύδος of separation is manifested in their being mutually mediated, object by subject, and even more and differently, subject by object. As soon as it is fixed without mediation, the separation becomes ideology, its normal form. Mind then arrogates to itself the status of being absolutely independent – which it is not: mind’s claim to independence announces its claim to domination. Once radically separated from the object, subject reduces the object to itself; subject swallows object, forgetting how much it is object itself” (CM: p.246; GS 10.2: p.742).⁶ For

⁴ *Wäre Spekulation über den Stand der Versöhnung erlaubt, so ließe in ihm weder die ununterschiedene Einheit von Subjekt und Objekt noch ihre feindselige Antithetik sich vorstellen; eher die Kommunikation des Unterschiedenen. Dann erst käme der Begriff von Kommunikation, als objektiver, an seine Stelle. (...) Friede ist der Stand eines Unterschiedenen ohne Herrschaft, in dem das Unterschiedene teilhat aneinander.*

⁵ *Das Bedürfnis, Leiden beredt werden zu lassen, ist Bedingung aller Wahrheit. Denn Leiden ist Objektivität, die auf dem Subjekt lastet; was es als sein Subjektivstes erfährt, sein Ausdruck, ist objektiv vermittelt.*

⁶ *...das Ψεύδος der Trennung jedoch äußert sich darin, daß sie wechselseitig durcheinander vermittelt sind, Objekt durch Subjekt, mehr noch und anders Subjekt durch Objekt. Zur Ideologie, geradezu ihrer Normalform, wird die Trennung, sobald sie ohne Vermittlung fixiert ist. Dann usurpiert der Geist den Ort des absolut Selbständigen, das er nicht ist: im Anspruch seiner Selbständigkeit meldet sich der herrschaftliche. Einmal radikal vom Objekt getrennt, reduziert Subjekt bereits das Objekt auf sich; Subjekt verschlingt Objekt, indem es vergißt, wie sehr es selber Objekt ist.*

this reason, Adorno's attention, rather than focussing on one or other of the two poles of the relationship, is drawn to the mediation of the two terms, which is, in his eyes, the heart of the problem, for in it resides the suffering relationship, the "severing of consciousness". It is when endeavouring to elucidate the mediations hidden under the concept's thought concerning identity that the philosopher expects, in this intervening period that constitutes the mediation, to make another come about, quite singularly, the particular which denies the concept.

The fact that such importance is accorded to mediation leads to the aesthetic question. Adorno finds in art and aesthetics his favourite field, precisely because works of art are not objects like others, and the relationships which art promotes constitute a particular terrain; he insists on this fact in numerous passages, and notably in the first introduction to *Aesthetic Theory*: "The knowledge of artworks is guided by their own cognitive constitution: They are the form of knowledge that is not knowledge of an object. This paradox is also the paradox of artistic experience" (AT: p.440; GS 7: p.516).⁷ In addition, one might advance the idea that there is always in Adorno a veiled desire to show, even if *a contrario*, what a "just life" would be, since art and philosophy (at least that which Adorno defends) find there their common horizon and their complicity beyond that which separates them; neither one nor the other should be normative and prescriptive *a fortiori*, neither one nor the other should behave as though this "just life" were already present, within arm's reach, but both should have, rather, the vocation of allowing to appear with their flaws, negatively, each in its own fashion, which would be this "just life", while at the same time the immanent tensions of the question crystallize in them.

One may recognize in this group of tensions the manifestation of the relationship between the concept and the particular. In this sense, though the (universal) spirit is certainly a component of these works, it is not the only one, since for Adorno "spirit is strictly one aspect of artworks; granted, it is that aspect that makes the artifact art, yet it is not in any way present without what is opposed to it. Spirit no more devours its opposite than history has known pure artworks that have achieved the identity of spirit and nonspirit" (AT: p.437; GS 7: p.512).⁸ And certainly, what is

⁷ *Die Erkenntnis der Kunstwerke folgt eigener erkennender Beschaffenheit: sie sind die Weise von Erkenntnis, welche nicht Erkennen von Objekt ist. Solche Paradoxie ist auch die der künstlerischen Erfahrung.*

⁸ *[Geist] ist [...] in den Kunstwerken bloß ein Moment; das zwar, was sie zur Kunst macht, doch gar nicht präsent ohne das ihm Entgegengesetzte. Er verzehrt es so wenig, wie die Geschichte kaum je reine: Identität von Geist und Nichtgeistigem.*

opposed to the spirit is not, for Adorno, the simple natural element (which he says is a limit), but rather materials “preformed historically and socially”, making up this heterogeneity that resists the unity of works and without which the works lose their truth content. When, in the first introduction to *Aesthetic Theory*, he recalls the central place of dissonance for aesthetic reflection as well as for the history of art, he connects this question of dissonance to that of the “suffering that, by virtue of the unity of [the artistic] process, finds its way to language rather than disappearing” (AT: p.437; GS 7: p.512).⁹ A little further on, he even borrows from Hegel a hypothetical reason (the most pertinent, according to him) for the survival of art even when its death is envisaged, and this reason is none other than “the continuation of needs, mute in themselves, that await the expression that artworks fulfill by proxy” (AT: p.437; GS 7: p.512).¹⁰

In the realm of artistic activity, it is probable that music occupies once more a very particular place. Referring to Hegel’s approach to music, Adorno posits in a very singular fashion the relationship between subject and object: Hegel’s subjectivism, he says, “is so total, his idea of spirit so all-pervasive, that the differentiation of spirit from its other, and thus the determination of that other, does not come into play in his aesthetics” (AT: p.450; GS 7: 528).¹¹ In his writing on Mahler, Adorno touches on this question again, showing how, in his opinion, musical interiority is not so much the expression of a “pure” internal content, but rather, by an experience of the second degree, the assimilation of external reality. For him, musical categories are not “those of the simple subject turned in on itself: attributed to the subject, they remain those of the world” (*Mahler*, GS 13: p.219).¹² Accordingly, in one of these provocative reflections of which he holds the secret, Adorno writes that “all great music is carried away by madness; it always carries an identification of the inside on the outside, but madness has no hold over the result” (*ibid.*). Music is thus for him the single place where relationships between subject and object may express themselves differently.

⁹ *Dadurch hat sie [die Kunst] teil an dem Leiden, das vermöge der Einheit ihres Prozesses zur Sprache tastet, nicht verschwindet.*

¹⁰ *...den Fortbestand der Nöte selber, die auf jenen Ausdruck warten, den für die wortlosen stellvertretend die Kunstwerke vollbringen.*

¹¹ *Sein [Hegels] Subjektivismus ist so total, sein Geist so sehr alles, daß dessen Unterscheidung von seinem Anderen, und damit die Bestimmung jenes Anderen, bei ihm in der Ästhetik nicht zur Geltung kommt.*

¹² *Weder verwechselt sie [die Musik] die Welt, [...] noch sind ihre Kategorien losgelassene des bloßen Subjekts: zugeeignet bleiben sie der Welt.*

If one may legitimately qualify the positions debated above as ethical, and if, since greatest reference has been made to it, the question of art is far from being different for Adorno to that of a “just life”, one may attempt to detect in the philosopher’s musical approach a certain number of elements which allow one to follow this train of thought in his musical writings, especially through four central categories: tone, otherness, distance and the relationship between detail and totality.

Thus, before examining more precisely what in Mahler and Berg seems to interest Adorno, one must reflect upon the question of tone. In his two works on Mahler and Berg, indeed, Adorno devotes an important chapter to this notion of tone. “It is the tone which is new”, he writes on the subject of Mahler. Because tone, one is given to understand, is personal, and irreplaceable; everything leads one to think that, faced with the dissipation of musical language in personal styles that Adorno notes during the 1960s, this category moves to the front line in the absence of a common code, and also given the question of the neutralization of material. Diametrically opposed to style – which obeys conventional obligations, which is a gesture of submission to cultural conventions – tone is singularity itself, placed within a work; Adorno detects there the trace of the particular, which cannot be other than it is, irrecoverable. Tone is not, however, reducible to the mere subjectivity of the composer; the amalgam would be too easy, too practical. Thus, Adorno notes that tone, in Mahler, results “from intrusive elements affecting the intact tradition” (*Mahler*, GS 13: p.173);¹³ it is like a kind of “minor language”, perhaps in the sense in which Deleuze found it in Kafka. The intrusive elements in question are certainly of the order of objectivity; they are from the extant, but in other respects, it is the composer’s singular use of them – incorporating them in his own writing – that leads them to become a tone. Thus, the relationship between the minor and major modes, the simple opposition of which had been reduced to the level of an over-used convention in Mahler’s time, is invested in his music with a new energy.

In Berg, it is the image of disappearance which confers upon his music its singular tone; there also, as with Mahler, tone is not the expressive manifestation of an “interiority” closed in upon itself, still less a message that the music is given to transmit, but, by means of an immense traversal of the mimesis of every act of writing, it is the very law that presides over the ordering of the music. In this sense, during the period of nominalism, tone becomes a central mediatory category for the philosopher; perhaps tone is essentially the actual mediating force which

¹³ *Der Ton stellt sich her [...] durch Einsprengsel, die das unangefochten Herkömmliche affizieren.*

allows the particular, that which is unique, to communicate with others – on the condition that they agree to understand it – and thereby attain, without reduction, the universal, while conserving its singularity.

From the first chapter of the book on Mahler, there is evident a character which seems for Adorno to be the basis of the writing: rupture. By means of the rupture, the rent that Mahler makes in the musical material, he shows by gesture that an entire life's experience awaits and that the long-awaited happiness will finally be attained. In fact, it is the tangible manifestation in music of what Adorno elsewhere calls the Other, of that alterity so well repressed by the identitary thought which has invaded consciousness: "If all music, from the first note, promises that which will be other, the rupture of the veil, so his symphonies aim finally at no longer missing it, at putting it literally in front of the eyes" (*Mahler*, GS 13: p.153).¹⁴

The Other, considered as that which escapes the closed system, as an incommensurable opening, is the core of *Negative Dialectics*: "The world's course is not absolutely conclusive, nor is absolute despair; rather, despair is its conclusiveness. However void every trace of otherness in it, however much all happiness is marred by revocability: in the breaks that belie identity, entity is still pervaded by the ever-broken pledges of that otherness. All happiness is but a fragment of the entire happiness men are denied, and are denied by themselves" (ND: p.404; GS 6: p.396).¹⁵

From the First Symphony, Mahler is aware of the complexity of the problem: as a manifestation, the Mahlerian breach remains entangled with the world of appearance, and, in sum, this first breach is but a simple fanfare. In addition, according to Adorno, Mahler's writing may also be understood as the attempt to pull away from this contradiction without renouncing the initial aim. While the fanfares persist in the symphonies, sometimes taking on the appearance of glorious chorales clothed in the sonorities of brass, the composer has nevertheless understood that the breach requires its own sublimation, and that this happens by means of its mediation; in other words, the breach becomes a dynamic process by the

¹⁴ *Verheißt alle Musik mit ihrem ersten Ton, was anders wäre, das Zerreißen des Schleiers, so möchten sein Symphonien endlich es nicht mehr versagen, es buchstäblich vor Augen stellen...*

¹⁵ *Nicht absolut geschlossen ist der Weltlauf, auch nicht die absolute Verzweiflung; diese ist vielmehr seine Geschlossenheit. So hinfällig in ihm alle Spuren des Anderen sind; so sehr alles Glück durch seine Widerruflichkeit entstellt ist, das Seiende wird doch in den Brüchen, welche die Identität Lügen strafen, durchsetzt von den stets wieder gebrochenen Versprechungen jenes Anderen. Jegliche Glück ist Fragment des ganzen Glücks, das den Menschen sich versagt und das sie sich versagen.*

fact that the whole form will be organized around it. In order to abandon what was prosaic in it, what was literal, the breach then enters into a dialectic relationship with the whole form. Thus, in the Finale of the 6th Symphony, just before the last return of the introduction and the coda, the episode that takes up once again a motif from the chorale gives the feeling that a gigantic monument is being raised up to the skies; but it has lost all its naïveté in that one may recognize in it its constituent elements. It is as becoming, from what has already been, that the breach exists, then, and no longer as positive reality, as fixed in itself. Furthermore, the episode rushes into the coda, wholly negative, tragic, revealing that it was nothing but a vision. This vision, however, is interpreted by Adorno as the appearance of the Other in its truth, a sign of the Mahlerian revolt against what is simply there, and which tends to claim that it is the whole.

The problem of alterity or otherness is also not absent from the work of Alban Berg, as the operas *Wozzeck* and *Lulu* amply demonstrate. But this problem may assume various forms, and I shall aim here to discover this through an element whose discretion should not mask its importance: the question of tact. In *Minima moralia*, Adorno devotes an important paragraph to tact, recalling that Goethe had undertaken to present it as “the saving accommodation between alienated human beings” (MM: p.35; GS 4: p.38).¹⁶ Tact, a relationship simultaneously protective and critical of threatened conventions, is, according to Adorno, “the discrimination of differences. It consists of conscious deviations.” (MM: p.37; GS 4: p.40).¹⁷ The question of tact may easily be enlarged to include the way in which men express themselves, and Adorno, in another passage from *Minima moralia*, makes clear reference to this: “The direct statement without divagations, hesitations, or reflections, that gives the other the facts full in the face, already has the form and timbre of the command issued under Fascism by the dumb to the silent” (MM: p.42; GS: p.46).¹⁸ Conversely, delicacy and circumspection, which take care of otherness, of the difference of the other, arise from an attitude marked by tact. Such a development is observed by Adorno in Berg, in his way of approaching material, in that which concerns the new as well as the conventions and idioms of the past.

From the Sonata Opus 1 for piano, Adorno shows how Berg introduces sounds built on fourths, new material that is distinct from the

¹⁶ ...die rettende Auskunft zwischen den entfremdeten Menschen...

¹⁷ Takt ist eine Differenzbestimmung. Er besteht in wissenden Abweichungen.

¹⁸ Das direkte Wort, das ohne Weiterungen, ohne Zögern, ohne Reflexion dem andern die Sache ins Gesicht sagt, hat bereits Form und Klang des Kommandos, das unterm Faschismus von Stummen an Schweigende ergeht.

usual sound of thirds. Unlike Schoenberg, who, in his Chamber Symphony, introduced fourths at a stroke, from the introduction and in a triumphant tone, Berg inserts this new sonority in the musical material eschewing all violence, preparing this new sound using the logic of the language of the past. Another interesting example is provided by the second of the *Altenberg-Lieder*. This very short song builds its unique tension on a central momentum, which is in fact a simple dominant 9th chord, a chord typical of the romantic expectation which demands its resolution. Berg is certainly aware of this, but he plays on this expectation, which in fact finishes in silence, before the second part of the Lied begins. In addition, the chord is not given as a single block, as an object in itself, but is mysteriously built up by means of the interplay of multiple orchestral voices. Thus one can see that the language of the past is interrogated critically, but not violently, with the respect that all sedimented material deserves. Such an attitude would become the rule with Berg, and nothing could appear without being previously prepared.

There is a category which accompanies tact and which is central to critical theory: it is the category of difference, of distance, the movement which allows thought to be a reflection on the object, but also, at the same time, a reflection on itself, a self-reflection. This distance does not have the function of separating, of closing thought in upon itself, but rather to assist the comprehension of the mechanisms of mediation between subject and object. Adorno points this out in *Minima moralia*: “Distance is not a safety-zone, but a field of tension. It is manifested not in relaxing the claim of ideas to truth, but in delicacy and fragility of thinking. Vis-à-vis positivism it is fitting neither to insist on being right nor to put on airs of distinction, but rather to prove, by criticism of knowledge, the impossibility of a coincidence between the idea and what fulfils it” (MM: p.127; GS 4: p.144).¹⁹

Distance does not mean coldness: it is bourgeois thought that is cold, since it instrumentalizes all that it dominates. On the contrary, distance aims to make things appear in their mediations, it has the virtue of unveiling that respects what things are. Adorno insists on this: “The pure unreflective act is violation projected on to the starry sky above. But in the long, contemplative look that fully discloses people and things, the urge towards the object is always deflected, reflected. Contemplation

¹⁹ *Die Distanz ist keine Sicherheitszone sondern ein Spannungsfeld. Sie manifestiert sich nicht sowohl im Nachlassen des Wahrheitsanspruches der Begriffe als in der Zartheit und Zerbrechlichkeit, womit gedacht wird. Dem Positivismus gegenüber ziemt weder Rechthaberei noch Vornehmheit, sondern der erkenntniskritische Nachweis der Unmöglichkeit einer Koinzidenz zwischen dem Begriff und dem ihn Erfüllenden.*

without violence, the source of all the joy of truth, presupposes that he who contemplates does not absorb the object into himself: a distanced nearness” (MM: pp.89f.; GS 4: p.100).²⁰

It is by means of this category of difference, distance, that Adorno’s interest in Mahler’s very singular way of integrating heterogeneous materials acquires its meaning. As is well known, marches, fanfares, *Waltzer* and *Ländler* have a central place in the symphonies; if these elements refer to popular material, supposed to be more spontaneous, closer to nature, Mahler evokes them with distance: by their deformations, by their integration, he shows how these materials, far from being natural, are mediated right through. Because Mahler, Adorno tells us, knows that mediation is universal, the fragments built up are formed by this mediation; without this mediation, it is myth that would win. Also, the numerous fragments of popular music in the symphonies bear the mark of reification; but it is a reification that is acknowledged, observed: their banality is thus the object of a second work, which mixes strangeness with their used and very well-known banality.

At the same time, this work on used and degraded material is an attack against false authenticity: in showing the stigmata of usage, of reification, Mahler reveals just how these materials include a part of suffering. This suffering is not hidden or rejected by the composer; rather, he makes it speak with a heightened power. In spite of certain similarities, such an attitude is diametrically opposed to that of Stravinsky. Stravinsky empties the language used of its suffering, of its expression, in order to recompose a style, to hide within it and play with it. Mahler takes the style apart in order to speak language once again. He arrives there by empowering the “scraps” of memory that culture has abandoned: “each symphony poses the question: how, from the ruins of the reified music world, may a living totality come into being” (*Mahler*, GS 13: p.189).²¹

Also at the same time, Mahler struggles against the universal character of the great bourgeois music and its tendency towards abstraction: Adorno emphasized that in art as in reality, the bourgeoisie has not been the humanity it has proclaimed. The intrusion of inferior

²⁰ *Die reine Tathandlung ist die auf den gestirnten Himmel über uns projizierte Schändung. Der lange, kontemplative Blick jedoch, dem Menschen und Dinge erst sich entfalten, ist immer der, in dem der Drang zum Objekt gebrochen, reflektiert ist. Gewaltlose Betrachtung, von der alles Glück der Wahrheit kommt, ist gebunden daran, daß der Betrachtende nicht das Objekt sich einverleibt: Nähe am Distanz.*

²¹ *Jede Mahlersche Symphonie fragt, wie aus den Trümmern der musikalischen Dingwelt lebendige Totalität werden kann.*

materials into the symphonic form, these dregs of culture, would therefore have several functions: to destroy the harmonious and almost abstract appearance of the musical totality, to reveal the use and the reification of language by the divergence that troubles the listener, to take in hand the suffering that, without this, would be repressed by aesthetic form. But these elements have yet another function: by the multiplicity of characters they present, by the energy they contain, an energy connected to situations of sedimented experience, these materials place music in a ferment. It is upon them that Mahler leans for support, to a lesser degree, in order to reinvest the world of experience, but at a distance, in symphonic form.

One may easily see comparable processes at work in Berg: *Waltzer* and *Ländler*, scraps of marches, are found regularly in numerous works. The status of quotation, in this case, bears witness to the distance with which he treats the materials inserted within his music. In the *Lyric Suite*, in the Violin Concerto, and also in the operas, quotation is present, but it is always the object of a re-reading, of a placing at a distance which gives it its content and facilitates its integration. Quotation is never used for its own sake, but reinterpreted; it is not taken up greedily in order to be used, but lines of flight are proposed which contain the object, which palpitates within it and seen through reflection. And it is perhaps in this distant attitude that quotation, in Berg as in Mahler, is modern, and not postmodern as is sometimes said.

The same attitude is evident as far as the treatment of Büchner's play in Berg's *Wozzeck* is concerned. The music is neither the illustration of the drama, not an accompaniment, but, at a hundred years' distance, is an extremely elaborate rereading of the play, intended to salvage its modernity. The music brings to light "the passionate concern with which it in some way thinks over the slightest comma in the texture of the play", interpreting the hollows and the silences of the text (*Berg*, GS 13: p.429).²² This distance is filled with compassion, as Adorno understood when he wrote of Berg's music: "[Berg's music] passes with a hand of infinite goodness over the fragment [Büchner's play], appeasing and polishing all that is excrescence, surplus, in it; wants to console the text for its own despair" (*ibid.*).²³

²² *Die leidenschaftliche Sorgfalt, mit der sie gleichsam das letzte Komma in ihrer Textur bedenkt, bring ans Licht, wie geschlossen das Offene, wie vollendet das Unvollendet bei Büchner ist.*

²³ *Sie gleitet mit unbeschreiblich gütiger Hand über das Fragment, besänftigt und glättet alles Herausstehenden, Herausstechende darin, möchte die Dichtung trösten über die eigene Verzweiflung.*

Identitary thinking, by its universalist vocation, through the relationship of exchange, and the concept, tends to form a system, a totality. Negative dialectics, as formulated by Adorno, are opposed to such a tendency, even if in their pessimism, they have themselves the same tendency to recognize that such a thought has already invaded the consciousness of man. In the postface to *Negative Dialectics*, Hans-Günter Holl (2001: p.415) clearly shows what is the only strategy defended by Adorno: “The ‘ruse’ of negative dialectics is in turning, by means of the mediation of the subject, the constraint of thought and closed totality against itself, to smash the identity of the concept in confronting the identity of the concept”. And the force which, for Adorno, seems to be the only one able modestly to lead such a resistance is a force which is linked to the possibility of tangible experience, what philosophy calls “the non-identical”. Wherever it can, between the gaps in the system, between the fragments that identity wishes to weld together forever, negative dialectics aim to make the particular appear, the particular in its most tangible manifestation.

For Adorno, the great music of the West shares the same defects as this identitary thought, and in the 1960s, he warned the practitioners of “new music” against such a tendency, to which a dominant rationalism could lead. The question of relationships between details and totality in aesthetic form is also central. If Adorno, in his musical approach, is so attached to analysis to the point of making it an obligatory passage for aesthetic understanding, it is because analysis aims at the explosion of appearance under its form of totality. In the introduction to the chapter on the works of Berg, the philosopher comes back to this fact: “Analysis (...) takes its legitimacy from the ‘composite’ aspect which no organized music can do without, and which is engraved much more deeply in the canonized artworks of the tradition than the dominant ‘religion of art’ would wish. (...) so correcting the semblance, created by these works, the semblance of their being like absolutely pure figures, of the absolute precedence of the whole and its flowing before that, from which it is brought together. As destruction of this semblance, analysis is critical” (*Berg*, GS 13: pp.370f.).²⁴

This destructive aspect of analysis must of course, says Adorno, be

²⁴ *Analysis [...] hat ihr Daseinsrecht an dem Moment des Zusammengesetztseins, das keine organisierte Musik von sich abzuschütteln vermag und das gerade in den kanonisierten Werken der Tradition unvergleichlich viel weiter reicht, als der herrschenden Kunstreligion genehm ist. [...]... der Schein berichtigt, den sie hervorbringen, eben der ihres absolut gestalthaften Seins, der absoluten Vorgängigkeit des Ganzen und seines Flusses vor dem, woraus er sich fügt. Als Zerstörung jenes Scheins ist Analyse kritisch.*

compensated for by a second reflection which considers the organization and the content of the work. This question of detail and totality would itself require an examination which it is impossible to undertake here. I will limit myself to pointing out the way in which Adorno places this question at the centre of his two works on Mahler and Berg. With Mahler, it is tension that persists amongst the concrete elements of composition, and the general form which claim his attention. Indeed, throughout the work, Adorno insists on the presence of heterogeneous elements which are in some sense swept along by the musical flow; at the same time, he also insists on the fact that these elements carry their own energy, their own characters, and that these are never annulled by the concern for the global form. On the contrary, Mahler, who seems to gather them, actually super-activates this energy proper to detail by technical means: variants, “melodization”, instrumentation. Such an energy rebounds on the form and pushes it towards change. Thus, detail, because it is characteristic, gathers up the meaning, and Mahler stands against the tradition of the great music which tended to diminish its importance. But on the other hand, the details are not there merely to link things together, and the form, which itself becomes characteristic by the action of the details, is no longer an abstract schema, a kind of musical concept, but a concrete form that vibrates for its duration and becomes a field of tensions. These tensions, insists Adorno, are not resolved by Mahler by means of a falsely harmonious surface, but they continue to be vibrant, they crackle in the musical flow.

With Berg, things happened differently, and the category which effects the relationship between detail and totality is certainly that which gives the work its title: miniscule transition. The care with which Berg endeavours to integrate each new element in his music – sometimes with an insane obsession for detail – is nothing else but an infinite care, with which he reflected singular detail in a totality conceived without violence. How is this totality conceived without violence? In the gesture of the composer, who gathers up every heterogeneous element, and, in dialogue with them, gives them access to unity. But this unity has nothing to do with the unity of identity, it is not given *a priori*, but is a unity of the multiple. In addition, this unity which may become monumental in certain works, is not presented as solid, fixed and eternal, but is like a constellation on the edge of nothingness, always about to dissolve, to disappear. Adorno is not mistaken, he clearly recognizes in it the same gesture that initiates negative dialectics when he writes: “Berg’s tendency to fade, to suppress himself, is at its deepest level the same as the will to escape from simple life, in arriving at clarity and awareness; and the return of the past, the powerless abandonment to the inevitable,

contribute no less to that tendency as a progressive spiritualization” (*Berg*, GS 13: p.334).²⁵

“Progressive spiritualization”: Adorno’s expression is important, because if true writing is true experience, then, as is shown during the course of these two works, the last works are the receptacle of this reflected experience. As with Beethoven, Adorno concentrates particularly on the last works of Mahler and Berg, and he undoubtedly does this because there is a profound community of thought with his last writings.

The disenchanted world has not stopped turning, and its surface has meanwhile become covered with a humanity made up of individuals who have missed the opportunity to become subjects. *Das Lied von der Erde*, the Ninth Symphony, the Concerto to the memory of an angel, the opera *Lulu*, these four works were created by means of what Adorno calls “the long gaze”, a gaze turned compassionately both towards the past and also towards the future, across a desert. It is the traversal of reification, the traversal of the internal desert, nonetheless overpopulated by commodities. The pentatonic motifs in *Das Lied von der Erde* speak of a distant world while showing us that it is ours, the Ninth Symphony makes the interval of the second an eternal dialogue, a sigh become a universal language that rediscovers in the Andante the accents of the singular. As for the unfathomable *Lulu*, her animal song – Adorno speaks of birds and lizards – but a song which is also instrumentalized, “tamed by the genius of man”, draws by means of enchanted sex the figure of a nature at once irresistible and victim. This nature, today completely socialized, is certainly ours, but not in the sense of mere possession. Perhaps, for Adorno, the elucidation of this nature ought to be the only concern of reason. And if Adorno is so severe in his musical choices, it is perhaps because for him, music, without a concept, is identified with what is awaiting this moment of clarity, while trying in vain to decipher it for human beings by means of its hieroglyphics.

²⁵ *Bergs Drang zum Sich-selbst-Tilgen, Sich-selbst-Auslöschung ist im innersten eins mit dem Drang, durch Erhellung, Bewußtwerdung dem bloßen Leben sich zu entwinden, und die Wiederkehr des Gewesenen, gewaltloses Eingeständnis des Unentrinnbaren, trägt dazu nicht weniger bei als fortschreitende Vergeistigung.*

The Value of Transgression and Disorder: Richard Strauss in the Light of Adorno's Theory of Music

Paula Gomes Ribeiro

"No work is truer to its aura, and more deceptive in its form than that of Strauss"

Th. W. Adorno, *Quasi una fantasia*
(p.35; GS 16: p.283)

Introductory note

The reception of musical-dramatic changes in Strauss's language from 1905 has been, mainly during the decades of 60, 70 and 80 of the 20th century, developed in critical theoretical discourses that cannot leave aside Theodor W. Adorno's writings on the composer, namely his two controversial essays of 1924 and 1964 – among his multiple other references to it – and the central concept of New Music. Adorno's approaches will be here discussed in a 'quasi una fantasia' form, by focusing especially on the concepts of transgression and disorder in *Salome* and *Elektra*. I argue that some central terms of Adorno's analysis are rooted in a rhetoric of industrial modernity and of an ideology of progress that has been persistently associated with the composer's image.

Regression or postmodernism

After *Elektra* Richard Strauss abandons a complex dramatic discourse, both musical and psychological, closely related to the composer's contemporary psychoanalytic achievements and "decadent" tendencies. He moves from the post-romantic and post-Wagnerian register, including an orchestra which seeks to making sense through its theatrical interaction with the voices, towards a clearer, more classical, but still eclectic language, in which pathos is suitably organized by means of a logocentric structure or, according to Adorno, of rationalized irrationalities (*Strauss II*);

Expression, Truth and Authenticity: On Adorno's Theory of Music and Musical Performance (ed. by Mário Vieira de Carvalho), 2009, Lisbon, Edições Colibri/CESEM, pp. 145-158.

from two dramatically oppressive, space-closed, one act dramas, based on the shooting psycho-realistic presences of the central feminine characters, towards 'clean' intrigues, in which the spirit of *divertissement* and ironic distance prevails.

It is well known that most of the musicological approaches to this transition in Strauss's musical dramaturgy maintain that, from *Elektra* on, his operas represent, as regards to language and style, an audacious turning back, a regression, but of great density, to more classical and rationalized musical and dramatic profiles. This shift would correspond, accordingly, to the rejection of the earlier, extremely powerful psychological style, built on strong symbols of the instincts of *eros* and *thanatos*. They seem to be dramatically too intense to be bearable, and their abandonment brought together a full reconciliation with tonality. One reads, for instance, in Morgan (1991: p. 33): "Recognising the impossibility of continuing along the lines of the technical innovations in his two great operas, he chose to turn in the opposite direction from Schönberg – a step that, from a historical point of view, must be viewed as 'backward'."¹ Dahlhaus assumes, nevertheless, that this break would only have taken place with *Die Frau ohne Schatten*, which would have definitively set him apart from musical modernism.²

From the point of view of a linear historicity, Strauss's disengagement from Schoenberg's advances is, then, understood, as a turning back. His resistance to history, in recovering tonality, his anxiety faced with the "dangers" of musical modernism, is fiercely exposed by Adorno: "The person who commits himself to what is older only out of despair at the difficulties of the new is not comforted, but becomes the victim of his helpless nostalgia for a better era that, finally, never actually existed."³ Adorno considers that Strauss failed, because he "no longer took any notice of the objective tendencies of the music of his era" (EoM: p. 648; GS 17: p. 258). Dahlhaus emphasizes this idea (1989: p.338), by observing that Strauss abandoned musical modernism and refused to take the path of New Music: "The transition, shunned by Strauss, from

¹ Even Norman del Mar (1969) stresses this turning back in Strauss's career.

² "Contrary to histories that proceed from the subsequent frame of a work rather than from the historical situation at the time of its writing, Strauss's actual turnabout came, not with *Der Rosenkavalier* (1911) a comic opera that might have remained a stylistic intermezzo, but with *Die Frau ohne Schatten* (1919), his 'official magnum opus' " (Carl Dahlhaus, 1989: p.337).

³ *Wer sich dem Älteren nur aus Verzweiflung an den Schwierigkeiten des Neuen verschreibt, der wird nicht getröstet, sondern Opfer seiner hilflosen Sehnsucht nach einer besseren Zeit, die am Ende es nicht einmal gewesen ist* (Adorno, "Difficulties", in: EoM, p. 648; GS 17: p. 258).

musical modernism to contemporary music was tied to a shift of emphasis in the system of musical genres, a shift which, with perverse logic, turned apparently backward-looking genres into bearers of progressive tendencies.”

If one accepts that the concept of progress in the musical material of the 20th century is deeply shaped by the positive reception of Schoenberg’s aesthetics, and understands it as the language of truth, one is naturally tempted to identify a regression in Strauss’s dramatic style after *Elektra* (Botstein, 1992: p. 12). Schoenberg’s language, which had given birth to atonality, is perceived as a real transgression, a genuine way of progress, as Adorno maintains. In fact, one can observe that Adorno’s musical ‘choices’ have had an enormous influence on composers and musicians of the second half of the 20th century. Wattenbarger underlines, by referring to Strauss’s work from 1910, the fact that Adorno sees the option of tonality and emotional rhetoric as a vehicle to pass on undemanding musical products, creating a false immediacy for listeners (Wattenbarger, 2001: p. 335). In fact, most of historical discourses on Strauss maintain the idea that, in *Der Rosenkavalier*, the composer refuses to develop the language introduced in *Elektra*, and definitively abandons the path of tonal dissolution. According to Adorno, after *Elektra* – Strauss’s creative apotheosis – the composer surrenders to ‘consonant’ decadence.

The revisionist approach of Leon Botstein radicalizes the problem of historicity to the point of defining Strauss as a precursor of postmodernity (1992: p.17). By stressing the limits of Strauss’s reception and image construction by 20th-century historiography and criticism, he rejects the idea of regression, and deconstructs some standardized notions. Accordingly, he sees not a break, but a “profound continuity between *Elektra* and *Der Rosenkavalier*”. In contrast to the previously mentioned discourses, Botstein argues that Strauss’s third period (1910-1941) is the most significant and singular, since he breaks with direct intimacy with his own era, stimulating dimensions of innovation usually disregarded, and in which he recognizes these post-modern qualities (such as the combination of historical styles, eclecticism, or the challenge of the predominant aesthetics of the avant-garde).

Strauss’s cynicism with regard to aesthetic progress, the employment of a mixture of styles led to an exclusive language, that of a historical pessimist who sets himself up as a mannerist. His immense mastery of the creative process, his capacity for detachment, and his refined ironic ability, allows him to capture the interest of the public, rejecting the allure of the romantic genius (he is neither excessive nor depressing, and he is economically autonomous), and makes him part of a parallel

aesthetic tendency. The dialectic built up from discordant symbolic dimensions characterized the works that follow *Der Rosenkavalier*: dream, supernatural or mythological worlds that intersect with the human universe, denote an intense appeal to ontological reflection and the need to combine or confront dissimilar elements. Masks, disguises, shadows, hybrid beings, incorporate themselves into a rhetoric that reveals fundamental concerns and reflections regarding the limits or even the collapse of the subject and of his autonomy and prominent rationality. The attention accorded to the fragile boundaries of the great Western dichotomies, part of an intricate questioning between the earthly and the spiritual, mythological heroes and human beings, human and inhuman dimensions, is noteworthy. In *Ariadne auf Naxos*, an elevated spiritual and tragic world combines itself with simple human and comic daily life: they interrelate and superimpose themselves in an elaborate dramaturgical counterpoint. In *Die Frau ohne Schatten* we find again a complex set of dynamics between the mysterious and the earthly, with a rich symbolic zone of transition between both. The parodic *Intermezzo* questions the system of opera narrative, absorbing cinematic techniques. The presence of two conflicting and complex forces, transmitted by opulent symbols, will also appear in *Die Ägyptische Helena* with the East-West conflict. The dimensions of space and time are increasingly complex and fragmented, the symbolic dimension of the narrative is extremely rich, and defies rational and historical dichotomies.

Imbalances towards a deconstructive *Spieloper*

By questioning the diagnosis of an abrupt ‘regression’ of style in Strauss, we must observe that there are relevant documentary elements of the progression of the composer’s ideas that demonstrate that this change was neither sudden nor straightforward – and definitively not a desperate act of abrupt escape to a more ‘comfortable’ tonal domain.

Even having become increasingly interested in cruel, psychoanalytical themes, such as those of Cesar Borgia, Savonarola, Semiramis or Saul (see Banoun, 1992: p.32), during the period linking the première of *Salome* with that of *Elektra*, Strauss maintained a constant interest in different subjects and in different stylistic options. If these dramatic projects had materialized, Strauss might possibly have followed the path of *Elektra*, but these were not the only ideas that fascinated him. Let us briefly examine some of his previous dramaturgical options, in which the emergence of a ‘new style’ may be foreseen, not as a drastic break but as a possible itinerary. During the composition process of *Elektra*,

Hofmannsthal was working on a psychological comedy in prose whose subject was the charismatic figure of Casanova.⁴ The composer observed enthusiastically: “this subject pleases me so much that I would be capable of any sacrifice rather than not successfully completing this opera.” Three months before the première of *Elektra* in Dresden (October 1908), Hofmannsthal revealed that Strauss sought to develop, in this comedy, a new style: “if I’ve understood properly your indications, which seem to me most promising, you wish to create something in an entirely new style, something (...) which will be closer to the old *Spieloper* than to *Die Meistersinger* or to *Feuersnot*. You wish, if I have not misunderstood your instructions entirely, to alternate closed numbers with other passages which will be something like the old *recitativo secco*.”⁵ Hofmannsthal continued to develop and mature this idea, trying to stimulate the composer’s interest in classical forms, his main concern being the intelligibility of the text.

In fact, in the very first letter that Hofmannsthal wrote to Strauss, he already suggested to the composer an idea for a ballet, the plot of which would be determined by an atmosphere of *galanterie* (Banoun, 1992: p.15; 2000: pp.259ff.). Even before this incursion, in 1894-5, Strauss tried to give new life to an old style, underscored by neoclassical conceptions, using a *Singspiel* by Goethe (*Lila*), a work that would remain incomplete. References to Watteau appear also, some years later, in the sketches for the ballet *Cithère*.

Scandal, Industry, and Modernity

Adorno approaches Strauss’s output through two conflicting and complementary prisms. He praises the emergence of a new style, impregnated with nervousness, freedom, ductility, moments of growing tension, audacious ideas and conflicts, but simultaneously he denounces the accommodative and vacuous aspects, the switch to music as commodity, the consequent loss of “truth content”. Adorno emphasizes the “scandalous aspect” in Strauss as a moment of authenticity. What must be saved, says Adorno (*Strauss II*: p.20; GS 16: p.604), “is his idiosyncrasy, his hate of everything which, in his own words, was ‘rigid’”. This conditioned his indifference to ‘ideas’ and thematic development, his tolerance towards the banal, and that cavalier disdain for work which

⁴ Cf. letter to Strauss, Rodaun, 4 July 1908, and letter to Hofmannsthal, Garmisch, 6 July 1908, in Bernard Banoun (1992: pp.48-50).

⁵ Cf. letter to Strauss, Rodaun, 18 October 1908, in Banoun (1992: pp.52f.).

provokes the cliché of ‘superficiality’. It is this – the scandalous aspect of Strauss – which is crucial. He rebels against that sphere of the German spirit which self-righteously arrogates the epithet ‘substantial’... he shoves it aside with a *dégoût* which would not have been unworthy of Nietzsche.”⁶

The nonconformism which characterizes the operas *Salome* and *Elektra* sets them up, according to Adorno, as a psychoanalytical manifesto and a challenge to a highly conservative audience. It is in these works that he finds a manifestation of supreme creativity in Strauss, transgression revealing itself as a result of aesthetic freedom (cf. Gilman, 1988: p.20). *Salome*’s perversion, and that of *Elektra*, Clytemnestra, Herod, Herodiad or of the other deviant or hysterical characters reside in their powerful conflict or dissonance with moral, social and musico-dramatic stereotypes. The audience experiences these characters as representatives of an unacceptable difference or otherness. The consequence is an attitude of confrontation and unwillingness. For Adorno, *Elektra* reaches the most developed stage of *dissonance* as a comprehensive concept.

Insanity, pollution, and artifice

At the time when *Salome* received its première, Strauss became ineluctably associated with ideas of dangerous or unhealthy seduction, irrationality, and transgression. “I confess that *Salome* seems to me to be the strongest of the music-dramatic works of today” states Romain Rolland (1951: p.153), “but I also say that he [Strauss] is worth more than *Salome*, and I beg him to raise himself above his victory and his partisans, and to separate his cause from that of the decadent Europe of today, which runs towards suicide with unrestrained joy”. Adorno experienced the disturbing echoes which surrounded the productions of the composer’s works, and later described them in returning to his childhood memories, notably the impressions that they had made on him and his family. The malaise associated with the reception of this musical language fascinated the child, who avidly absorbed any mention of these “boisterous pieces”, being nevertheless forced to filter some aspects of

⁶ Zu retten wäre seine Idiosynkrasie, sein Haß gegen alles, nach seinen eigenen Worten, ‘Steife’. Er bedingt die Gleichgültigkeit gegen Einfälle und Themenbildungen, die Toleranz fürs Banale, auch jene kavaliershafte Verachtung von Arbeit, die das Stichwort Oberflächlichkeit provoziert. Um dies Anstößiges geht es. Jene Sphäre des deutschen Geistes, die selbstgerecht das Epitheton ‘substantiell’ an die Brust sich heftet, [...] schiebt er mit einem *dégoût* beiseite, der Nietzsches nicht unwürdig wäre.

these allegedly ‘insane’ plots and their “hysterical” characters: “I had been persuaded”, said Adorno, “that the head in *Salome* belong to a calf, and similarly, they had tried to convince me that all the excitement in *Otello* was about a handkerchief that had been mislaid” (QuF: p.34f.; GS 16: p.282).⁷

Even more than the lyric drama inspired by the polemical play by Oscar Wilde, it was *Elektra* that stirred young Adorno’s fantasy. The description of his first experience of the work is poignant and revealing, namely as concerns the analogies between Straussian language and an industrial rhetoric: “To me the name of Richard Strauss suggested music that was loud, dangerous and generally bright, rather like industry, or rather what I then imagined factories to look like. It was the child’s image of modernity that was set alight by this name.” (QuF: p.34; GS 16: p.282).⁸

This affinity appears recurrently in the texts that the philosopher dedicated to the composer. Strauss’s music seemed to him an artificial, manufactured product: “In Strauss,” writes Adorno (*Strauss II*: p.9; GS 16: p.569), “the ‘manufactured’ aspect ventures forth boldly, pioneering, like factory smokestacks in freshly conquered country.”⁹

In sketching out his first thoughts on the work, beginning with comments by others, Adorno was able to make an overall analysis of the work’s reception even before having listened to it. It was the very name of *Elektra* that kindled his imagination. He says: “This word was explosive and full of artificial, seductively evil smells, like a large chemical works close to the town where we lived, whose name sounded very similar. The word glittered cold and white, like electricity, after which it appeared to have been named; a piece of gleaming electrical machinery that poured out chlorine and which only adults could enter, something luminous, mechanical and unhealthy” (QuF: p. 35; GS 16: p.282).¹⁰

⁷ ...jemand hatte mir eingeredet, in *Salome* handle es sich um einen Kalbskopf, wie man mich auch zu überzeugen suchte, in *Othello* sei Aufregung wegen eines verlorenen Taschentuches...

⁸ Unter Richard Strauss dachte ich eine Musik, laut, gefährlich, überaus hell und ähnlich der Industrie oder, wie es damals mir sich darstellen mochte, den Fabriken: es war das Kinderbild der Moderne, das der Name entzündete.

⁹ In Strauss wagt der Aspekt des Gemachten ungescheut, pionierhaft sich vor wie Fabrikschornsteine in frisch erobelter Landschaft.

¹⁰ Dies Wort war tosend und künstlicher, anziehend boshafter Gerüche voll wie ein großes chemisches Werk bei meiner Stadt, dessen Name sehr ähnlich lautete; blinkte kalt und weiß wie Elektrizität, nach der es zu heißen schien; ein elektrisches Räderwerk, das glänzte, Chlor ausströmte, und das man erst betreten durfte als Erwachsener, luminos, mechanisch, ungesund.

White, sparkling, noisy, artificial is the image that Adorno had made of *Elektra*, Strauss and modernity.¹¹ His discernment is vivid and fierce, and combines visual, auditory, smell and tactile elements to develop a metaphorical and intuitive analysis of the pungent modern strength of the work. What is also striking in Adorno's remarks, associated with the image of an inorganic and cold engine, opposed to biological warmth, is the concept of pollution, a contaminating force, that spreads diseases; the dramatic danger of illness that one can also find associated with the scandalous 'infecting agents' of Violeta, Mimi, Salome, Lulu, and so many others (cf. Hutcheon, 1996). One finds extended metaphors of sickness in the prolific moral judgements associated with *Salome* and *Elektra* reception – let's recall Rolland's assertions, in 1905, that expose *Salome*'s subject as an "hysterical and morbid passion" (Rolland, 1951: p.146). It is also interesting to observe that precisely between the premieres of *Salome* and *Elektra* – 15 July 1907 –, Rolland remark to mademoiselle Cosette Padoux that Strauss's music: "brûle, crépite, sent mauvais, et fauche tout sur son passage" (Rolland, 1951: p.167), as a volcano, the notions being very close – as we can see – to the those later introduced by Adorno. In these analysis and comments marked by modernist values and concepts, it is possible to identify a line established between hysteria (and recent psychoanalytical knowledge of unconscious mechanisms and pathologies) physical illness, pollution and industry. A rhetoric of modernity, imbued with industrial and psychoanalytical concepts and symbols, as well as with the idea of progress, characterizes Adorno's approach to Strauss's musical language. This blue, industrial, cold flame comes, according to Adorno, from a rebel spirit that paves the way for New Music, but never becomes part of it.

Composing machine

"Cultural conservatism answered the Straussian critique of inwardness" says Adorno (*Strauss II*: p.9: GS 16: p.569), "with the reproach of 'artifice'. Underlying this is the philistine conception of art as an organic entity, a spontaneous growth...".¹² The artifice is set up in

¹¹ It is interesting to observe that this sensorial awareness of a noisy and vociferous object, as of a pathological discourse, is also mentioned by Debussy concerning Strauss; he writes that *Till Eulenspiegel* sounds like "une heure de musique nouvelle chez les fous."

¹² *Der Kulturkonservatismus hat die Straussische Herausforderung von Innerlichkeit beantwortet mit dem Vorwurf der Mache. Dahinter steht die banausische Vorstellung von Kunst als einem Organischen, unwillkürlich Wachsenden.*

defiant counterpoint to romantic pathos, the violent strength of the works coming from the “technicization of expressiveness”. “In works of art there is no such thing as natural causality” (VMI: p.293; GS 16: p.515).¹³ Emotions are manipulated, not in a Cartesian sense but according to the new insights of psychoanalysis. Emotions and images follow on from each other so quickly that the units are no longer recognizable, exactly comparable to cinematic technique.

“What is needed is a precise overview of the Straussian province. Even more, you have to leave it behind you in order to discover once again the chemical, highly industrialized and neon-lit character of his Art Nouveau that was once advertised by the name of *Elektra*” (QuF: p.36; GS 16: p.283).¹⁴ A first attentive listening to Strauss’s work allows, according to the philosopher, a more acute understanding than the analyses carried out afterwards: the interiority of the discourse, its truth, reveals itself at first contact. In this intuitive approach to the work, one may discern the aura, its true dimension. “No work is truer to its aura, and more deceptive in its form than that of Strauss, and it would scarcely be going too far to maintain that you only know it, if you know it by hearsay, rather than by hearing it.” (QuF: p.35; GS 16: p.283).¹⁵

A detailed analysis made impossible to recognize the truth content. To quote Adorno:

...the latent content of a work of art may well be transmitted uniquely in the aura you enter when you touch it, without any real knowledge, whereas it is too encapsulated in the solid kernel of its form to reveal itself to us until that form is shattered. But that aura is created as an emission of rays; it hovers before us a sign of the material which your eye is doubtless able to perceive in the form of fluid particles, but not in a solid mass. It is extinguished, and then flares up finally once more, once our mind has penetrated to its core. (QuF: p.35; GS 16: p.282f.).¹⁶

¹³ *In Kunstwerken waltet keine Naturkausalität.*

¹⁴ *Es bedarf der genauen Übersicht über die Straussische Region, ja mehr noch: man muß diese Region bereits wieder verlassen haben, um nochmals des chemischen, hochindustriellen und illuminierten Charakters seines Jugendstils inne zu werden, den einmal der Name Elektra anzeigte.*

¹⁵ *Kein Werk ist echter in seiner aura, trügender in seiner Gestalt als das Straussens, und kaum wagt zuviel, wer behaupten wollte, eigentlich kenne es nur der, der es vom Hörensagen anstatt vom Hören kennt.*

¹⁶ *So teilt der latente Gehalt eines Kunstwerkes sich vielleicht einzig in der Aura mit, in die man gerät, wenn man es anrührt, ohne es zu kennen, während es im dichten Kern der Gestalt allzusehr sich verkapselt, um uns offenbar zu werden, bevor die Gestalt zerfiel; jene Aura aber formt sich in strahlender Emission, schwebt uns vor*

Always distant from the truth and from New Music, Strauss created a style dominated by the detachment of society, in which the effect, the theatrical dimension is carefully thought out beforehand. According to Adorno (*Strauss II*: p.19; GS 16: p.582), “his music is not merely for the theatre, it is theatre, applause included”.¹⁷ Strauss places his creative process on the stage.

Adorno depicts Strauss’s work as a curve which reaches the supreme point of authenticity with *Don Juan*, unequalled tensions with *Salome* and *Elektra* and a progressive descent, intensified after the *Alpensinfonie* and *Die Frau ohne Schatten*. “The idea of élan itself, music as curve, implies a fall from the heights; what was thrown forth by the composing hand must sink abruptly in a meteoric arc. This was the almost visual form of Strauss’s first authentic work, *Don Juan*; never again did he achieve the same unity of programme, thematic content and formal development. That curve dominates both him and his work” (*Strauss II*: p.19; GS 16: p.596).¹⁸ If the complexity of the dissonant discourse corresponds to tension and to negativity, consonance corresponds to simplicity, satisfaction, repose. When Strauss changes his discourse, Adorno no longer finds his transgressive power, his challenging freedom – composition thus resembling a factory of culinary delicatessen: “After the *Alpensinfonie* and *Die Frau ohne Schatten* his productive apparatus became a composing machine into which the main motifs and situations were fed and which turned them out as finished operas. The incalculable: the surprise principle ebbed away in the ever-sweeter delights of an ever more softly splashing musical stream” (*ibid.*: p.20; GS 16: p.601).¹⁹ The polluting and transgressive gesture is transformed into a machine for producing coloured dreams.

als Zeichen des Stoffes, dessen unser Auge wohl in fluidierenden Teilchen, nicht aber in schwerer Masse teilhaft zu werden vermag, erlischt und flammt nochmals endlich auf, wenn wir das Gebilde durchschauen.

¹⁷ *Seine Musik ist nicht fürs Theater, sondern Theater selber, den Applaus inbegriffen.*

¹⁸ *Der Idee des Schwungs selber, der Musik als Kurve, ist Niederfallen eingeschrieben: was von der kompositorischen Hand geworfen ward, muß jäh sinken im Bogen des Meteors. Er war die fast visuelle Figur von Straussens erstem authentischen Werk, dem Don Juan; nie wieder hat er solche Einheit von Programm, thematischem Inhalt und formalem Ablauf erreicht. Über ihn selbst, sein Gesamtwerk, herrschte jene Kurve.*

¹⁹ Modified translation (Editor’s note). Adorno’s original is as follows: *Seit Alpensymphonie und Frau ohne Schatten wurde sein Produktionsapparat zu einer Komponiermaschine, in welche die Hauptmotive und -situationen hineingepumpt werden und die sie als fertige Opern ausspeist. Das Inkalkulable: das Überraschungsprinzip verebbt in immer süßeren Reizen eines immer sanfter plätschernden Musikstroms.*

A new Zarathustra?

According to Adorno's essay of 1924, the main problem of Strauss's musical discourse is that of intimacy with life, which is supposed to impregnate the essential meaning of his works. His music emerges as a constant image of his ego, a sensorial discourse without fixed form. In this sense, Strauss's music takes on self-reflexive characteristics, being "not capable of breaking out of its sphere directly upward at any point" (*Strauss I*: p.408; GS 18: p.255).²⁰ The pathos of personality is never sacrificed, there is no "critique of personality" (cf. QuF: p.115; GS 16: p.354).

The problem brought to light by Adorno has its core in the use of form. Whereas Strauss's music is no more than the representation of his 'psychological subject', his form is only appearance. Adorno reproaches Strauss for dissimulating his interior life under the forms that he avidly searches out in a narcissistic way, and which remain, he says, empty. These forms have only an apparent objectivity, that of the machine. Even the idea of time in the work did not provide an immanent basis but, was, according to Wattenbarger (2001: p. 320), "the measurable time of the industrial process." In brief, the *formal nature* of Strauss is *apparent* since it is not produced in the real context of community, it is not interrelational, being freely constructed by the ego, as a mere outgrowth of life. The idea of *apparent form* is deepened by an association between Strauss's aesthetics and the premises of the *Lebensphilosophie*. Through this influence, Strauss's music reflects Nietzsche's thinking, the composer becoming, for Adorno, a kind of modern personification of Zarathustra and his pathos. It is based on an ontological and temporal experimentation: "The subject of his music is *life*: life in the precise sense that its conceptual form has found in Nietzsche, Simmel and Bergson"²¹, Adorno claims (*ibid.*: p.407; GS 18: p.254).²² That is, instead of aspiring to transcendence, Strauss's music explores the depths of subjectivity, of a supposedly self-sufficient human being, acquiescing to the supremacy of an Anti-Christ.²³

²⁰ *Darum vermag die Musik des psychologischen Subjekts an keiner Stelle ihr Bereich unmittelbar nach oben zu durchstoßen.*

²¹ One can observe the connections between Strauss's *Schwung* and the *élan vital* of Bergson's and Nietzsche's *will of power*.

²² *Der Gegenstand seiner Musik ist das Leben: Leben in der spezifischen Bedeutung die in der Philosophie Nietzsches, Simmels und Bergsons begrifflich geformt wurde...*

²³ Unger (1992) claims that in fact, in *Also sprach Zarathustra*, Strauss was in

Rupture towards order and apocrypha

“The discomfort shown by emancipated music
when faced by a situation in which anything goes,
is handed down from one generation to the next,
like the violent order of the world itself”
(VMI: p.293; GS 16: p.514)²⁴

The need for order is a social given that impregnates the musical world. A powerful force, a temptation, makes the composer, after daring to try out a freer language, return to an organized system that can assure him of logical tranquillity. Even the daring, transgressive creator finds himself, according to Adorno, irremediably tempted to naturalize his new techniques. If Jean Cocteau's expression *l'ordre après le désordre* disturbs the philosopher (VMI: p.292; GS 16: p.513), it is because he considers that disorder is systematically expelled from artistic creation in general and from musical creation in particular. “I am unable to discern any guarantee of truth in this eternal recurrence of the need for an order based on systems”, writes Adorno referring to art: “on the contrary, they seem rather to be the symbols of perennial weakness” (VMI: p.292; GS 16: p.513).²⁵

Classical art, conceived as a place of balance, of security, of stability, does not disturb an audience longing to experience a calm amazement. In the classical notion of balance, which, according to Adorno, characterizes *a priori* and conventionally the artistic tradition, the extremes, the poles, are thoroughly excluded. Such a product, so harmonious, becomes a kind of “windowless monad” (*fensterlose Monade*) (QuF: p.111; GS 16: p.331).

The connivance with the normal, the imbalance with the canonical surface, is possibly stronger than any other artistic impulse. “It is also

agreement with the concept of form of Adorno's *Aesthetic Theory* and explains the main points of convergence between the both authors. Nevertheless, Wattenbarger (2001) contests this interpretation, by arguing that Unger's methodological principle contradicts the philosopher's processes. An Adornian “stable system” and its “objective knowledge” could not be presupposed.

²⁴ *Das Unbehagen der emanzipierten Musik daran, daß man alles dürfen darf, erbt sich fort wie die gewalttätige Ordnung der Welt...*

²⁵ Modified translation. Instead of “on known systems” (Livingstone's translation), “on systems”, according to Adorno's original (Editor's note): *In der ewigen Wiederkehr des auf Schemata gerichteten Ordnungsbedürfnisses vermag ich keine Bürgschaft von dessen Wahrheit zu sehen, eher ein Symptom perennierender Schwäche.*

worth reflecting on the reasons which lead people, as soon as they have reached open ground, to create the feeling that it is time for order to be restored, instead of breathing a sigh of relief that such works as *Erwartung* and even *Elektra* could be written, works which are incomparably closer to the actual conscious and unconscious of contemporary listeners than any artificially imposed style.” (VMI: p.291: GS 16: p.513).²⁶

In his quest for *musique informelle*, Adorno stimulates a cultural image founded on the rhetoric of disorder, prophesying the progress of the sciences of chaos in the last decades of the 20th century. The boundaries between order and disorder will lose nevertheless their definition, being the idea of chaos replaced by that of complexity.

The change in Strauss’s attitude towards the musical material has, for Adorno, a direct relation to the need to a return to order – will it be compatible with the transfiguration of Straussian language after the atonal phase? “The element of violence and rupture in the transition from the experiences of free atonality to the systematization of twelve-note technique, and the conception of religiosity as return, together with the finger-wagging admonition about learning to pray, all come together, not just historically, but also in terms of content. In both dimensions, order is derived from the need for order and not from the truth of the matter.” (VMI: p.274f.; GS 16: p.498).²⁷ Order as a subjective need and religiosity become the antidotes to transgression and truth.

Conclusion

In Adorno’s approaches to Strauss, *Salome* and *Elektra* there are points of undeniable tension, which reflect his belief in Strauss’s transgressional potential and psychoanalytical insights as moments of real

²⁶ Modified translation. “Unconscious”, instead of “subconscious”, according to Adorno’s original (Editor’s note): *Man sollte auch in der Musik einmal darüber nachdenken, warum die Menschen, sobald sie wirklich ins Offene kommen, das Gefühl produzieren: da muß doch wieder Ordnung her, anstatt aufzuatmen, daß die Erwartung, selbst schon die Elektra geschrieben werden konnten, die dem eigenen Bewußtsein und Unbewußtsein gegenwärtigen Hörer unvergleichlich viel kommensurabler sind als oktroyierter Stil.*

²⁷ Modified translation (Editor’s note). Adorno’s original is as follows: *Das Moment des Abrupten und Gewaltsamen im Übergang von den Erfahrungen der freien Atonalität zur systematischen Formulierung der Zwölftontechnik, und die Konzeption von Religiosität als Rückkunft, mit dem drohenden Zeigefinger des Beten-Lernens, fallen nicht nur entwicklungsgeschichtlich zusammen sondern auch dem Inhalt nach; hier wie dort wird Ordnung aus dem Bedürfnis postuliert und nicht aus der eigenen Wahrheit der Sache.*

freedom and truth – moments which were further denied by Strauss's coming back to 'order', after 'transgression', to 'consonance' after 'dissonance', to 'agreement', after 'rupture' with bourgeois audiences. Adorno's metaphorical, complex and polysemantic, dialectical analysis is marked by some of the most complete sensorial descriptions he ever made of the listening process. Adorno was seduced and frightened by Strauss to the point of identifying him with the very concept of modernity.

Nevertheless, in the last two decades, the reception of Strauss within musicological research has changed profoundly, and has included a critical revision of Adorno's position not only on the composer but also, in general, on New Music. Several authors even felt the need to rehabilitate Strauss from that standardized image, largely enriched by anecdotes and reinterpretations of original statements, and issuing, in great measure, from the conflict between the avant-garde and the composer's pattern of musical communication (Cf. Gould, 1983; Puffet, 1989; Unger, 1991; Botstein, 1992; Banoun, 2000). While postwar criticism was dominated by the idea that Strauss gave up historical progress and took up a comfortable position in relation to the audience, not to mention his Nazi conformism, more recent readings stress the ideological character of that construction as such, inspired by Adorno's aesthetical choices and their reception by music criticism, notably its 'avant-garde' trend, part of the New Music.

“As speaking entities do artworks live” Aesthetics as a Philosophy of Language

Tilo Wesche

Introduction

There are many answers to the question as to what it is that causes us to reflect on something, what causes us to try to understand. Wonder, personal or historic experiences – notably when they are negative –, the quest for scientific knowledge, or simple curiosity – all of these are well-known phenomena that give rise to thought. Thus it is correct to speak not of one singular source of thought, but of several. However, philosophy is not concerned with merely enumerating and describing these origins, but rather with understanding them. It seeks to establish why thinking is to be wished for, why it should occur. Why, philosophy asks, is thought or reflection preferable to ignorance? Why should one seek to understand one’s life and to explain the world, rather than to unquestioningly accept the one like the other?

To answer these questions is to think thought. A philosophy that attempts to do this, and with a critical intention at that, is Adorno’s. According to Adorno, it is really impossible to establish a foundation for thinking, or for thought to grasp itself. For that reason, the project of thinking thought – the classical self-image of philosophy – must be abandoned. According to Adorno, philosophy must be led to transcend itself into art. This does not mean that aesthetics should supersede philosophy, but rather that philosophy should take a step back. The way in which thought begins cannot be captured by philosophical contemplation, since such contemplation presupposes the occurrence of thought as an ongoing process. The way in which thinking first arises can therefore only be observed from a *pre*-philosophical point of view. The way in which one arrives at a reflection can only be reached through a standpoint that does not yet presuppose either reflection or, consequently, philosophy. This pre-philosophical site is occupied by the artwork.

By turning towards aesthetics, Adorno actually performs a threefold transformation. Firstly, philosophy transcends itself towards artworks. This does not mean that philosophy should itself become art, be it in the form of presentation or in subject matter. Rather, aesthetics first presents philosophy with the perception of what thinking is. Artworks occasion the discovery of what it is that drives us to think. Secondly, philosophy is transformed into a particular conception of language. Reflection issues from artworks solely by virtue of their language. Adorno calls this origin of reflection – which he himself would never have designated as such – the language character, the language-likeness, the eloquence, the speaking or telling aspect of the artwork. In what follows, the term “language” therefore does not refer to meaning or propositional language, but rather to that which moves one to reflection in the artworks. Thirdly, aesthetics is in a sense being back-translated into a philosophy of language. Philosophy is not only driven to transcend itself. By defining aesthetic language-likeness as that which induces thinking behaviour, both of one’s self and of the world, it recognizes its own object again.

The following reflections investigate both the extent and the limitations of Adorno’s approach to the artwork as an origin of thought (*Denkursprung*). It makes sense to approach this endeavour by taking stock of Adorno’s philosophical programme as it presents itself in the conclusion of the *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (I). In the second part the attention will be focused on Adorno’s aesthetic conception of language (II). Here it will be investigated why the language of the artwork should be particularly suited for fulfilling the philosophical dialectic-programme. The third section intensifies this exploration and expounds the language character in respect of its immediacy (III). In the fourth section, Adorno’s understanding of Beethoven serves to illustrate initial considerations with the interpretation of a particular work (IV). Finally, it will be demonstrated why Adorno’s concept of aesthetic immediacy does not adequately account for the dialectics of enlightenment and myth (V).

I. The *Dialectic of Enlightenment*

Horkheimer and Adorno understand by the term “enlightenment” not only the character this phenomenon assumed in a particular historical period. Rather, they take the systematic concept of “enlightenment, understood in the widest sense as the advance of thought”¹ (DA: p.1; GS 3: p.19) to refer to a structure characteristic of all kinds of rationality.

¹ *Aufklärung im umfassendsten Sinn fortschreitenden Denkens.*

This structure of rationality reveals itself in the definition of knowledge as power. The first essay, “The Concept of Enlightenment”, links Francis Bacon’s equation of knowledge and power to that enlightenment which, as the formulation *Unnachgiebigkeit der Theorie* (“intransigence of theory”) indicates, does justice to its definition as power (see DA: p.33; GS 3: p.59). Knowledge is power in the sense of being able to convince oneself of something. In the individual understanding resides the emancipatory potential without which it would be impossible to link knowledge to enlightenment. Whatever criticism Horkheimer and Adorno level at enlightenment, they always insist in this quest for rationality. Their criticism can therefore not be said to advance the cause of anti-enlightenment or irrationalism.

Myth, on the other hand, is based on what is perennially present, i.e. on what is given by nature. What exists by nature cannot be demonstrated either as true or as untrue by means of argumentative ratification. It exists, and exists in its own right, without need of justification. It has an immediate validity, which is naturally given with its very existence, and need not be deduced.

As is generally known, Horkheimer’s and Adorno’s critique of enlightenment postulates that enlightenment reverts to mythology. The reason for this reversion is that rationality appears as if it exists by nature. Whenever it fails to examine its binding authority (*Verbindlichkeit*), and to question the foundation and motive of thinking, rationality assumes the semblance of something valid by nature. Horkheimer and Adorno point out in their critique the apparent evidence that rationality is a compelling asset endowed with binding force. If it cannot be understood why one should strive to rationally ascertain oneself and the world, rationality appears to rely solely on the authority of its being. Here precisely resides the positivism of rationality: that its binding authority is justified solely by virtue of its existence. Already speaking of rationality as “human nature” contradicts the lies of enlightenment. For if, on the one hand, nothing is to be accepted as true but what can be argued on the grounds of understanding, then, on the other hand, this thesis forfeits its own right. Rationality itself forsakes its binding authority. For if rationality is founded on a right given by nature, then it reverts to the very realm where, according to its own claims, nothing can lay claim to binding authority. Rationality that fails to establish its own foundations descends to the level of mere enchantment. Rationality falls hostage to that from which it seeks to free itself.²

² According to Horkheimer and Adorno, rationality misjudges nature as being that of the origin, which in truth must be “remembered” (DA: p.33; GS 3: p.60).

In Bacon's philosophy of nature, the authors recognize the paradigm of this rationality: domination of nature by means of adaptation to nature. More precisely, it resembles nature in two respects – firstly, in lacking an origin or beginning, and secondly in lacking an end. Rationality bestows on itself as a natural given (*Naturgegebenheit*) the semblance of having neither begin nor end. As far as its endlessness is concerned, on the other hand, this manifests itself in the peculiar ambivalence of defining knowledge as power. Power, by its very nature, is the unlimited increasing of itself, it is always a "progress of power" (*Fortschritt der Macht*; DA: p.28; GS 3: p.53). In this sense, the "knowledge that is power" reveals itself to be a constantly expanding knowledge, which knows "no limits" and "no holding back" (DA: pp.2, 3; GS 3: pp.20, 22). Knowledge as power is "thinking in progress", in the sense of constantly expanding and surpassing itself.³ This increasing progress of knowledge is subject to a "ineluctable necessity" (DA: p.7; GS 3: p. 27), which causes knowledge to advance as if under a fateful spell. In this necessity of the progressing knowledge its naturelike validity comes to light. Knowledge advancement becomes an autonomous process (*selbstätiger Prozeß*), as long as knowledge is regarded as an asset which in itself is valid by nature.⁴

But why, it may be objected, should it be necessary to justify the reason why reality must be cognitively internalised? Should one not follow the path of "common sense" and accept rationality as self-evident, as a matter of course, precisely in the way the authors of the *Dialectic of Enlightenment* argue against? In a discussion, for instance, the participants confine themselves to an exchange of views on the matter at hand, without justifying the reason why one should seek to convince one's opponents in a rational, argumentative way. At the very least, it would be unusual to expect the participants in a discussion to engage in a meta-discussion on the reasons and justifications for the form their discussion takes, unless one were to speak like Socrates and habitually press one's interlocutors to establish the presuppositions or foundations of their line of argument.⁵ But this is not necessary, because *in* the context of a discussion and *for* the participants in it, rationality is already recognised as a binding value. From the point of view of the parties to an

³ Just as power manifests itself as power only by overpowering inferior forces, just so knowledge asserts itself by exposing older "knowledge" as error or ignorance. Cf. Hinrich Fink-Eitel (1992).

⁴ "Thought is reified as an autonomous, automatic process." (*Denken verdinglicht sich zu einem selbstätig ablaufenden, automatischen Prozeß*.) (DA: p.19; GS 3: p. 42).

⁵ Cf Socrates' warning against the enemies of discourse in *Phaedon* 89 a-e.

argument, the legitimacy of the argumentative format is accepted as established, and the requirement of self-justification is rightly suspended.

Why and to what extent rationality has to establish its status as an asset of binding value – these are the questions subjected to immanent critique in the *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. The term immanent critique in this context refers not only to the methodological demand that the object of critique not be subjected to external, unproven criteria. In a wider sense, immanent critique is Horkheimer and Adorno's positive concept of thinking. Immanent critique is the thinking of which enlightenment falls short when it relapses into mythology. On the other hand, enlightenment that accounts even for its own dialectical relationship to myth can only be achieved by way of immanent critique.

This idea is contained in the book's second basic thesis, namely that not only does enlightenment revert to myth, but that "myth is already enlightenment" (DA: p.xviii; GS 3: p.16). Its genesis is misjudged by the kind of enlightenment that sees itself as a natural given. Enlightenment, however, is not an ahistorical phenomenon, as though it had suddenly emerged. It is, rather, a historical process that only acquires legitimacy by virtue of being this *process* of emancipation from myth. Myth is enlightenment, insofar as it forms part of the genesis of enlightenment. And it forms part of enlightenment, because enlightenment only assumes its rightful place in the form of critique of what is given by nature. Enlightenment has to justify its existence, not to itself, but against the claims of myth, and it is this self-justification against the claims of myth on which Horkheimer and Adorno focus. By virtue of the fact that enlightenment has to stand its ground, rationality is *not* questioned from an internal point of view, where its validity is taken for granted. Rather, it must defend its claim to legitimacy against a perspective from which its validity is not seen as a foregone conclusion, but first needs to be established. Opponents and assailants of rationality need to be convinced of its binding, compelling force. The binding authority of enlightenment is to be argued on the basis of its origins, which lie in mythology. Without being thus validated vis-à-vis myth, rationality can only be seen as a natural given, and hence appearing as mythical.

This clarifies why enlightenment can only remain true to itself and fulfil its own stringent requirements in the form of critique – a critique of myth, to be precise; Adorno later on elaborates on this standpoint by defining thinking as negation.⁶ More light is then also shed on its peculiar

⁶ Cf "Thought as such, *before all particular contents*, is an act of negation, of resistance to that which is forced upon it." (*Denken ist, an sich schon, vor allem besonderen Inhalt, Negieren, Resistenz gegen das ihm Aufgedrängte*) (ND: p.19; GS 6: p.30; cf. *ibid.* p. 48). Emphasis of T. Wesche.

pattern as an *immanent* critique.⁷ A critique may not – and this is the command of its immanence – rely on the authority of the very principles, i.e. those of rationality, which flow from it, and which are supposed to result from argumentation. The binding authority of rationality is what needs to be established, and for that reason the argumentation process cannot have recourse to rationality. Enlightenment proceeds as an immanent critique, in that it has to convince the mythical worldview of the tenet that rationality is an asset of binding authority, and this argumentation process can clearly not presuppose that the validity of rationality has already been established.

One aspect of the first basic thesis, i.e. that enlightenment reverts back to mythology, has not yet been touched on, namely the fact that this reversion is presented as a characteristic, specific tendency of enlightenment. This reversion does not flow from a desideratum for a greater input of rationality. Rather, the reversion to mythology occurs of necessity. The reason for this is not faulty argumentation, or even indifference to issues of substantiation. Rather, enlightenment's entanglement in myth is inevitable, because its binding authority simply cannot be founded. No reason can be adduced as to why one should cognitively take possession of reality. In the final analysis, it is impossible to justify why knowledge is to be preferred to ignorance, false semblance, error or deceit.

The reason why thinking cannot be grounded is the aporia in which thinking inevitably becomes entangled when it tries to establish its own justification.⁸ Put succinctly, it consists in that thinking presupposes its own validity. On the one hand, the aim is to convince those who do not as yet accept rationality as binding. On the other hand, by pursuing this aim, enlightenment presupposes the pre-establishment of rationality. For in order to comprehend the binding validity of rational thinking, one must already have experienced rational thinking as the method leading to this understanding. If thinking is an asset to be striven for, it is the prerequisite for demonstrating its own desirability. In order to comprehend rationality, it must already have been established as the binding requirement for yielding to rational persuasion and for reconstructing states of affairs by way of rational argument.

⁷ On the rank and significance of immanent critique in the writings of music cf. Richard Klein's contribution in Part II.

⁸ Habermas rightly objects that the topic of mutual deliberation or communicative reasoning has been neglected in the *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. But communicative reasoning is precisely also unable to supply its own theoretic foundation. The aporia of rationality is therefore impossible to avoid, even by its variant based on theory of communication. (Cf. Jürgen Habermas, 1985: esp. 154f.).

Enlightenment reveals itself as being based on the premise of aporia, because thinking is to be established as a binding, axiomatic principle, but at the same time this axiomatic character must be presupposed to make this process possible. If thinking is to do justice to the dialectic of enlightenment, it must account for this aporia.

The affinity with language [...] is suddenly turned upside down so that it becomes a means of musical enlightenment...

Versuch über Wagner (VW: p.49: GS 13: p. 47)⁹

II. Aesthetics as a philosophy of language

“Enlightenment pushed aside the classical demand to ‘think thinking’ – Fichte’s philosophy is its radical fulfilment”.¹⁰ A philosophy revisiting the discipline’s most classic concern therefore seriously engages with a critique of enlightenment. With their classical investigation of thinking, Horkheimer and Adorno squarely position their *Dialectic of Enlightenment* in the tradition of metaphysics. This tradition needs to be defended against an enlightenment assuming a “the sober matter-of-factness by which it purported to distinguish itself from Hegel and from metaphysics in general. [...] For positivism, which has assumed the judicial office of enlightened reason, to speculate about intelligible worlds is no longer merely forbidden, but senseless prattle.” (DA: pp.18f; GS 3: pp.41f.).¹¹

However, it is no longer possible to engage with metaphysics unconditionally, as though its history were not one of inadequate answers to its questions. Horkheimer and Adorno’s approach is thus rather one of a critique of metaphysics, which notwithstanding does not relinquish

⁹ *Die Sprachähnlichkeit der Musik [...] schlägt um in ein Mittel musikalischer Aufklärung...*

¹⁰ *Aufklärung hat die klassische Forderung, das Denken zu denken – Fichtes Philosophie ist ihre radikale Entfaltung – beiseitegeschoben* (DA: p.19; GS 3: p.42). – Cf. ND: p.407; GS 6: p.399: “Enlightenment leaves practically nothing of the metaphysical content of truth” (*Aufklärung läßt vom metaphysischen Wahrheitsgehalt so gut wie nichts übrig*). – Cf. ND: p.17; GS 6: p.28: “Though chained to the questions of traditional philosophical problematics, we certainly must negate that problematics” (*Die überlieferte philosophische Problematik ist bestimmt zu negieren, gekettet freilich an deren Fragen*).

¹¹ *...Nüchternheit, durch die sie von Hegel und Metaphysik überhaupt sich zu unterscheiden meint. [...] Dem Positivismus, der das Richteramt der aufgeklärten Vernunft antrat, gilt in intelligible Welten auszuschweifen nicht mehr bloß als verboten, sondern als sinnloses Geplapper.*

classical philosophy in favour of the pathos of unambiguousness. The calling into question of thinking is to be pursued beyond the limits of philosophy, since it needs to be discharged on a different basis. Horkheimer and Adorno refer to this site beyond the confines of philosophy as the perspective of dialectic materialism. This view is meant to oppose an idealism that presumes thinking to be a self-sufficient, self-generating force: Thinking is unable to grasp its own prime mover, its motivating foundation, and for this to come into view, thinking has to transcend itself. The project pursued by Horkheimer and Adorno, i.e. the self-suppression of philosophy, thus locates itself within the field of unresolved tensions of post-idealistic philosophy. For Schopenhauer, for instance, the foundation of cognition (*Grund der Erkenntnis*) lay in the will, which he regarded as transcendent to cognition. According to Kierkegaard the basis of self-comprehension reveals itself in love, which in turn cannot be resolved by thinking. For Marx, as for Horkheimer, social practice is the key to undo the semblance to economic relations. The will to understand, according to Wittgenstein, can only be executed as enactment-in-language, but cannot be grasped by means of theoretical contemplation. Finally, for Heidegger the foundation of philosophical thought lies in another thought, opposed to the former.

Adorno's starting point for understanding the language-likeness of the artwork as an origin of thinking stands on its delimitation from the philosophy of Martin Heidegger. Both are competing for a new philosophical beginning, which cannot in any case be accomplished by an abstract negation of metaphysics. Adorno seeks to found it with his concept of "metaphysical experience". He develops his critique of traditional metaphysics as a counter-proposal and alternative to Heidegger's.¹² This competitive relationship, which can hardly be overestimated, not only explains why Adorno avoids the concept of origin, reserving it instead for references to Heidegger's work and stylising it in the concept of the archaic, both in the sense of the pre-rational and of the earliest historically. It throws something of a clarifying light on Adorno's own project as the programme of dialectic. Its

¹² The competitive relationship between dialectics and the ontology of Heideggerian provenance transpires as clearly from the structure of *Negative Dialectics* as it does from the lectures of the late period: cf. *Ontologie und Dialektik* (Adorno, 2002), *Metaphysik. Begriff und Probleme* (Adorno, 1989). – Leaving aside the concept of a critique of science without abandoning science, as well as the critique at the ontologisation of the ontic, Adorno's invectives against Heidegger miss their target. On Heidegger and Adorno with regard to their aesthetics: Günter Fingal (2000: 11-20), Udo Tietz (2002). Cf. also the contributions by Richard Klein, Wolfram Ette and Johann Kreuzer.

centrepiece is the idea of a movement that does not rely on a non-moving initiator – a movement that can do without the eternal, motionless mover of the Aristotelian tradition. Adorno understands the artwork as the kind of reality that sets in motion thinking, yet at the same time is not independent of rationality.

According to Kant, artworks are things that make us think. The analysis of an artwork, Adorno concludes, therefore describes what it is that initiates thought. This capacity to initiate resides in the language of the artwork. The twelfth meditation on metaphysics at the end of *Negative Dialectic* states: “thinking [...] contains [...] the need [...] in itself. [...] the need in thinking is what make us think” (ND: p.408; GS 6: p.399).¹³ What motivates thought, is a need inherent to it or, as it is also put, a longing or its wish. This wish is no subjective will. Rather, the wish to think is articulated by the artwork. And it is this articulation of the wish that constitutes the language-like character of the artwork.¹⁴ To analyse the origin of thinking therefore means to describe what Adorno calls the language of the artwork. Philosophy understands itself as the conceptual effort involved in this interpretation; accordingly it is redeemed in the analysis of artworks: “What the philosophical concept will not abandon is the yearning that animates the non-conceptual side of art, and whose fulfilment shuns the immediate side of art as mere semblance.” (ND: p.15; GS 6: p. 27).¹⁵

The final passage of the first “excursus”, entitled “Odysseus or Myth and Enlightenment”, sheds some light on the language-like character of artworks. Homer’s *Odyssey* relates, according to Adorno’s reading of the epic poem, Odysseus’ vagary as the history of liberation from myth. The key to this interpretation is the idea that the liberation from myth rests on the foundation of the specific form, the narrative. The possibility of

¹³ *Das Denken [...] enthält das Bedürfnis [...] in sich. [...] Das Bedürfnis im Denken will [...], daß gedacht werde.* – Towards the end of the *Negative Dialectics*, the conceptual delimitations vis-à-vis Heidegger’s philosophy becomes a bit blurred, at least according to Adorno’s understanding of it. On the one hand, he wrongly applies the term “ontological need” to Heidegger’s idea of an origin of thought. On the other hand, Adorno lays claim to the designation “a need of thinking” to describe his own, alternative concept.

¹⁴ Cf AT: p.174; GS 7: p.199: “Not for itself, with regard to consciousness, but in-itself, what is wants the other; the artwork is the language of this wanting, and the artwork’s content is as substantial as this wanting” (*Nicht für sich, dem Bewußtsein nach, jedoch an sich will, was ist, das Andere, und das Kunstwerk ist die Sprache solchen Willens und sein Gehalt so substantiell wie er*).

¹⁵ *Der philosophische Begriff läßt nicht ab von der Sehnsucht, welche die Kunst als begrifflose beseelt und deren Erfüllung ihrer Unmittelbarkeit als einem Schein entflieht.*

homecoming, and with it the possibility of escape, is based on the fact that the journey and the setbacks militating against homecoming are reported in the form of a narrative. "It is in the self-reflection which causes violence to pause at the moment of narrating such deeds. Speech itself, language as opposed to mythical song, the possibility of holding fast the past atrocity through memory, is the law of Homeric escape. Not without reason is the fleeing hero repeatedly introduced as narrator." (DA: p.61; GS 3: p.98).¹⁶ Memory and the abolition of mythical coercion are one and the same thing in the narration, because the narrating memory of the seemingly naturally-given proceeds as reflection, the absence of which is the reported disaster.

What Adorno here outlines – rather than elaborates – as the concept of a narrating language, is later developed in greater detail with the aid of terms like the "language character", "language-likeness" or "eloquence" of the artwork, in the theoretical writings on literature and music, and finally in the *Aesthetic Theory*.¹⁷ In this sense, the following reflections trace the trajectory linking the *Dialectic of Enlightenment* to Adorno's aesthetic writings. The connection, never explicitly stated by Adorno, comprises three steps. Firstly, Adorno engages with the classical matter of the origin of thinking, which he investigates in the context of its aporia. In the same text, Adorno then goes on to propose the concept of a narrative language fit to fulfil the programme. This point of entry via the

¹⁶ *Es ist die Selbstbesinnung, welche Gewalt innehalten läßt im Augenblick der Erzählung. Rede selber, die Sprache in ihrem Gegensatz zum mythischen Gesang, die Möglichkeit, das geschehene Unheil erinnernd festzuhalten, ist das Gesetz des homerischen Entrinnens. Nicht umsonst wird der entrinnende Held als Erzählender immer wieder eingeführt.*

¹⁷ The most important writings on aesthetic language-likeness are the essays *Musik, Sprache und ihr Verhältnis im gegenwärtigen Komponieren* (*Music, Language and their Mutual Relationship in Current Composing*) (GS 16: pp.649-664) and *Über das gegenwärtige Verhältnis von Philosophie und Musik* (*On the Current Relationship Between Philosophy and Music*) (GS 18: pp.149-176); as well as the posthumous *Aesthetic Theory* (AT: pp.99ff., 138f., 147f., 219ff., 242f; GS 7: pp. 120ff., 160f., 171f., 249ff., 274f.). In his major work on aesthetics, Adorno also refers to the language characterizing the artwork as "nonconceptual language" (*nichtbegriffliche Sprache*) (AT: p.101; GS 7: p.121), as a "script, but it is a script without meaning or, more precisely, a script with broken or veiled meaning" (*Schrift [...], aber eine ohne Bedeutung oder, genauer, mit gekappter oder zugehängter Bedeutung*) (AT: p.104; GS 7: p.122), "a language remote from all meaning" (*bedeutungsferne Sprache*) (AT: p.105; GS 7: p.123), an "immanent language" (*immanente Sprache*) (AT: p.120; GS 7: p.142), "non-significative language" (*nicht signifikative Sprache*) (AT: p.147; GS 7: p.172), "what speaks out of it" (*das aus ihr Redende*) (AT: p.221; GS 7: p.251), a "non-discursive language" (*nicht-diskursive Sprache*) (AT: p.221; GS 7: p.251), "intentionless language" (*intentionslose Sprache*) (AT: p.242; GS 7: p.274).

language of the narrative artwork is subsequently modified and expanded into a theory of the language of the artwork in general. The early essay is therefore – as will be shown below – subsequently elaborated by Adorno in such a way, that the original programme is executed on the basis of an aesthetic concept of language. In particular, Adorno investigates the phenomenon of language from the perspective of music.

The term “language-likeness” refers to what is common to the aesthetic and the propositional language, and that simultaneously – as a relation of mere resemblance – recognises a difference between both. What artworks share with the language of opinions and judgments, is their eloquence. Artworks can address someone, can say something to someone. On sounds and their connectedness in music, for instance, we read: “They say something, often something human.” In general, “the gesture of music” is said to be “borrowed from the speaking voice”.¹⁸ The term “eloquence” refers to the expressive character – in the broadest sense of the word – of artworks: they lead something to representation, semblance, language or expression.¹⁹ In a more restricted sense, however, “aesthetic eloquence” has the significance of a start, a beginning. It refers not so much to a flowing conversation, as rather to the beginning of speech. The artwork does not merely speak, it addresses someone.²⁰ The

¹⁸ *Sie sagen etwas, oft ein Menschliches [...] ...ist der Gestus von Musik der Stimme entlehnt, die redet* (MLC: p.113; GS 16: p.649).

¹⁹ Cf. Seel (2000); Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht (2003). Language for Adorno signifies, in artworks, “expression” (*Ausdruck*) (AT: p.138; GS 7: p.160). “Through expression, art closes itself off to being-for-another, which always threatens to engulf it, and becomes eloquent in itself: this is art’s mimetic consummation. [...] Its quintessence is art’s character of eloquence.” (*Durch den Ausdruck sperrt sich Kunst dem Füranderessein, das ihn so begierig verschlingt, und spricht an sich: das ist ihr mimetischer Vollzug. [...] Dessen Inbegriff ist der Sprachcharakter der Kunst.*) (AT: p.147; GS 7: p.171).

²⁰ The language character, including the capacity of address, constitutes an intersection in Adorno’s aesthetics, where the latter meets the dialogue structure as proposed by phenomenology (Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Bernhard Waldenfels) and by hermeneutics (Martin Heidegger, Hans-Georg Gadamer). To quote an example: “When we think ourselves closest to it [music], it speaks to us and waits sad-eyed for us to answer” (*Wenn wir sie uns am nächsten meinen, dann spricht sie uns an und wartet mit traurigen Augen, daß wir ihr antworten*) (BB: p.xi; NS I.1.: p.15). In a letter to Max Horkheimer dated 23.09.1941, Adorno emphasizes the significance of address: “I have experienced nothing as vividly as the relation to truth embodied in the act of addressing, and I have experienced it in a very specific way. In fact, I have always found it difficult to understand, and still find it incomprehensible, that a person who speaks should be a scoundrel or a liar.” (*Nichts habe ich so stark erfahren, wie die Beziehung zur Wahrheit, die in der Anrede liegt, und zwar in einer ganz spezifischen Weise. Es ist mir nämlich immer schwer gefallen und fällt mir im Grunde heute noch schwer zu verstehen, daß ein*

term “addressing” does not imply that it draws our attention to something specific, but that it first occasions and stimulates this attention. It does not simply present a matter from a new perspective or a new point of view, but it first opens our eyes to this matter, so that it exists *for us*. It brings this matter to the fore in such a way that we first begin to reflect on it and wish to understand it. In short, it gives rise to the beginning of thought.

However, aesthetic language cannot simply be compared to propositional language. “The person who takes music literally as language will be lead astray by it.”²¹ The difference is that, in the representation of a thought origin (*Denkursprung*), propositional statements – as indicated above – become aporetic. If the binding authority of thought is to be demonstrated, the same thought is already presupposed as the condition to understand this demonstration. According to the structure of propositional statements, thought is either already effective, in which case it appears to be given by nature, and hence exempt from the need of demonstration; or it would be the goal of a statement that cannot be understood. Adorno’s concept of the artwork, as far as the programme of dialectic provides a basis for its understanding is concerned, is intended to resolve this aporia. Such a possibility is contained in the idea of intention-less-ness (*Intentionslosigkeit*: “lack of intention”). In this lack of intention resides the specific difference between aesthetic and meaning language, between the intentionless eloquence of artworks and the propositional message.²² This lack of intention is marked by two characteristics: intentionless language is, firstly, a capacity exclusive to the artwork and, secondly, has no propositional content.

Let us first consider the first-mentioned characterisation, according to which eloquence is an activity emanating from the artwork itself. It is

Mensch, der spricht, ein Schurke sein oder lügen soll.) Quoted after Rolf Wiggershaus (1988: p. 564).

²¹ *Wer Musik wörtlich als Sprache nimmt, den führt sie irre* (Cf. MLC: p.113; GS 16: p.649; TMR, p.90f.).

²² Albrecht Wellmer distinguishes between five variations of meaning embodied in the term “language-likeness”, which he relates exclusively to music. Music resembles language, firstly as a language of feelings, secondly as a world representation, thirdly as a syntax and grammar, in the fourth instance as a text (of musical notes), and in the fifth instance as a linguistic interpretation of artworks. The fifth aspect, significant for Wellmer’s aesthetics (the latter being based on a theory of communication), in my view exceeds the bounds of Adorno’s understanding of language-likeness, the intention-less character of which relates to a manifestation particular and proper to the artwork itself, and can therefore not be reconciled with the communication to be effected by the performing artist. Cf. Albrecht Wellmer (2003).

the artwork itself, and not some intention invested in it, that speaks to us. Artworks are eloquent only when they are not informed by a “message”.²³ Artworks, according to Adorno, “are things whose power it is to appear. Their immanent process is externalized as their own act, not as what humans have done to them and not merely for humans.” (AT: p.107; GS 7: 125).²⁴ The eloquence of the artwork is released by a configuration particular to its materials. This objective configuration simultaneously requires control over the material, i.e. the subjective ability to dispose of the materials. Its consistency is neither made nor produced. It is not created by a mere decision, but rather depends on an “immanent” or “autonomous logic” of the materials (MLC: pp. 117, 123; GS: 653, 661). The materials dispose themselves by virtue of their own energy to a consistent whole, to which they strive “of their own” (MLC: p.125; GS: p.664; cf. AT: 158; GS 7: p.180). And it is this power, which is proper to the artwork, that makes the artwork eloquent and hence active, alive. “Artworks are alive in that they speak [...] by virtue of the communication of everything particular in them. Thus they come into contrast with the arbitrariness of what simply exists.”²⁵ Intentionless is thus the language of the artwork just because the artwork itself speaks (GS 16: p.664; AT: p.157; GS 7, p.180).²⁶

This oeuvre-specific semblance is the power by which artworks cast

²³ Cf. Adorno’s statement on music: “Its similarity to language is fulfilled as it distances itself from language” (*Ihre Sprachähnlichkeit erfüllt sich, indem sie von der Sprache sich entfernt*) (MLC: p.117; GS 16: p.654).

²⁴ [*Kunstwerke*] sind Dinge, in denen es liegt, zu erscheinen. Ihr immanenter Prozeß tritt nach außen als ihr eigenes Tun, nicht als das, was Menschen an ihnen getan haben und nicht bloß für Menschen.

²⁵ *Lebendig sind sie als sprechende [...]. Sie sprechen vermöge der Kommunikation alles Einzelnen in ihnen. Dadurch treten sie in Kontrast zur Zerstreutheit des bloß Seienden* (AT: p.4; GS 7: p.14f.); cf. “Radicalized, what is called reification probes for the language of things” (*Was Verdinglichung heißt, tastet, wo es radikalisiert wird, nach der Sprache der Dinge*) (AT: p.78; GS 7: p. 96). – “Form seeks to bring the particular to speech through the whole” (*Form versucht, das Einzelne durchs Ganze zum Sprechen zu bringen*) (AT: p.190; GS 7: p.217). – “Artworks become like language in the development of the bindingness of their elements, a wordless syntax even in linguistic works” (*Sprachähnlich wird das Kunstwerk im Werden der Verbindung seiner Elemente, eine Syntax ohne Worte noch in sprachlichen Gebilden*) (AT: p.242; GS 7: p. 74; See also AT: pp.101, 185, 189, 284; GS 7: p.121, 211, 215f., 323).

²⁶ Cf. Adorno’s formulation: “then the language itself [of the poem] speaks” (*dann redet die Sprache [des Gedichts] selber.*), in: “Rede über Lyrik und Gesellschaft” (GS 11, p.57), “Die beschworene Sprache. Zur Lyrik Rudolf Borchardts” (GS 11: p.536); or: art “becomes eloquent in itself” (*spricht an sich*) (AT: p.147; GS 7: p.171).

their spell over us, by which they command our attention and address us. The artwork manifests itself by virtue of the fact that it carries one away, that one is drawn into it and loses oneself in it. However, this being-carried-away resembles mental captivity rather than the sensual enthrallment of, for instance, the sweet charm of Mozart arias. Rather, the artwork casts its spell over us by awakening our interest in interpreting it, so that we begin to feel the wish to understand it. By exerting their fascination, artworks attract our attention and thereby initiate reflection. Decisive is the fact that the reflection is not intended by the person, but initiated by the artwork. Adorno also calls this inner capacity of the work to move us to reflection as “the need of artworks for interpretation” (AT: p.169; GS 7: p.194): the “neediness” of the work itself, that “demands” comprehension, “awaits” it, and “longingly await” it.

But why does aesthetic eloquence escape the aporia in which propositional language is caught? Put differently, how is it possible to understand what has been said, without presupposing thought as the very faculty enabling this understanding? An answer can be found by referring back to the above mentioned capacity of the artwork to address people. The possibility of being able to understand what has been said does not reside in the human being, but is given by the artwork. The artwork can address a human being with such immediacy, that what is said can be understood.

The description of the second characteristic of the intentionlessness further helps to elucidate this matter. For in the second instance, the artwork is intentionless in the sense that it does not convey meanings, and hence what it says is not a content of propositional character. What the work says, is rather this saying itself, its language. The artwork is not unravelled with the knowledge of what ought to be thought, but rather by understanding the demand for thought emanating from the artwork.

The artwork addresses, and demands therefore thinking. This giving to think is, on the one hand, the form in which the artwork addresses us. On the other hand, it is also what is said. What a artwork conveys with immediacy, is therefore not an already defined content, but primarily this immediate addressing. By itself and by its own strength, the artwork alone moves us to pay attention to itself, and not to anything that should be acknowledged beyond being attentive. Attention is therefore that to which the artwork by itself moves. For that reason, language-character and interpretation do not coincide. The language-likeness of the artwork is the precondition of the possibility of interpreting it. Before we interpret a work, it must have addressed us in such a way that we desire to understand it. That the interpretation of a artwork meets its specificity, is – by contrast to the language-character – an achievement of the

interpreter, and not an ability of the artwork. The artwork attracts to itself so that we begin to interpret it. And, simply because we wish to understand it, we give importance to an interpretation concerning the artwork. What the work demands, is the attention to itself, and not the conclusiveness and certainty of its interpretation.

Starting from here it becomes easier to understand the claim that the artwork is not therefore involved in an aporia, because the understanding is made possible by the artwork itself. In the encounter with a artwork, we begin to reflect because it addresses: it calls, and we listen to. The artwork moves by itself to this attentiveness. Since the artwork, by virtue of its form, addresses us with immediacy, and this addressing is in itself what is said, the said cannot be any content that would still have to be translated by the subject. The said has not first to be explained by means of an interpretation; rather, it is already the condition of interpretation. In so far as the understanding of the demand to reflect is not so much the result, but rather the origin of an interpretation, such understanding does not presuppose itself as a subjective ability, e.g. as an interpreting or explaining activity. Instead, the artwork itself makes possible the understanding of the demand to reflect. It demands that we think, and it does so in a way that we can immediately understand this demand.

III. Aesthetic immediacy

Aesthetic understanding has the form of immediacy. This immediacy endows the artwork with a specific ambivalence of its own, its so-called enigmatic character:

This quality of being a riddle, of saying something that the listener understands, and yet does not understand, is something [music] shares with all art. No art can be pinned down as to what it says, and yet it speaks. (MLC: p.122; GS: 16: p.660).²⁷

What artworks wish to mean, is revealed with immediacy only in experiencing them, while it closes itself to a conceptual explanation. The said, it could thus be argued, issues from the artwork. In this sense, the

²⁷ [Musik] teilt mit aller Kunst den Rätselcharakter, etwas zu sagen, das man versteht und doch nicht versteht. Bei keiner Kunst läßt sich festnageln, was sie sagt, und dennoch sagt sie. Cf. "That artworks say something and in the same breath conceal it expresses this enigmatic quality from the perspective of language" (Daß Kunstwerke etwas sagen und mit dem gleichen Atemzug es verbergen, nennt den Rätselcharakter unterm Aspekt der Sprache) (AT: p.160; GS 7: p.182, cf. p.304f.).

artwork may be described as an origin. The artwork is a source of thought, in the sense that it initiates thinking by virtue of its *immediate* eloquence.²⁸

Artworks are able to say without mediation what does not appear beyond their experience. But for that very reason, we must now add, the said also conceals itself. It is the unmediated eloquence which, on the one hand, allows a reflection to begin, but, on the other, forbids that we may truly conceive of this reflection as binding. “Signifying language”, writes Adorno in describing this ambivalence, “would say the absolute in a mediated way, yet the absolute escapes it in each of its intentions, which, in the end, are left behind, as finite. Music reaches the absolute immediately, but in the same instant it darkens, as when a strong light blinds the eye, which can no longer see things that are quite visible”²⁹ (MLC: p.116; GS 16: p. 652; AT: p.177; GS 7: p.201.).

Just why the absolute escapes from meaning language may have become clear from the already demonstrated aporia of this attempt. Conversely, as for the relationship between art and the absolute, it should firstly be retained that – despite of the polemic on the concept of the absolute – Adorno does not simply reject it. On the contrary – music is said to touch the absolute without mediation.

Although the artwork – by virtue of its eloquence – is able to give rise to reflection, it shares with the meaning language the fate of being unable to retain it. Admittedly, the artwork “touches” thought “without mediation”, i.e. within its semblance. But precisely on account of this closeness and immediacy, thought becomes – according to Adorno’s image – “obscure”. It reverts to obscurity, because the eloquence whence it issues is restricted to the area within the semblance of an artwork. But why does this eloquence remain confined to experience, and why does the origin of thought remain hidden from theoretical observation, especially as it emerges in experience?

The reason for this is the autonomy of the artwork: The origin of thought withdraws into the artwork, on account of the latter’s autonomy. Autonomous artworks are capable of speaking by virtue of their own

²⁸ Adorno avoids the term “origin” in order to distance himself from Heidegger. Still, the conceptual differentiation cannot hide a resemblance in content, notably to the idea of “shock” (Stoß) as expounded by Heidegger in his essay on the artwork. Cf. Martin Heidegger (1960: 65-68).

²⁹ *Die meinende Sprache möchte das Absolute vermittelt sagen, und es entgleitet ihr in jeder einzelnen Intention, läßt eine jede als endlich hinter sich zurück. Musik trifft es unmittelbar, aber im gleichen Augenblick verdunkelt es sich, so wie überstarkes Licht das Auge blendet, das das ganz Sichtbare nicht mehr zu sehen vermag.*

power, i.e. on account of their inner configuration, and without having to be imbued with an intention or purpose. There is thus no reason, apart from their semblance, for turning one's attention to them. Nobody who has not yet come under their spell, and who is not in a certain sense captivated by this spell, can therefore be *convinced* of their significance (AT: p.160, 164f.; GS 7: p.182f., 188f.; MLC: pp.116-117; GS 16: p.652f.). Autonomy – as the first paragraph of the *Aesthetic Theory* argues – authenticates the rightful claim of art, and simultaneously dislodges it. On the one hand, autonomy is the seal vouching for the authenticity of artworks. On the other hand, autonomy prevents the artwork from ever convincingly laying claim to a “right of existence” or a “reason for being”. By being experienced, artworks can therefore move to a thought. However, inasmuch as no reason can be adduced for art itself, thought within art also escapes understanding.

This means that the artwork itself now assumes a somewhat aporetic character. Adorno thoroughly investigates this aspect in his diagnosis of the culture industry. The relationship between the culture industry and great art is not one of mutually alien opposites. On the contrary, great art itself generates mass culture.³⁰ Being its autonomy expression no less of the impossibility of grounding it than of its realisation [*Gelingen*], the negation of art appears as a possibility inherent to art. That autonomous art cannot lay claim to any compelling reasons for being, encompasses the freedom to be alienated into products contrary to its character. The culture industry is therefore not a phenomenon of barbarism, which is alien to art and could be overcome only by art.³¹

Of decisive importance is the consequence that results for autonomous art as regards culture industry. As indicated above, authentic

³⁰ “Light art has accompanied autonomous art as its shadow” (*Leichte Kunst hat die autonome als Schatten begleitet*) (DA: p.107; GS 3: p.157). “Thus we see that the evolution of the opera, and in particular the emergence of the autonomous sovereignty of the artist, is intertwined with the origins of the culture industry. Nietzsche, in his youthful enthusiasm, failed to recognize the artwork of the future, in which we witness the birth of film out of the spirit of music. [...] ...how inaccurate it is to assert that mass culture was imposed on art from outside. The truth is, it was thanks its own emancipation that art was transformed into its opposite.” (*So verschränkt der Übergang der Oper an die autonome Souveränität des Artisten sich dem Ursprung der Kulturindustrie. Die Begeisterung des jungen Nietzsche hat das Kunstwerk der Zukunft verkannt: in ihm ereignet sich die Geburt des Films aus dem Geiste der Musik. [...] ...wie wenig die Massenkultur der Kunst bloß von außen angetan ward: kraft ihrer eigenen Emanzipation ist diese in ihr Gegenteil umgeschlagen*) (VW: pp.107f.; GS 13: pp.102f.).

³¹ Adorno's diagnosis of the culture industry has rightly been criticized for its totalizing tendencies, which fail to recognize the significance of popular culture. However, this does not invalidate the main thrust of his diagnosis.

art carries the potential of its own deformation. For that reason, it does not simply exist. We are not always readily faced with authentic artworks, but also – and virtually as a rule – with culture industry. On this background emerges the need for a critique of culture capable of distinguishing between authentic and apparent artworks. The aesthetic experience therefore presupposes thought as the criticism capable of distinguishing between authentic art and the culture industry. Thus before thought issues from artworks, it must already have distinguished these from apparent works. Thought is supposed to issue from the artwork. And yet it is already presupposed as the capacity to see through the semblance of culture-industry-products, and turn towards authentic artworks. In this sense thought precedes art as the pre-aesthetic concern to give preference to truth over semblance. It is only after one has already turned towards true artworks, that the latter are able to address one. In this sense, the eloquence of art does not occur unconditionally, but presupposes the willingness to engage with artworks. The latter remain speechless, unless a concern for cognition imbues them with significance. Aesthetic language-likeness can move – without mediation – to a reflection, but it is not itself pure immediacy. It is not an origin, and hence not unprecedented by what is only supposed to flow from it: a reflection. The reflection – and in this way the aporia manifests itself in the artwork – is as an opening oneself to artworks, on the one hand, a point of departure, and simultaneously it is where artworks by themselves seek to move to. Thought precedes the aesthetic experience, and at the same time it is the content that can only be set free in this very experience.

Two states of affairs are thus revealed: an element of untruth and semblance contained in aesthetic language-likeness (to be explained in part IV of this paper), and the limitation with which any attempt at elucidating the origin of thought also as an issue from the artwork collides. A reflection is not a natural given, and hence not exempt from the need to explain its existence, neither is it adequately explained by stating that it is initiated by another phenomenon, i.e. the artwork. A reflection may occur *within* the aesthetic experience, but it does not necessarily result from arguments, far less is it an inevitable consequence of such arguments: not even of those employed in the analysis of a artwork. Artworks may move to thought, as Adorno puts it, but without the “magic of making anything happen” (*die Magie des Einwirkens*, cf. MLC: p.114; GS 16: p.650). Here we once again encounter the idea from the *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, i.e. that disaster in the real world can be traced back to a rationality that appears to be validated by nature. Because this rationality excludes a reflection that would always need to be performed first, but whose necessity cannot become visible to

cognition. The reflection on whether things really are what they seem is not a pre-existing, natural given. Any reflection must have a beginning, but it is not inevitable that this beginning does in fact occur. Reflection cannot be enforced, and neither can a world that is different from the historically existing one. Any attempt to *persuade* to reflection and hence to the core of a better world replicates the coercion which is an indelible mark of the bad world. What moves towards reflection remains a part of freedom that manifests itself in art, but beyond the reach of compelling arguments.

IV. Critique as a means of self-transcending (Selbstüberwindung)

Without doing full justice to the fragments on Beethoven, it can nevertheless be stated that Adorno's interest essentially focuses on the "dialectic-dynamic character" – be it right, or be it apparent – of Beethoven's music. It owes its dynamism to the fact that its individual formal elements mutually interact in a constellation, which builds the work as a whole. Thus individual figures are introduced so "devoid of qualities" (*qualitätslos*), that they strive of their own for greater articulation and demand to be developed further.³² For instance, with Beethoven, the beginning is not an introduction to a theme that is still to come. In the first bars, the theme, which is not a theme, is already vaguely there, and, kept in a vague state, it yearns to be manifested. An insufficient moment strives by itself to come to light, but in such a way that it does not appears fully articulated, but rather as a reminiscence. This drive for manifestation, immanent to the single element, accounts for its dynamism.

This dynamism forms the field of forces not only of the formal elements, but also of the audible, experiential attraction, by which the performed musical work casts its immediate spell over us. What the work expresses is therefore no content, but its dynamic form. Musical works are only understood in their practical performance, because it is only by virtue of the unmediated experience of their dynamism that they are able to address us. Here resides the significance of musical reproduction. The aim of his book on reproduction – according to Adorno – was to rescind the separation of the work from the reproduction and to emphasize the mutual relationship between the work and the performance, the text and the interpretation. Admittedly the score contains the whole as the comprehensive correlation of its moments. But for the work to be able to

³² Cf. BB: pp.10-25; NS I.1: pp.31-51, and VW: pp.50f.; GS 13: p.49. See also Friedrich A. Uehlein (1998).

speak and to reveal its sense (*Sinn*), the performer has to interpret it, i.e. to perform it.³³ For its manifestation, music therefore depends on what lies beyond the composition, it depends on the spontaneity, fantasy, imagination, improvisation, and even on the physical exertion of the performer (TMR: pp. 107, 114, 126, 148f., 155, 196). On the other hand, the instructions for an appropriate interpretation are contained within the composition itself, and consequently the interpretation in turn is dependent on the pre-existing composition (TMR: pp.161, 168ff., 196).

Against this background, Adorno's designation of Beethoven's music as an imageless language (*bilderlose Sprache*) can more easily be understood.³⁴ Its imagelessness distinguishes Beethoven's music from Romantic music, even from that of such a valued composer as Schubert's. Whereas Schubert's *Lieder* inspire yearning by the audible heaviness and emptiness of life, Beethoven attains yearning by speaking without an image of something specific. Schubert suggests that life is the moving force. With Beethoven, on the other hand, the addressing power resides exclusively in the form of dynamism. Admittedly, Beethoven's music brings the moving element to perception musically, and hence in the form of imagery. However, this image is cancelled without delay, since it is mediated exclusively by means of the form. Beethoven's music constitutes metaphysics, in the specific sense that it identifies the moving with no spatially-temporally specifics.

Great art such as Beethoven's is therefore also always characterised by a semblance (*Schein*). By addressing us by themselves, artworks awake the semblance that their language-likeness comes from nature and is hence independent of external activities and occurrences. Interpretations of Beethoven's music as one, if not *the* example of absolute music fail to recognize this semblance, which – according to Adorno – Beethoven's

³³ Cf. TMR: p.13: "Not without reason is to interpret music called to make music – to perform imitative achievements." (*Musik interpretieren heißt nicht umsonst Musik machen – nachahmende Leistungen vollbringen*). Cf. *ibid.* 10, 12, 19, 74 f., 101 f., 107, 208. Cf. MLC: 115; GS 16: p.651: "To interpret language means to understand language; to interpret music means to make music. [...] But to play music properly means, above all, to speak its language properly. [...] It is only in mimetic practice [...] that music discloses itself, never in a consideration that it independently interprets in the act of execution." (*Sprache interpretieren heißt: Sprache verstehen; Musik interpretieren: Musik machen.[...] Musik richtig spielen aber ist zuvörderst ihre Sprache richtig sprechen. [...] Nur in der mimetischen Praxis [...] erschließt sich Musik; niemals einer Betrachtung, die sie unabhängig in ihrem Vollzug deutet.*). Cf. also RPhM: p.139f.; GS 18: p.154.

³⁴ Beethoven's music "is not an image of anything, and yet is an image of the whole: an imageless image" (*kein Bild von etwas – und ist es doch, Bild des Ganzen, bilderloses Bild*) (BB: p.8; NS I.1.: p.28).

music itself opposes. Artworks are both autonomous *and* made as something that became so. They are no being without a becoming. The concealing of this is what constitutes their semblance.³⁵ The question whether a critique of their semblance is possible is thus important for their issue. Adorno's oeuvre offers two divergent answers to this question. According to one answer, philosophy – as a conceptual analysis of the artwork – provides this critique of semblance. Before studying this response more closely in part V of the present paper, I wish to expound the other answer, which Adorno puts forward in the course of his Beethoven interpretation. In this latter case, the critique is of an aesthetic nature. Both the philosophical and the aesthetic critique are procedures of immanent critique, and hence spell out the aporia expounded above in relation to the artwork. There, the artwork originates and simultaneously already presupposes thought as a capacity of critique. Here, the aporia consists in that which lies between the autonomy of the artwork to address and to move by its own ability to thought, and a critique, the emergence of which cannot lay on such an ability of the artworks. However, by means of his different approaches, Adorno resolves one-sided the aporia, respectively, in a philosophical and in an aesthetic direction, without dealing with both as an unity. According to the one approach, the philosophical analysis of the artwork takes the external site of critique, which exists independently of the artwork, and hence suspends the question of how the philosophical critique comes about. The aesthetic approach locates critique in the artwork itself, and hence raises the question of the possibility of that aesthetic self-suppression of the semblance (*Selbstaufhebung des Scheins*). Artworks themselves fulfil the critique on their apparent (*scheinhaft*) autonomy. They manifest themselves by virtue of their own capacity, and must once again stage the of their autonomous manifestation, i.e. make it valid, expose it, or express it. The question is how artworks express the semblance, if this expression cannot be that autonomous and language-like semblance, which – according to Adorno – is their only one legitimacy.

Adorno investigates this matter in Beethovens late works, which he regards as an immanently critical evolution from Beethoven's middle, classical phase. But even before that, a kind of pre-history of the late works manifests itself in the move from the classical works that the works of the late middle phase fulfil. Adorno develops the decisive aspect of this distinction in his temporal theory of musical types (BB: pp.88-100: NS I.1: pp.134-150). This theory distinguishes between the intensive

³⁵ Cf. in relation to the "semblance of being not artifactual", AT: pp.171-175; GS 7: pp.196-200.

and extensive temporal types. The former marks the dramatic symphonic form: as, for example, the *Eroica*, the *Fifth Symphony*, the *Kreuzersonate* op. 47, the Piano Sonatas op. 53 and 57, the first movement of the String Quartets op. 59,2 and 95. The latter temporal type belongs to the epic form, for instance the first movements of the *Pastoral* op. 68, the first movements of op. 59,1 and of op. 69, as well as of the Piano Concerto in G major, but especially the *Archduke-Trio in B-flat major* op. 97. The distinction between intensive and extensive is modelled on the one between systole and diastole in breathing. Music of the intensive type seems to “inhale”. Its dynamic tension integrates the time to form a single, dense stream, a breathless rush. Music of the extensive type, on the other hand, “takes time off”, exhales, takes time for a “breather”. In exhaling the music pauses, lingers, does not push on, as music of the symphonic form does, but stands still, “takes its time”.

Intensive and extensive temporal types, symphonic and sonata form remain in a mutual relationship of “aporia”, “paradoxy”, or “objective antinomy” (BB: pp.94, 96, 98, 100; NS I.1: pp.142, 144, 147, 149). Its aporia consists in the unity of opposites, viz. autonomy and its critique. The critique is aimed at the semblance of autonomy and self-movement (*Selbstbewegung*). Adorno refers to it as the “totality” of a work that appears to speak by itself. It is accomplished in the corrective adjustment of the intensive type by the extensive. By way of speaking, the extensive type constitutes a variant of immanent critique in the realm of musical theory.³⁶ Adorno interprets the moments of extensive distension as moments that find by themselves their sense in the remembrance of making music. As he puts it in a comment on the lengthening of the cello F in the 8th and 9th bar of the first movement of the *Archduke-Trio*:

A suspension of progression and of unity is achieved while, at the same time, thematic unity is strictly maintained (in genuinely dialectical fashion). The form draws breath. This pause is the truly epic moment. But it is a moment when music reflects on itself – it looks around. In the extensive type Beethoven’s music attains something resembling self-contemplation. It transcends its own breathless self-containment: the naivety that inhabits the rounded, closed masterpiece that purports to have created itself and not to have been ‘made’. Perfection in a work of art is an element of illusion,

³⁶ “The theory of the extensive type should be understood as follows: both as a critique of the classical Beethoven, and as a configuration the critique of which gave rise to Beethoven’s last phase.” (*So ist die Theorie des extensiven Typus zu verstehen: als Kritik des klassischen Beethoven und als die Konfiguration, deren Kritik den letzten involviert.*) (BB: p.90; NS I,1: p.137).

which is opposed by the self-contemplation of the extensive type. 'Actually, I'm not a totality at all.' This looking-around is achieved, however, by using precisely the means of totality: music transcends itself. (BB: p.92; NS I.1: p.139).³⁷

In their standing still, the extensive moments step back from the dynamism, in order, one could say, to undermine their self-movement. By being interrupted, the movement is being exposed as something that is in no way nature-given or perennially possible. What makes the extensive critique of the intensive self-movement aporetic, however, is only the fact that it presupposes this very movement. After all, the question is how these extensive movements are at all possible, if they are not elements of an autonomous manifestation. Granted, the extensive work undermines the semblance of self-movement that characterises the dynamic form. However, it must manifest itself also as music, and hence presupposes the dynamic form as a prerequisite of its own manifestation. On the other hand, this possibility is precluded by its definition as a critique of dynamic self-movement, to which it is opposed. For instance, it is said of the reprise in the *Archduke Trio* that its significance lies in the remembrance of the semblance of dynamic self-movement, which raises the question how it can manifest itself as this critique, “since no dynamic progression leads up to it” (BB: p.95; NS I.1: p.143). How can music manifest itself as a critique of autonomous manifestation, if simultaneously it subverts an autonomy that constitutes the only legitimate manifestation of music?

On the one hand, it can only have been initiated by the artwork itself, but on the other hand, cannot have issued from it. Adorno's strength is that he does not cut this knot. What – according to Adorno – makes Beethoven's late works great is not that they claim to solve this aporia, but that they fail to solve it, thereby exposing it to full view.

A work of art is great when it registers a failed attempt to reconcile objective antinomies. That is its truth and its 'success': to have come

³⁷ *Es wird eine Suspension des Fortgangs und der Einheit erzielt bei gleichzeitigem striktem Festhalten der thematischen Einheit (echt dialektisch). Die Form schöpft Atem. Dies Innehalten ist das eigentlich epische Moment. Es ist aber ein Moment der Selbstreflexion der Musik: sie blickt um sich. Im extensiven Typ kommt Beethovens Musik zu etwas wie Selbstbesinnung. Sie transzendiert ihr atemloses Bei-sich-selber-Sein: die Naivität, die gerade in dem runden, geschlossenen Meisterwerk steckt, das sich gibt, als schaffe es sich selber und sei nicht 'gemacht'. Die Vollkommenheit am Kunstwerk ist ein Element von Schein und diesem opponiert die Selbstbesinnung des extensiven Typus. 'Eigentlich bin ich ja gar keine Totalität'. Dies Um-sich-Blicken aber wird erzielt gerade mit den Mitteln der Totalität: die Musik transzendiert sich selber. (cf. BB: pp.92f., 96f., 99f.; NS I.1: pp.141, 145, 146, 149).*

up against its own limit. In these terms, any work of art which succeeds through not reaching this limit is a failure. This theory states the formal law which determines the transition from the 'classical' to the late Beethoven, in such a way that the failure objectively implicated by the former is disclosed by the latter, raised to self-awareness, cleansed of the appearance of success and lifted, for just this reason, to the level of philosophical succeeding. (BB: p.100; NS I.1: pp.149f.).³⁸

Artworks attain their proper "philosophical achievement" in the explicitness of their aporia. The latter comes to light or, as it is put, is revealed in the performing immediacy. Artworks do not depict their aporia, they perform it.

The aporia of the intensive versus the extensive type, of symphonic versus sonata form, is acted out in two sites. On the one hand, the extensive works of the latter part of the middle period evolved from the intensive classicist works as if they were a correction of these. On the other hand, the late works themselves are a critique of both the classicizing works and of those of the latter middle period, which still share the aporia as a relationship between the works. What Adorno interprets, in Beethoven's middle period, as the unfolding of two distinctive phases of his oeuvre, he finds united in a single work, namely the first movement of the Ninth Symphony.³⁹ The last symphony, Adorno writes, is the work in which the extensive, epic type "is paradoxically reconciled" (BB: p.97; NS I.1: p.146) with the intensive, symphonic type. The paucity of material analysis, just like the prescriptive predominance of work interpretation, lends credence to the suspicion that Adorno's approach conceals a problem. This problem lies not so much in an over-interpretation of Beethoven, who may not have intended the Ninth Symphony to be this reconciliation, but in Adorno's aesthetic appropriation of the critique.

³⁸ *Groß ist ein Kunstwerk, wenn sein Mißlingen objektive Antinomien ausprägt. Das ist seine Wahrheit und sein 'Gelingen': auf die eigene Grenze stoßen. Jedes Kunstwerk das sie nicht erreicht und gelingt ist demgegenüber mißlungen. Diese Theorie stellt eigentlich das Formgesetz dar das den Übergang des 'klassischen' zum späten Beethoven bestimmt und zwar derart, daß das objektiv in jenem angelegte Mißlingen von diesem aufgedeckt, zum Selbstbewußtsein erhoben, vom Schein des Gelingens gereinigt und eben damit ins philosophische Gelingen erhoben wird. (cf. DA: p.103f.; GS 3: p.152).*

³⁹ "The Ninth is, in a sense, an attempt to interlock the intensive and extensive types." (*Die IX. ist in einem gewissen Sinn der Versuch, intensiven und extensiven Typus zu verschränken.*) (BB: p.190; cf. *ibid.* p.97; NS I.1: p.136; cf. *ibid.* p.146). According to Adorno, the Seventh Symphony may be seen as having been an early attempt at such integration (BB: p.88; NS I.1: p.134).

Two questionable constellations emerge from Adorno's interpretation of Beethoven. The first of these concerns the above-mentioned idea of music transcending itself. The critique of autonomy, it was claimed, is attained by means of what is being criticized. Music itself, in its extensive form, exposes the semblance attached to its autonomous manifestation. This implies that the critique satisfies the requirement of its immanence. What is being neglected, however, is its pre-aesthetic perspective, which is precisely what cannot be initiated from the artwork itself. In this sense, the question of how a critique of the artwork could effectively proceed from the outside is not adequately addressed by the notion of self-transcending. That the artwork itself exposes its semblance – this not only repeats the myth of a negativity which neutralizes itself. It also remains in Adorno merely an assertion. With regard to the genesis of the *oeuvre*, there is no description of how the works of the latter middle period, by starting from the classicist works, may have been able to assert themselves as a critique of the latter. Under the perspective of an immanent approach it remains unexplained how a single work like the Ninth Symphony may by itself destroy the semblance of self-movement that it simultaneously produces. Adorno's tangible over-interpretation reveals more than mere misinterpretation. It poses, rather, the question whether the project of a dialectic of enlightenment can in fact be accomplished in art.

The second problem suggests an answer in the negative. Adorno's dialecticization of the artwork, as illustrated by his understanding of Beethoven, fails precisely the dialectic that is intended to do justice to the aporia of thought. It does so on account of idealizing the performing immediacy. Artworks are supposed to expose the initially concealed aporia by enacting it. Their accomplishment thus gives unmediated expression to what the semblance of autonomous manifestation conceals. However, this unmediated expression of their aporia is not yet the explicitness that would allow for the comprehension of the aporia. It can only emerge with such explicitness once both the cause and the inevitability of the aporia manifest themselves. The explicitness and transparency of aporia are not exhausted in its performing unmediated expression, but rather require argumentative depth. This, however, is an analytical and conceptual task that artworks do not accomplish. It is ironic that Adorno, particularly in his interpretation of Beethoven, whom he considers as a continuation of Hegel's dialectic, should fail to account for the relation between the representation and what is being represented, the dialectic of consciousness and reflection in Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*, and that he should hence fail to align the perspective of his own philosophical analysis with the underlying understanding of the artwork.

V. The language-likeness of philosophy

The task of subjecting artworks to philosophical analysis is founded by Adorno on the philosophical concept of truth.

Philosophy and art converge in their truth content: the progressive self-unfolding truth of the artwork is none other than the truth of the philosophical concept. [...] The truth content of artworks is not what they mean, but rather what decides whether the work in itself is true or false, and only this truth of the work in-itself is commensurable to philosophical interpretation and coincides – with regard to the idea, in any case – with the idea of philosophical truth. [...]: aesthetic experience is not genuine experience unless it becomes philosophy. (AT: p.172; GS 7: p.197).⁴⁰

The truth of the work is, as transpires from the context, the “not made”, the “intention-less”, or “nature”, i.e. the intentionless manifestation in the form of addressing, that emanates from the artwork itself. A philosophical analysis of the artwork must determine – according to Adorno – whether an artefact has language-likeness or not, and hence whether it is a artwork or not. This analysis distinguishes between “true” and “false” works, between authentic art and culture industry. Philosophical analysis of artworks therefore performs a critique of culture in the sense set out above, and takes effect as a pre-aesthetic concern to distinguish between the true and the untrue.

What Adorno presents here is an inverted version of the solution offered in his first approach to aporia. Whereas, in that case, philosophy is restricted to the “philosophical achievement” that consists of the performing expression of the aporia in the work, here, the aesthetic experience is possible exclusively (!) by means of the philosophical work analysis. There, the pre-aesthetic concern for truth is located within the artwork itself, and hence re-interpreted as an intra-aesthetic self-transcending of the semblance. Here, philosophy is cast in the emptiness of the pre-aesthetic, and in this sense the pre-aesthetic status of critique is

⁴⁰ *Philosophie und Kunst konvergieren in deren Wahrheitsgehalt: die fortschreitend sich entfaltende Wahrheit des Kunstwerks ist keine andere als die des philosophischen Begriffs. [...] Der Wahrheitsgehalt der Werke ist nicht, was sie bedeuten, sondern was darüber entscheidet, ob das Werk an sich wahr oder falsch ist, und erst diese Wahrheit des Werkes an sich ist mit der philosophischen Interpretation kommensurabel und koinzidiert, der Idee nach jedenfalls, mit der philosophischen Wahrheit. [...] genuine ästhetische Erfahrung muß Philosophie werden oder sie ist überhaupt nicht.*

accounted for. However, the question as to how the philosophical critique of semblance is motivated remains answered, since it cannot be born from the artwork, and hence from the origin of thought (*Denkursprung*).

In what follows, this matter will be investigated with reference to Adorno's contribution, while avoiding any one-sided solution. Adorno's aesthetic approach surely calls for the rehabilitation of philosophy. Simultaneously, this conception of philosophy must guard against forfeiting the alternative to traditional philosophy that Adorno rightly attributes to the aesthetic language phenomenon. This conception would have to prove its worth, while recognising aesthetic language-likeness as a joint characteristic of art and philosophy. Such an attempt can take as a point of departure Adorno's idea of a genuinely philosophical power of representation. Adorno introduced this notion at a central point of his work, and he did so in a strangely rhapsodic way and without further explanation:

This may help to explain why the presentation of philosophy, is not an external matter of indifference to it but immanent to its idea. Its integral, nonconceptually mimetic moment of expression is objectified only by presentation in language. (ND: p. 18; GS 6: p. 29).⁴¹

Language-likeness, which distinguishes artworks from propositional statements, is an integral element of the expression of philosophical representation. Accordingly, philosophy's power of representation is not at all restricted to propositional statements, analytical differentiations, or logical proofs. Admittedly it remains committed to them, but beyond this, it develops its own descriptive power, namely on account of its being constituted as immanent critique.

So far philosophy has asserted itself as a critique not only of enlightenment, but also of the aesthetic answer to the question as to what it is that moves us to thought. This does not, of course, imply that philosophy has answered this question. However, it has at least exposed the open character of this question in an appropriate way. What it is that makes us prefer thought to any ignorance, is not comprehensible, either

⁴¹ *Das mag erklären helfen, warum der Philosophie ihre Darstellung nicht gleichgültig und äußerlich ist, sondern ihrer Idee immanent. Ihr integrales Ausdrucksmoment, unbegrifflich-mimetisch, wird nur durch Darstellung – die Sprache – objektiviert.* – In this regard, the following reflections are in agreement with Jürgen Habermas' criticism of Adorno's weakening of the role of theory and of his concept of immediacy, though the present paper understands this immediacy as relating less to practice than to the artwork. But above all, the present reflections are at variance with Habermas's opinion that the aporia of the *Dialectic of Enlightenment* may be circumvented; cf. Jürgen Habermas (1985: esp. p.154f.).

rationally or on the basis of experience. Neither rationality – at least not that of enlightenment, which restricts itself to logic – nor art is capable of revealing this origin. And it would be possible to demonstrate that, even for theology, the matter at issue is this hidden beginning, which – as theology puts it – language is. Rationality, art and theology jointly circle around an origin of thinking, which none of them manages to grasp. But what, then, is it that moves us to thought? What else is it, if neither rationality, nor aesthetics, nor theology can explain why we prefer truth to semblance? Admittedly, philosophy does not provide an answer to this question. But perhaps it was able to move us to reflect on this matter. Hence this reflection only begins against the backdrop of the negativity of both rationality and experience.

Admittedly, this reflection on thought was from the outset supposed to be the question guiding our reasoning. However, initially no motive emerges for this question, which consequently hardly appears as a concern worthy of pursuit. But this initial lack of necessity is the only appropriate form in which this question can manifest itself. Not only because the freedom of the origin of thought is expressed in it, which compelling reasons can never attain, but also because the quest for the origin of thought is as far from being immediately given as any other reflection. Properly speaking, the question only arises in the course of its negative mediation. In fact, it only arises and imposes itself by virtue of being mediated by the critique of inadequate answers to it, i.e. via the critical representation of both rationality and the experience of the artwork. Admittedly the attempt to represent an origin of thought will always remain aporetic, because thinking about it will always precede the attempted representation. Nevertheless, this presupposed reflection is recovered once the representation of its aporia has been completed. Only once both the cause and the inevitability of this aporia have been grasped does the question arise, and the origin of thought manifests itself in the form of such ongoing questioning. The aporia of thinking is its origin. This origin cannot simply be represented, but manifests itself as that which escapes a rational or aesthetic representation of thought, and hence always remains intangible. The origin is not exposed, but performed, in that its inaccessibility is shown anew at every occasion, thereby truly initiating reflection upon it.

Philosophy that admittedly fails to grasp the origin of thought conceptually, but engenders its manifestation by performing it, is a dialectical theory of thought. In contrast with the artwork, *theoretical* reflection generates argumentatively an explicit awareness of its own aporia. And it is only this explicit awareness of its own aporia that initiates reflection, and hence causes the origin to manifest itself. Its

dialectic consists in the fact that this emergence of the origin of reflection, its presence, depends on its hiddenness (*Entzogenheit*). A reflection here occurs, mediated by the representation of the conceptual hiddenness of its origin. Contrary to any immediacy of the origin of thought, philosophy insists on its hiddenness. But in doing so, it is more than a merely negative representation of absence. After all, philosophy is also representation of the origin in its concealment: It causes the origin to emerge as what conceals itself. The philosophical interpretation of artworks is therefore not restricted to a mere critique of immediacy, but precisely as a critique of aesthetic immediacy it also demonstrates the emergence of the origin of thought in the artwork, as that which conceals itself. For this reason, the right of aesthetics and its limitation coincide: It is neither based on a false understanding of art, as if the appropriate understanding were able to answer the question of thought; nor, on the other hand, is it a mere failure. For in this failure alone does the origin manifest itself, and by so doing concealing itself. However, philosophy is a theory of *thought*, because the origin of thought emerges and manifests itself, not as the origin of any particular thinking, for instance of practical considerations guiding the will, or of the analysis of artworks, or of scientific research. Rather, it emerges as the origin of reflection on the origin itself. It emerges solely as the beginning of reflection on what it is that, given its concealment, causes thinking to begin.

Translated by Richard Bertelsmann

“Identity is the very Devil!”: Notes on Adorno, Wittgenstein, and Music

Paulo Ferreira de Castro

*Great works can be recognized by the gap
between their aim and their actual achievement.*

Theodor W. Adorno (*SFrag*: p.226; *GS* 16: p.455)¹

“Adorno and Wittgenstein” is hardly a recognizable topic. What, after all, could the redoubtable dialectician from Frankfurt have in common with the ascetic Viennese *philosophe malgré lui*? What if anything could be drawn upon as a mediation between a mode of socially and politically committed thought steeped in Hegel, Marx and messianic theology, on the one hand, and a philosophy taking its cue from Frege’s and Russell’s pursuits in the fields of pure logic and the foundations of mathematics, on the other?

The answer is simple: for a long while, virtually nothing. We have no reason to believe that Wittgenstein ever became aware of Adorno’s existence (and we can only guess what he might have made of his texts had he done so). As for the members of the Frankfurt School, their assessments of Wittgenstein are scanty and, when they exist, turn out to be almost invariably dismissive. By and large, their perception of the author of the *Tractatus logico-philosophicus* is that of a neo-positivist moving in the orbit of the Vienna Circle, and their condemnation of positivism and the analytical tradition as a whole is promptly extended to Wittgenstein’s philosophy. In a lecture of 1962, for instance, referring to some well-known passages in the *Tractatus*, Adorno has the following to say:

When Wittgenstein explains that one should only say what can be said clearly, and be silent about what cannot be said clearly, it all sounds very heroic indeed and possibly even has some mystical-existential overtones that appeal most successfully to people in the present mood.

¹ *Grosse Werke sind kenntlich an der Differenz dessen, was aus ihnen hervortritt, von ihrer eigenen Intentionen.*

On the other hand, I believe this famous sentence by Wittgenstein to be indescribably vulgar from an intellectual point of view, because it fails to grasp the whole point of philosophy: the paradox of this venture lying precisely in saying by means of the concept that which actually cannot be said by means of the concept, actually saying the unsayable after all. (PhT: I, pp.55-56).²

And later (1963), in the same series:

The task of philosophy, I would go so far as to say, is the complete opposite to that which is postulated in Wittgenstein's famous saying at the end of his "Treatise": "What one cannot speak of, one must be silent about". (PhT: II, p.183).³

From passages such as these, it emerges clearly that for Adorno "Wittgenstein" is little more than a cipher: his name stands for a view of philosophy that is largely unacceptable, indeed antagonistic, to the whole project of critical theory, namely, an affirmative mode of thinking which, by restricting itself to a supposedly neutral and stable ("scientific") description of the existent, blinds itself to the possibility of any alternative account of truth. Incidentally, one might add, this is not an altogether unwarranted interpretation of certain claims in the *Tractatus*;⁴ but one wonders whether Adorno would have held his strictures in the face of Wittgenstein's later remark (1929) that the running "against the boundaries of language", no matter how hopeless, is "a tendency in the human mind" which, in his own words, "I personally cannot help respecting deeply" and "would not for my life ridicule" (Wittgenstein,

² Wenn Wittgenstein erklärt, man solle nur das sagen, was sich klar sagen lässt, und über das schweigen, was sich nicht klar sagen lässt, dann klingt das zwar sehr heroisch und hat womöglich noch einen mystisch-existentiellen Oberton, der sehr erfolgreich an die Menschen in der gegenwärtigen Stimmung appelliert. Ich glaube aber, dass dieser berühmte Satz Wittgensteins geistig von einer unbeschreiblichen Vulgarität ist, weil darin vorbeigesehen wird an dem, worauf allein es in der Philosophie ankommt: das ist genau das Paradox dieses Unterfangens, mit den Mitteln des Begriffs das zu sagen, was mit den Mitteln des Begriffs eigentlich nicht sich sagen lässt, das Unsagbare eigentlich doch zu sagen.

³ Die Aufgabe der Philosophie, möchte ich einmal sagen, ist das ganze Gegenteil dessen, was in dem berühmten Spruch von Wittgenstein postuliert ist, mit dem sein "Traktat" schliesst: "Wovon man nicht sprechen kann, darüber muss man schweigen".

⁴ Cf. Wittgenstein (1989: 6.53, p.176): "The right philosophical method would be this: to say nothing but what can be said, i. e. the propositions of natural science – i. e. something that has nothing to do with philosophy" (*Die richtige Methode der Philosophie wäre eigentlich die: Nichts zu sagen, als was sich sagen lässt, also Sätze der Naturwissenschaft – also etwas, was mit Philosophie nichts zu tun hat*).

1993: p.44). In all fairness, Adorno's own verdict in his "Einleitung zum 'Positivismusstreit in der deutschen Soziologie'" (1969) appears marginally more nuanced: "[Wittgenstein] has reached the threshold of a dialectical consciousness of so-called constitution problems and carried scientism's right to cut off dialectical thinking ad absurdum" (Adorno, 1969b: p.302).⁵ Might not Wittgenstein's phrase, the "running against the walls of our cage", in turn be taken after all as an apt description of Adorno's own dialectical imperative?

The posthumous publication of *Philosophical Investigations* in 1953 did little at first to modify the tenor of the Continental reception of Wittgenstein, in spite of the obvious shifts in its author's philosophical aims and methods. On the one hand, the widespread interpretative scheme based on the radical opposition of a "first" and a "second" Wittgenstein only served to reinforce the by then well-established positivistic interpretation of the *Tractatus*; on the other hand, the philosophical context of its publication caused the work to be read mainly as a sample of so-called "ordinary language philosophy", to which Continental philosophers tended to react with contempt. (One could recall Marcuse's criticism of Wittgenstein in *One-dimensional man* as a case in point.)

Not all criticisms were equally monolithic though, even amongst Wittgenstein's fiercest opponents, and in this context the interpretation of the *Tractatus* given by Lukács deserves mention. For Lukács too, Wittgenstein's position is close to the positivists', that is, to a philosophy that celebrates that "universal manipulation of life" typical of late capitalism; but, unlike the positivists, Wittgenstein is deeply aware of precisely those vital problems which a scientist philosophy would rather expel from its sphere – and here Lukács must be thinking of a passage such as section 6.52 of the *Tractatus* (p.176):

*We feel that even when all possible scientific questions are answered the problems of our life remain completely untouched.*⁶

⁵ [Wittgenstein hat] die Schwelle eines dialektischen Bewusstseins von den sogenannten Konstitutionsproblemen erreicht und das Recht des Szientismus ad absurdum geführt, dialektisches Denken abzuschneiden.

⁶ Wir fühlen, dass selbst, wenn alle möglichen wissenschaftlichen Fragen beantwortet sind, unsere Lebensprobleme noch gar nicht berührt sind. – The historical misreading of Wittgenstein has been described in a similar vein by Paul Engelmann (1970: p.77): "A whole first generation of disciples was able to take [Wittgenstein] for a positivist, because he really has something of enormous importance in common with the positivists: he draws the line between what one can speak about and what one must be silent about just as they do. The difference is

From Lukács's perspective, the trouble with the philosophy of the *Tractatus* is that the answer to such awareness of "all that really matters in human life" (Engelmann) consists in nothing but an injunction to silence, and therefore in a kind of masochistic exercise in the self-destruction of philosophy as such. Wittgenstein's silence, then, can express no more than

the thinking (and above all the feeling) of those who cannot see a way out of the universal manipulation of life through present-day capitalism, but are only capable of raising a protest against it that is impotent from the outset. (Lukács, 1984: p.375).

This kind of assessment can be said to have remained in force until Apel, Habermas and Gadamer, among others, began to confront Wittgenstein's philosophy with a degree of sympathy unknown to the Frankfurt School, giving the initial impulse to what has been termed Wittgenstein's "return to the continent" since the 1960s. Thanks to this movement (not altogether devoid of its own inevitable set of misrepresentations), Wittgenstein (now especially the author of the *Philosophical Investigations*) quickly attained the unprecedented status of the thinker who, coming from the "wrong" side of the philosophical fence, was destined to incarnate the epochal linguistic turn in philosophy – thus suggesting a somewhat unexpected convergence with certain developments in the mainstream of Central European thinking. Oddly enough, the acknowledgement that, to a large extent, these developments have also been fostered by Adorno and other members of the Frankfurt School has not been conducive to much research into the "hidden links" between the two directions of thought.⁷ Such a task is obviously beyond the scope of the present paper. What follows should be regarded as no more than a suggestion as to where some such links might be looked for, and takes as its focus Adorno's and Wittgenstein's attitudes towards the "unsayable" – as well as the related

only that they have nothing to be silent about" (*Eine ganze erste Schülergeneration konnte [Wittgenstein] für einen Positivisten halten, weil er mit diesen wirklich etwas enorm Wichtiges gemein hat: Er zieht die Grenzlinie zwischen dem, worüber man sprechen kann, und dem, worüber man schweigen muss, genauso wie sie. Der Unterschied ist nur, dass sie nichts zu verschweigen haben*).

⁷ Some significant exceptions are: Jürgen Habermas's and Albrecht Wellmer's contributions to the Wittgenstein centenary symposium at Frankfurt University (proceedings published as "*Der Löwe spricht... und wir können ihn nicht verstehen*", cf. McGuinness, 1991); Demmerling (1994); several papers in the 1/96 issue of *Wittgenstein Studies* (on-line publication, 1996), especially those by Thomas Rentsch, Geert-Lueke Lueken and Christoph Demmerling; and Wiggershaus (2000) to all of whom I am indebted.

question of the crucial cognitive role assigned to art, and particularly to music, within their respective philosophies.

*

The image of Wittgenstein as an “analytical” philosopher was not seriously challenged until the publication of Allan Janik’s and Stephen Toulmin’s much-decried, and highly influential, *Wittgenstein’s Vienna* in 1973. The main argument of the book revolves around the conviction that in spite of all his associations with the British empiricist tradition, Wittgenstein was in fact “a Viennese thinker whose intellectual problems and personal attitudes alike had been formed in the neo-Kantian environment of pre-1914, in which logic and ethics [and aesthetics as well, one should like to add] were essentially bound up with [one another] and with the critique of language” (p.22). Janik and Toulmin were not the first, however, to point to the transcendentalist connection of Wittgenstein’s early philosophy: in his commentary of the *Tractatus*, Erik Stenius (1960: p.214), for one, states the view that Wittgenstein’s dependence on an Anglo-Saxon model of thought is in fact of only secondary importance to the core of his philosophy, which is, “on the whole, more related to German metaphysics, and in particular to the metaphysics of Kant”; and the idea that the *Tractatus* represents a form of linguistic transcendentalism, in which language somehow takes on the function assigned by Kant to transcendental consciousness, has by now become relatively widespread.⁸ In the case of Wittgenstein we may well concede that the Kantian heritage was mediated above all by his passionate reading of Schopenhauer, himself a rather unorthodox Kantian; but even though Wittgenstein’s Kantianism has been played down by those, like Rudolf Haller, who uphold the rights of an indigenous Austrian empiricist tradition, it is hard not to give at least some credit to Erik Stenius’s claim that “one did not need to have read Kant to be influenced by a more or less clearly stated Kantianism; it belonged to the intellectual atmosphere in the German speaking world” (Stenius, 1960: p.214).⁹ It is precisely this Kantian background that can be said to provide the crucial bridge between Wittgenstein and Adorno: not only in the purely biographical sense that, as is well known, the *Critique of Pure Reason* formed the starting point for the latter’s philosophical

⁸ “What Kant’s transcendental deductions are intended to perform: this is performed by the logical analysis of language” (Stenius, 1960: p.218).

⁹ On Haller’s position, cf. for instance Haller (1999) and Haller (1988), especially chapters 1 and 3.

apprenticeship, but also in view of both men's conception of philosophy as a *self-critique of reason*, no matter how differently pursued in each case.¹⁰

Wittgenstein's avowed aim in the *Tractatus* (4.114, 4.115) consists in the demarcation of the "unsayable" from within, as it were, by means of a painstaking account of what *is* sayable (p.58), and this task he sets out to fulfil by means of the so-called "picture theory" of language, which rests, roughly speaking, on the assumptions that a one-to-one relation obtains between word and object, and that a proposition and the possible state of affairs it "depicts" share one and the same "logical form" – a form, however, that cannot in turn be expressed by any proposition: "That which expresses *itself* in language, *we* cannot express through it" (*Was sich in der Sprache ausdrückt, können wir nicht durch sie ausdrücken*).¹¹ Wittgenstein assimilates the limits of theoretical reason to the limits of linguistic expression *per se*, and these ultimately emerge from his conviction that the inner core of logic is essentially *tautological*,¹² a notion bearing on the 'emptiness' of the identity principle – a principle so true that it fits nothing in the world but itself. Small wonder then that in the thick of his struggling with the most intractable problems of formal logic a desperate Wittgenstein should once have confided to Russell: "Identity is the very Devil!"¹³

The gist of Wittgenstein's critique of language can already be found in the work's preface (p.2): "The book will, then, draw a limit to thinking, or rather – not to thinking, but to the expression of thoughts [...]. The limit can therefore only be drawn in language, and what lies beyond the limit will simply be nonsense".¹⁴ Sense is therefore, according to the early Wittgenstein, the preserve of the "universal" language of science (or

¹⁰ Among other intellectual stimuli common to both men at different points one could cite Goethe, Schiller, Kierkegaard and Nietzsche, as well as *Gestalttheorie* and psychoanalysis. It should also be added that Schopenhauer's influence on Adorno is less often acknowledged than is the case with Wittgenstein. For obvious reasons of space I will not pursue such lines of inquiry here.

¹¹ Wittgenstein (1989: 4.121, p. 58). Cf. also 4.12.

¹² Id., 6.1: "The propositions of logic are tautologies" (*Die Sätze der Logik sind Tautologien*); and 6.11: "Therefore the propositions of logic say nothing" (*Die Sätze der Logik sagen also Nichts*) (p.142). Cf. also Diamond (1989): pp.282ff; Wittgenstein 1997: 216, p.350.

¹³ Letter to Bertrand Russell (17.10.1913), in *Cambridge Letters* (Wittgenstein, 1995: p.41).

¹⁴ *Das Buch will also dem Denken eine Grenze ziehen, oder vielmehr – nicht dem Denken, sondern dem Ausdruck der Gedanken [...]. Die Grenze wird also nur in der Sprache gezogen werden können und was jenseits der Grenze liegt, wird einfach Unsinn sein.*

of “facts”): whatever may lie beyond its bounds is to be regarded as *nonsense* (*Unsinn*) and as such cannot be *said*. But, in a decisive Wittgensteinian ontological twist, there may be ways in which the “unsayable” can reveal, or *show*, itself: “There is indeed that which is inexpressible. This *shows* itself, it is the mystical” (6.522, p.176)¹⁵ – a phrase which in its negativity already seems to border on Adornian territory.

Logical analysis of propositions may well clarify the sense of what *is* sayable, an important achievement by itself within a culture plagued by all kinds of language misuse (as typically diagnosed by contemporary Viennese authors such as Hofmannsthal and Karl Kraus),¹⁶ but Wittgenstein’s real quest lies well beyond such an aim (this is the sense of the famous metaphor of philosophy as the ladder that is to be thrown away after one had climbed up on it – cf. Wittgenstein, 1989, 6.54, p.178). In keeping with his theory, all propositions are declared *gleichwertig* (equivalent) (6.4), although *value* (*Wert*), not sense, is the ultimate horizon of his endeavours. “Hence there cannot be any propositions of ethics either”,¹⁷ he declares, in a statement in turn leading up to the single direct reference to aesthetics in the whole *Tractatus*, the elliptical pronouncement “Ethics and aesthetics are one” (*Ethik und Ästhetik sind Eins* – 6.421) – making explicit how ethics and aesthetics are inextricably bound up with each other and with the question of the “unsayable” in the context of Wittgenstein’s early philosophy (pp.170,172).¹⁸

We need to turn to the wartime *Notebooks* for an elucidation of that fleeting and rather obscure allusion; in a note dated October 7, 1916, Wittgenstein writes:

¹⁵ *Es gibt allerdings Unaussprechliches. Dies zeigt sich, es ist das Mystische.*

¹⁶ In passing, it may seem ironic that, at the root of Benjamin’s and Adorno’s preoccupation with style and “presentation”, one could detect the influence of Wittgenstein’s foremost intellectual hero, the Viennese – but rather amusical – Karl Kraus, for whom “the accurate use of language was synonymous with the representation of truth” (Susan Buck-Morss, 1977: p.13). Buck-Morss aptly relates Adorno’s and Benjamin’s concerns with the problematics of *Darstellung* with Kraus’s critique of language and the overall Viennese intellectual and artistic climate, to which Adorno, for one, was directly exposed from the time of his studies there with Alban Berg.

¹⁷ *Darum kann es auch keine Sätze der Ethik geben* (6.42).

¹⁸ It should be noted that, as late as 1929, Wittgenstein writes in his “Lecture on Ethics”: “I am going to use the term Ethics [...] in a sense [...] which includes what I believe to be the most essential part of what is generally called Aesthetics” (Wittgenstein, 1993: p.38).

The work of art is the object seen sub specie aeternitatis; and the good life is the world seen sub specie aeternitatis. This is the connection between art and ethics (Wittgenstein, 1997: p.178).¹⁹

Art and ethics (insofar as they are *possible* at all: we shall return to this topic in due course) open up a perspective on the world as seen from an ideal location: the standpoint of “eternity” (in the sense of timelessness), from which alone any object could be known as if liberated from the constraints of subjectivity (*with* space and time instead of *in* space and time, as Wittgenstein would have it), and the world itself contemplated as a “totality” (*als begrenztes Ganzes* – 6.45, p.174). These are, of course, venerable *topoi* of a Neoplatonic bent, revived by many as an integral part of *fin-de-siècle* mystique: one is reminded, for instance, of the ecstatic condition depicted by Stefan George in his poem “Entrückung”, not coincidentally the inspiration behind the atonal last movement of Schoenberg’s Second String Quartet. But it would appear that Wittgenstein’s notion of contemplation is in fact more closely modelled on Schopenhauer’s theory of art, and it may be illuminating to compare the above passage with the following excerpt from *The World as Will and Representation* (§ 36):

[Art] plucks the object of its contemplation from the stream of the world’s course, and holds it isolated before it. This particular thing, which in that stream was an infinitesimal part, becomes for art a representative of the whole, an equivalent of the infinitely many in space and time. It therefore pauses at this particular thing; it stops the wheel of time; for it the relations vanish; its object is only the essential, the Idea. We can therefore define it accurately as the way of considering things independently of the principle of sufficient reason, in contrast to the way of considering them which proceeds in exact accordance with this principle, and is the way of science and experience (Schopenhauer, 1969: p.185).

Schopenhauer’s view of art as a redemptive transfiguration of reality is intimated in a few elusive utterances from the *Notebooks*, but as late as 1930 Wittgenstein can be seen to rely on much the same frame of reference. He writes:

But only the artist can represent the individual thing so that it appears to us as a work of art [...]. The work of art compels us – as one might

¹⁹ *Das Kunstwerk ist der Gegenstand sub specie aeternitatis gesehen; und das gute Leben ist die Welt sub specie aeternitatis gesehen. Dies ist der Zusammenhang zwischen Kunst und Ethik.*

say – to see it in the right perspective, but without art the object is a piece of nature like any other [...]. (Wittgenstein, 1998: pp. 6e-7e).²⁰

Here, it seems to me, we find one of the clearest expressions of Wittgenstein's basic stance – one that could be defined as the search for the “right perspective” on life and world alike, from which the “unsayable” can (perhaps...) *show* itself. Characteristically, his standpoint as a philosopher is itself essentially modelled on the vision of the artist's work, and this vision remains binding throughout his entire *oeuvre*: as he notes in the early 1930s, “I believe I summed up where I stand in relation to philosophy when I said: really one should write philosophy only as one *writes a poem*” (Wittgenstein, 1998: p.28e)²¹ – a position not to be confused with a trivial aestheticizing of philosophy, which to him would amount to yet another form of *schweefeln*.²² Later he would go as far as to admit: “Scientific questions may interest me, but they never really grip me. Only *conceptual* and *aesthetic* questions have that effect on me. At bottom it leaves me cold whether scientific problems are solved; but not those other questions” (Wittgenstein, 1998: p. 91e [21.01.49])²³ – an admission, incidentally, that could almost be mistaken for a quotation from Adorno.

Inevitably, any account of Wittgenstein's early aesthetics must also acknowledge the privileged status of music among the various art forms. In this respect, I believe one can hardly begin to evaluate the full implications of music for his philosophical outlook without taking into account the extraordinary role that music played in the Wittgenstein household – in this respect not unlike Adorno's own family circle:²⁴ that

²⁰ *Doch kann nur der Künstler das Einzelne so darstellen dass es uns als Kunstwerk erscheint [...]. Das Kunstwerk zwingt uns – sozusagen – zu der richtigen Perspektive, ohne die Kunst aber ist der Gegenstand ein Stück Natur wie jedes andre [...].*

²¹ *Ich glaube meine Stellung zur Philosophie dadurch zusammengefasst zu haben indem ich sagte: [P]hilosophie dürfte man eigentlich nur dichten.*

²² In a letter to Ludwig von Ficker from October or November 1919, Wittgenstein uses this Austrian idiom as he refers to his aims in writing the *Tractatus*: “All that so many people babble about today, I have laid down in my book, by keeping silent about it” (*Alles das, was viele heute schweefeln, habe ich in meinem Buch festgelegt, indem ich darüber schweige*) (Wittgenstein, 1980: p. 97).

²³ *Wissenschaftliche Fragen können mich interessieren, aber nie wirklich fesseln. Das tun für mich nur begriffliche & ästhetische Fragen. Die Lösung wissenschaftlicher Probleme ist mir, im Grunde, gleichgültig; jener andern Fragen aber nicht.* – To what extent his position might also reflect an influence of Nietzsche is a much-neglected question in the field of Wittgensteinian studies, to which no definitive answers can be given here.

²⁴ Wittgenstein's parental home was a musical household par excellence: his father, one of the most prominent industrialists in Austria, played the violin; his mother

bildungsbürgerliche, sheltered world of privacy and inwardness, where musical mothers and aunts provide the ideal safeguard against the unpleasantness of reality, and children first learn the virtues of aesthetic sublimation immanent in the bourgeois *intérieur*. Not surprisingly, Wittgenstein's musical attitudes were to a large extent conditioned by the intimate knowledge (indeed, the self-evidence) of the great Viennese tradition between Haydn and Brahms which he acquired as a boy, and which also offered him the kind of affective security he would never be able to find elsewhere. Of modern music, on the other hand, he was more than sceptical, which is perhaps ironic, given the striking affinities that might be established between the world of the *Tractatus* and, say, Webern's music.²⁵ (That Wittgenstein's tastes in artistic matters were not uniformly retrospective is shown, incidentally, by the house he designed for his sister in a style clearly reminiscent of Adolf Loos's; although it must be added that he was not entirely happy with the result.)

For all those brought up in similar circumstances in Germany or Austria in the latter part of the 19th century, Schopenhauer's metaphysics was of course part and parcel of the very awareness of music as an art form. This legacy is the utopian element of Schopenhauer's aesthetics, itself a distillation of pervasive romantic themes, traces of which can be readily detected in Wittgenstein as well as in Adorno: in its lack of referentiality (at least in the sense in which the term is commonly understood), music is like a mirror to the world without really "belonging"

was a remarkable pianist (one hesitates to describe her as an amateur, given the exceptionally high standards of the family's home music-making); one of his brothers was no other than the famous pianist Paul Wittgenstein, for whom Ravel, Prokofiev and Richard Strauss, among others, wrote works for piano left-hand; and the family's long-standing musical connections included, at various times, Clara Schumann, Brahms, Hanslick, Joachim and his Quartet, the Rosé Quartet, Mahler, Bruno Walter, the young Pablo Casals and the blind organist and composer Josef Labor (who occasionally gave advice to Schoenberg on compositional matters). Although young Ludwig did not seem particularly gifted in this exacting musical environment and did not learn to play an instrument as a child, he developed an intense, almost obsessive, interest in music, became the most fastidious of listeners, and cultivated whistling as an art form. Only later did he learn to play the clarinet, as part of his training as a schoolteacher (cf. Brian McGuinness, 1990: especially pp.19-21). Adorno's mother was a professional singer, and his mother's unmarried sister, whom Adorno considered as a second mother, was a pianist. The similarity of both men's backgrounds of course extends to the fact that they both came of well-to-do assimilated Jewish families.

²⁵ An often-overlooked common denominator between Wittgenstein's early philosophy and some features of Schoenberg's school is provided by the impact on both of Goethe's theory of morphology. Concerning Wittgenstein, cf. Joachim Schulte (1990).

to it, a paradoxical “universal language” whose task it is to express the inexpressible, or, in Schopenhauer’s own words, “[the] copy of an original that can itself never be directly represented” (Schopenhauer, 1969: p.358).²⁶ In a Schopenhauerian sense, a “true philosophy” would only be possible in the guise of a comprehensive and definitive explanation of music (id., p.369); and this claim too was to have a considerable impact on both Adorno and Wittgenstein. In the *Notebooks*, for instance, the latter toys with the idea that, as a kind of metalanguage, music might hold the answer to some of the philosophical puzzles that kept teasing him at the time:

*But is language the only language?
Why should there not be a mode of expression through which
I can talk about language in such a way that it can appear to
me in coordination with something else?
Let us suppose that music were such a mode of expression:
then it is at any rate characteristic of science that no musical
themes occur in it.
I myself write only sentences down here. And why?
In what way is language unique? (Wittgenstein, 1997,
29.5.15: p.144).²⁷*

Much later, in an entry in his diaries from the early 1930s, we read this most revealing of admissions:

*I often think the highest aim I might possibly achieve would be to
compose a melody, (28.4.30) (Wittgenstein, 1997b: p.21)²⁸*

and the temptation to “liquidate” philosophy into music is of course something that Adorno, who for his part never quite gave up composition, would have been familiar with. In music’s similarity to language

²⁶ ...[das] *Nachbild eines Vorbildes, welches selbst nie unmittelbar vorgestellt werden kann.*

²⁷ *Aber ist die Sprache die einzige Sprache?*

Warum soll es nicht eine Ausdrucksweise geben, mit der ich über die Sprache reden kann, so dass diese mir in Koordination mit etwas Anderem erscheinen kann?

Nehmen wir an, die Musik wäre eine solche Ausdrucksweise: Dann ist jedenfalls charakteristisch für die Wissenschaft, dass in ihr keine musikalischen Themen vorkommen. Ich selbst schreibe hier nur Sätze hin. Und warum?

Wie ist die Sprache unik?

²⁸ *Ich denke oft das Höchste was ich erreichen möchte wäre eine Melodie zu komponieren.*

(*Sprachähnlichkeit*) and utopian potential arising from a common background of deep Schopenhauerian pessimism we of course recognize some crucial motifs of Adornian theory.

It hardly needs pointing out that for Adorno too (himself a Viennese *manqué*)²⁹ music takes pride of place in his philosophical universe: in an aphorism from *Minima moralia*, for instance, he goes as far as subscribing to the romantic dogma of music's hegemony among the arts – indeed, as the *only* autonomous art in a strict sense – in terms not very dissimilar to, say, Walter Pater's brand of aestheticism:

Perhaps the strict and pure concept of art is applicable only to music, while great poetry or great painting – precisely the greatest – necessarily brings with it an element of subject-matter transcending aesthetic confines, undissolved in the autonomy of form. (MM: p.223; GS 4: p.252).³⁰

It is a remarkable point of convergence of two otherwise very different modes of thought that music should be presented as the “higher” – in fact, as the “absolute” – language by both philosophers, in the context of what has been described (from the Adornian side at any rate) as the interplay of neo-Kantian and Jewish themes typical of the interwar years.³¹ If for Wittgenstein, as we have seen, music is a language that says nothing, although this “nothing” is what matters most to him as part of the “mystical” realm of the metalinguistic, for Adorno (heavily influenced in this respect by Benjamin's early linguistic mysticism), music seems to approach the ideal of what he calls the “true” language of “the name”; in music, the dissolution of extrinsic meanings (*Bedeutungen*) in the autonomy of musical form appears almost complete – an achievement that amounts to the obstinate attempt, “das Unsagbare eigentlich doch zu sagen”:

The language of music is quite different from the language of intentionality. It contains a theological dimension. What it has to say is simultaneously revealed and concealed. Its Idea is the divine Name which has been given shape. [...] It is the human attempt, doomed as ever to name the Name, not to communicate meanings. (FML: p.2; GS

²⁹ On Adorno's relation to Vienna, cf. Heinz Steinert (1993).

³⁰ *Vielleicht ist der strenge und reine Begriff von Kunst überhaupt nur der Musik zu entnehmen, während große Dichtung und große Malerei – gerade die große – notwendig ein Stoffliches, den ästhetischen Bannkreis Überschreitendes, nicht in die Autonomie der Form Aufgelöstes mit sich führt.*

³¹ For instance by Michael P. Steinberg (1993: p.398).

16: p.252).³²

In his much-quoted “Fragment über Musik und Sprache”, Adorno argues, in a way that Wittgenstein himself might have found congenial, that music is akin to logic, insofar as right and wrong can be distinguished in it; like language, music is a succession of articulated sounds that are “more” than “just” sound, but what these sounds “say” cannot be abstracted from the music: Adorno is adamant that music does *not* form a system of signs, and in this too he seems in agreement with Wittgenstein’s suggestion that “music conveys to us *itself*”,³³ an idea that survives well into the post-Tractarian period.³⁴

The decisive distinguishing factor between music and language, according to Adorno, lies in music’s virtual ignorance of the concept, and with it, of the kind of “identity thinking” that lies at the root of reason’s devilish temptation to grasp the totality of the real, although he is quick to remark that music *does* know its own quasi-concepts in the guise of recurring, coagulated (*geronnenne*) formulas, making room for “musical specification” much as the concept does for individual things – and like concepts too, susceptible to being healed of their abstractness by the changing context in which they may be found, or the configuration (*Zusammenhang*) that may be constructed out of them. Music, Adorno writes in the “Fragment”, aims at the intentionless: but if music is to be more than a mere succession of physical stimuli, intentions are in fact essential to it, insofar as they are, as Adorno puts it, intermittent, and dialectically resolved into musical structure (FML: pp.1-2; GS 16: pp.251-252). Therefore, the most “musical” kind of text is not the one that tries to imitate musical effects, but the one that, like the greatest music, best resists interpretative closure (it should be clear by now that

³² *Gegenüber der meinenden Sprache ist Musik eine von ganz anderem Typus. In ihm liegt ihr theologischer Aspekt. Was sie sagt, ist als Erscheinendes bestimmt zugleich und verborgen. Ihre Idee ist die Gestalt des göttlichen Namens. Sie ist [...] der wie immer auch vergebliche menschliche Versuch, den Namen selber zu nennen, nicht Bedeutungen mitzuteilen.*

³³ Cf. *The Brown Book* (1934-1935) – Wittgenstein (1969: p.178; cf. also p.166). On occasion, as in his criticism of Tolstoy’s aesthetics, Wittgenstein extends the same principle to the work of art in general: see Wittgenstein (1998: p.67) (5.4.47).

³⁴ As it happens, this maximalist view of musical autonomy also tends to sound like a variation on certain formalist themes, being strongly reminiscent, for instance, of Hanslick’s assertion regarding what he calls a “beautiful melody”: “It is meant to be itself and nothing else” (*Sie soll nichts Anderes sein, als sie selbst*) (Hanslick, 1990: p.45) – an indication of the curious intertextual commitment of both thinkers to the conservative 19th-century *topos* of absolute music, which Adorno would eventually translate into an essential feature of his modernist aesthetics. Hanslick’s central thesis is in fact critically referred to in Adorno’s “Fragment”.

Adorno's idea of "great music" tends to connote the free atonal and athematic style of Schoenberg's pre-serial works). In this respect, Adorno contends, an author like Kafka is infinitely more musical than Swinburne or Rilke, for, instead of attempting to write "musically" in a conventional sense, he tends to treat literary meanings as if they were musical ones – like broken-off parables (*abgebrochene Parabeln*), in Adorno's telling metaphor. This dialectical *Musikähnlichkeit* of language could be said in turn to provide a key to Adorno's own highly idiosyncratic style: in the anti-systematic character of his writing, he sometimes tends towards a mode of presentation that would approximate music's way of "taming" intentionality (without, however, ceasing to uphold philosophy's own rights: Adorno is particularly adamant about this):

To be musical means to energize incipient intentions: to harness, not indulge them. This is how music becomes structure. (FML: p.3: GS 16: p.253).³⁵

In the words of Susan Buck-Morss (1977: p.101), "Adorno didn't write essays, he *composed* them, and he was a virtuoso in the dialectical medium. His verbal compositions express an 'idea' through a sequence of dialectical reversals and inversions. The sentences develop like musical themes: they break apart and turn in on themselves in a continuing spiral of variations [...]. But there is no affirmation, no 'closing cadence'. The contradictions are unraveled; they are not resolved".³⁶

The task of philosophy could no longer be understood in terms of the retrieval of a fixed meaning lying ready and waiting "behind" the world of phenomena. Meaning, always a precarious and mobile construct, must itself be wrought out of the inexhaustible texture of reality, in a never-ending (and therefore historically and socially determined) process of reconfiguration of truth, or, as Adorno (1931, GS: 1: p.335) writes in his 1931 inaugural lecture, "Die Aktualität der Philosophie":

*Philosophy must then bring its elements [...] into changing tentative arrangements until [...] they shape up as a figure that is readable as an answer, while at the same time the question vanishes,*³⁷

³⁵ *Musikalisch sein heisst, die aufblitzenden Intentionen zu innervieren, ohne an sie sich zu verlieren, sondern sie zu bändigen. So bildet sich Musik als Struktur.*

³⁶ Cf. Adorno (1958) "Der Essay als Form", *Noten zur Literatur*.

³⁷ *So hat Philosophie ihre Elemente [...], so lange [...] in wechselnde Versuchsanordnungen zu bringen, bis sie zur Figur geraten, die als Antwort lesbar wird, während zugleich die Frage verschwindet...*

a formulation that reads like a retort to, if not indeed a parody of, the corresponding section in the *Tractatus* (6.521, p.176):

*The solution of the problem of life is seen in the vanishing of this problem,*³⁸

and seems in fact to typify Adorno's express dialectical answer to Wittgenstein's saying/showing dichotomy, in what could perhaps be even more adequately characterized as the "musicalization" of a method Walter Benjamin (1982: p.574) was to define in such strikingly Wittgenstein-sounding terms as "I have nothing to say. Only to show" (*Ich habe nichts zu sagen. Nur zu zeigen*), in a note to his Arcades project. On another plane, the same dichotomy could be said to inform Adorno's fundamental commitment to the idea that aesthetically valid artworks *expose* social contradictions rather than *resolve* them, which, again, almost suggests a dialectical variation on Wittgenstein's theme of the "mystical", as that which cannot in fact be said, but only shown.

For both Wittgenstein and Adorno, music holds out an implicit promise of redemption, and redemption lies, arguably, at the very core of both men's philosophies.³⁹ What separates them are seemingly irreconcilable attitudes towards temporality (the ever-present of timelessness against the ever-future of utopia), even though art's vanishing point is in either case somewhat indistinguishable from the always self-defeating attempt to recover/attain a state of plenitude (the form of the divine name, the unsayable, the irrepresentable). (One could also argue along Benjaminian lines that "The overcoming of the concept of 'progress' and that of the concept of 'decadence' [...] [are] only two sides of one and the same thing").⁴⁰ Redemption must ensue from an act of Tolstoyan renunciation in the first case, or not at all; from a Mosaic commitment to messianic hope in the second. But even Adorno, for all his eschatological inspiration, tends to focus on the rifts within the present rather than the anticipation of the future, not least because the

³⁸ *Die Lösung des Problems des Lebens merkt man am Verschwinden dieses Problem...*

³⁹ "The only philosophy which can be responsibly practiced in face of despair is the attempt to contemplate all things as they would present themselves from the standpoint of redemption" (*Philosophie, wie sie im Angesicht der Verzweiflung einzig noch zu verantworten ist, wäre der Versuch, alle Dinge so zu betrachten, wie sie vom Standpunkt der Erlösung aus sich darstellten*) (MM: p. 247; GS 4: p.281).

⁴⁰ *...die Überwindung des Begriffs des 'Fortschritts' und des Begriffs der 'Verfallszeit' [...] nur zwei Seiten ein und derselben Sache [sind]* (Benjamin, 1982: 575).

function of utopia in his thinking remains at best that of a regulative idea. On the other hand, because he is so mistrustful of historical progress (as a mere cloak for disintegration) and believes himself to live in a terminally corrupt age, Wittgenstein tends to think that great art is no longer viable, and he is not far from advocating a retreat from the aesthetic, in his own version of the “end of art” theme:⁴¹ “Architecture immortalizes and glorifies something. Hence there can be no architecture where there is nothing to glorify” (Wittgenstein, 1998: p74e),⁴² he writes as late as the late 1940s, for instance; he deems Mahler’s music worthless, while, characteristically, recognizing Mahler’s “rare talents” as a composer (id., 14.1.48: pp.76-77) and admits that modern music must inevitably seem “absurd”, for it is the expression of an absurd time:

*Truth would sound completely paradoxical to everyone. And the composer who feels it in himself must, because of this feeling, clash against everything that is expressed at present, and must therefore appear absurd and idiotic by current standards. Only not absurd in an attractive way (as this is basically what corresponds to today’s view after all), but meaningless.*⁴³

If there is a sense in which Wittgenstein’s cultural pessimism could be brought to bear on a critique of modernity, it would have to centre on the

⁴¹ Cf., in particular, the draft of the foreword to *Philosophische Bemerkungen* (1998 [1930]: p.9e), containing Wittgenstein’s perhaps most explicit profession of faith in “untimeliness”: “Even if it is clear to me then that the disappearance of a culture does not signify the disappearance of human value but simply of certain means of expressing this value, still the fact remains that I contemplate the current of European civilization without sympathy, without understanding its aims if any. So I am really writing for friends who are scattered throughout the corners of the globe” (*Ist es mir so klar dass das Verschwinden einer Kultur nicht das Verschwinden menschlichen Wertes bedeutet sondern bloss gewisser Ausdrucksmittel dieses Werts so bleibt dennoch die Tatsache bestehen dass ich dem Strom der Europäischen Zivilisation ohne Sympathie zusehe, ohne Verständnis für die Ziele wenn sie welche hat. Ich schreibe also eigentlich für Freunde welche in Winkeln der Welt verstreut sind*). In this connection, compare the diagnosis of the age in terms of a *Wert-Vakuum* by fellow-Viennese Hermann Broch, in the latter’s study “Hofmannsthal und seine Zeit” (Broch, 1975: pp.111ff.).

⁴² *Architektur verewigt und verherrlicht etwas. Darum kann es Architektur nicht geben, wo nichts zu verherrlichen ist.*

⁴³ *Die Wahrheit würde allen Menschen ganz paradox klingen. Und der Komponist der sie in sich fühlt muss mit seinem Gefühl im Gegensatz stehen zu allem jetzt Ausgesprochenen und muss also nach den gegenwärtigen Massstäben absurd, blödsinnig, erscheinen. Aber nicht anziehend absurd (denn das ist das was doch im Grunde der heutigen Auffassung entspricht) sondern nichtssagend. – Wittgenstein, 1997b (27.1.31): p. 38.*

role of negation (as a measure of cultural entropy, so to speak), and in this his position is not as remote from Adorno's as it might appear at first sight: it is only more bleak and uncompromising, if anything, as the duty of the modern artist now appears to consist in nothing but the acknowledgement of the sheer impossibility of the artwork.

This may be the end of art, but it is not the end of the story. After Wittgenstein's "return to philosophy" around 1929, his critical programme gradually develops instead into a strenuous self-critique directed against the narrowness of his own early views on logical analysis and the general tasks of philosophy, with the result that his former theory of language is rejected along with the atomistic assumptions that underpin the epistemology of the *Tractatus* – namely, the naïve conviction that both the proposition and the corresponding "facts" of reality break down into ultimate constituents (incidentally, a move that might profitably be brought to bear on music analysis as well, as currently practised).⁴⁴ Because Wittgenstein came to realize that a logical isomorphism between the proposition that "depicts" and that which is "depicted" is untenable, he now began to move away from the snares of "logical form" and towards the social *uses* of language, a new interest that would lead on to the development of more flexible models for the investigation of what language (and art) is and does. As he noted in one of his posthumously published *Zettel* (656), "Language actually has a multiple root; it has roots, not *one* single root" (*Die Sprache hat eben eine vielfache Wurzel; sie hat Wurzeln, nicht eine Wurzel*) (Wittgenstein, 1997c: p.429). So instead of striving after the elusive "deep structure", as a kind of "essence" of the proposition, the second Wittgenstein sets out to understand the endless variety of linguistic games (*Sprachspiele*), whose rules are at the same time the rules of a form of social praxis (*Lebensform*) and which can no longer be conceived of in the perfect autonomy of "logical form" (in other words, the questions of meaning and signification now become inseparable from those of culture and intersubjectivity: "what belongs to a language game is a whole culture", as he puts it on one occasion – Wittgenstein, 1966b: p.8). Instead of the compulsive unity bestowed by logical identity on the multiplicity of the real he now prefers to deal with the interplay of identity and difference characteristic of what he calls "family resemblances" (*Familienähnlichkeiten*) and "physiognomies" (the latter, incidentally, also an element of Adorno's vocabulary, possibly originating in Spengler).

⁴⁴ Cf. the "Vorwort" to *Philosophische Untersuchungen* (Wittgenstein, 1997, especially p. 232), where Wittgenstein acknowledges the crucial impact of the discussions he had with Piero Sraffa, a Marxist economist and a close associate of Gramsci's, on his own philosophical evolution.

Maurice O'C. Drury reports an interesting conversation from 1948 (Drury, 1996: p.157 [discontinuous pagination]), in which Wittgenstein contrasts his own position with Hegel's, while at the same time unwittingly reaching a point of maximum proximity to Adorno in his resistance to false reconciliation: "No, I don't think I would get on with Hegel. Hegel seems to me to be always wanting to say that things which look different are really the same. Whereas my interest is in showing that things which look the same are really different. I was thinking of using as a motto for my book a quotation from *King Lear*: 'I'll teach you differences'". Concurrently, his suggestion that philosophical problems "are solved, not by providing new experience, but by arranging what we have always known"⁴⁵ brings his procedure remarkably close to a method of constellation constructing. Much of Wittgenstein's later work is in fact concerned with a relentless inquiry into the ambivalent power of the concept,⁴⁶ directed, no less than Adorno's, against reification and spurious categorization ("Philosophy is a battle against the bewitchment of our intelligence by means of our language");⁴⁷ and not surprisingly his developing hermeneutical model is once again saturated with musical insights, as well as with a new awareness of the interaction of the various media, as dialectical as anything to be found in Adorno:

*Think of the multifariousness of what we call "language". Word-language, picture-language, gesture-language, sound-language.*⁴⁸ (Wittgenstein, 1993b: p. 179).

Rather than implying the denial of all specificity to "language" as a central category in his thought, Wittgenstein's second philosophy could be said to open up a whole range of *intermedial* perspectives on the question of the sayable/unsayable dichotomy that to a large extent still await serious consideration. It should also warn us, among other things, against the risks involved in every claim about music's linguistic

⁴⁵ ...werden gelöst, nicht durch Beibringen neuer Erfahrung, sondern durch Zusammenstellung des längst Bekannten. – Wittgenstein, 1997: 109, p.299. Regarding this topic, cf. also Wittgenstein's notion of *Übersicht* ("overview", "synoptical view"); for instance: "Die übersichtliche Darstellung vermittelt das Verständnis, welches eben darin besteht, dass wir die 'Zusammenhänge sehen'" (id. 122: p. 302) ("The perspicuous presentation conveys that understanding which consists precisely in our 'seeing the connections'").

⁴⁶ Including, in particular, the very concept of the beautiful: cf. Wittgenstein (1996b).

⁴⁷ *Die Philosophie ist ein Kampf gegen die Verhexung unsres Verstandes durch die Mittel unserer Sprache.* (Wittgenstein 1997: 109, p. 299).

⁴⁸ *Denke an die Vielgestaltigkeit dessen, was wir "Sprache" nennen. Wortsprache, Bildersprache, Gebärdensprache, Tonsprache.* (Wittgenstein 1993b: 129, p.179).

character that fails to address the multiform texture of “language” as a concept; the decision whether music “is” or “is not” a language being properly meaningless unless framed by some form of linguistic theory – and probably by a poetics as well. *Mutatis mutandis*, much the same would apply to “music”, of course, one of the most irritating features of both Adorno and Wittgenstein lying precisely in their tendency to deal with music (always in the singular!) as a totality, mistaking a peculiar aesthetic norm (the Viennese tradition, in both cases) for a privileged metaphysical essence, no matter how anti-totalitarian the thrust of their respective philosophies. But it could well be that, of the two, Wittgenstein is the one who offers the most auspicious means of thinking through his own self-critique without collapsing into that “running against the walls of the cage” so typical of Adorno’s aporetic imagination; and I would in fact argue that, in spite of Wittgenstein’s professed pessimism with regard to modern art, his notion of *Sprachspiel* as a play of *difference*, coupled with his critique of solipsism, opens up important theoretical perspectives whose potential for a pluralistic aesthetics remains to be fully explored.

*

I should perhaps conclude by saying that once one begins to develop a feeling for similarities one is threatened with being swamped by them. Going too far in seeking to “reconcile” Adorno and Wittgenstein would be a bad piece of identity thinking, as unwelcome as the more familiar failure to realize that their universes of discourse are indeed open to a vision that manages to see through traditional pigeonholing. It seems to me that the only method capable of doing justice to the indisputable differences in their modes of thought would be one that would allow the one to be read *against*, and not *instead of*, the other. In brief: if “Adorno and Wittgenstein” is in fact to become a topic, its justification might perhaps be found in the paradox, common to both thinkers, that music worth listening to is always an *overture*.

I wish to thank Andrew Bowie and Joachim Schulte for their invaluable comments on the original version of this paper, as well as my colleague David Cranmer for his expert linguistic advice.

‘Musique informelle’ as Postmodern Thought: Adorno and Lyotard on the Critical Possibility of Art

Ângelo Martingo

Introductory note

According to Adorno and Lyotard, modern thought is characterized by a totalizing rationality, and both the Adornian critique of the post-war avant-garde and Lyotard’s theorising of the postmodern are directed toward the critique of that character. This paper shows the way in which art may respond to that critique of modernity. Lyotard’s theorizing will be examined first, after which Adorno’s proposal of a *musique informelle* will be dealt with. The conclusion identifies common positions held by Adorno and Lyotard and relates the former’s *musique informelle* to the latter’s theorizing of the postmodern. A convergent thought is found to exist insofar as both constitute a critique of a totalizing thought, and both demonstrate the potential of art as an instrument of cultural criticism.

I – Lyotard on the postmodern

The postmodern is defined by Lyotard (1984: p.XXIV) as “[...] incredulity towards metanarratives”. By ‘metanarrative’ is meant a totalizing thought subsuming various domains of knowledge (ethical, rational, aesthetic) under the idea of emancipation (be it from nature through technology, or from myth and prejudice through reason) (cf. Lyotard 1992: pp.36, 97). The definition of the postmodern as a mode of thought resistant to a totalizing rationality excludes any understanding of the postmodern either as a system of thought or as an historical period. Conceiving of the postmodern as a mode of thought aiming at a new and exhaustive conceptual framework for thinking reality would fall into contradiction, since a totalizing rationality is precisely the object of criticism. In a similar way, since the rupture with the past is the motor of modernity’s mechanism of renewal, to conceive of the postmodern in a periodizing way would amount to a paradox (as a ‘new modernity’) and

prevent its critical potential (Lyotard 1991: p.25; 1993a: pp.47f.). The prefix ‘post’ in “postmodern” does not denote a temporal succession in Lyotard’s (1993a) account, but rather the continuous displacement of a unified and totalizing representational framework. Instead of a system of thought, the postmodern, in Lyotard’s account, might thus better be characterised as a critical strategy. The methodology of this strategy consists of putting forward elements that deconstruct the unity of a given object of reflection or a given method of thought.¹ The postmodern opens the reading of a given object or field of knowledge, according to Lyotard (1984), to the thinking of singularities. “Postmodern knowledge [...]”, Lyotard (1984: p.xxv) writes, “refines our sensitivity to differences and reinforces our ability to tolerate the incommensurable”.²

The postmodern as articulation of heterogeneous elements as well as the relation of the postmodern vis-à-vis the modern can be best understood with reference to Lyotard’s (1971) theorizing of art in *Discours, figure*.³ In *Discours, figure*, Lyotard (1971) puts forward a critical account of literature and the plastic arts by showing in each field of art the coexistence of a systematic support of sense (*‘discours’*) and of deconstructing elements that are not exhausted by the systematic framework of meaning (*‘figure’*). The Saussurean model of language and the technique of perspective are particularly expressive examples of *‘discours’*. The deconstruction of these models of representation is carried out by Lyotard with reference to the poetry of Mallarmé and the work of Cézanne and Klee in the plastic arts.

In the literary field, Mallarmé’s *Un coup de dés*, performs, according to Lyotard (1971: pp.62, 64), a deconstruction of the Saussurean structural model of the linguistic system by blocking heterogeneous modes of meaning: it signifies and it makes visible the object it speaks of. Regarding reference, Lyotard’s (1971: pp.69f.) claim is not that the

¹ Deconstruction, in Lyotard’s (1971: p.319) account, consists of introducing operations that delay the performativity and closure of a structure.

² Lyotard (1971) uses frequently the word ‘incommensurable’ to denote the relation between co-existing heterogeneous elements. The word (etymologically meaning ‘not-co-measurable’) has a long tradition in the field of mathematics for denoting the relation of two numbers for which there is no integer common divisor (i.e., the ratio of these two numbers is an irrational number). An irrational number is a number that cannot be obtained by a finite number of algebraic operations (sum, subtraction, multiplication, and division), although it may be calculated with a desired degree of approximation. Two examples of incommensurable quantities are found in the diagonal of a square with unit side length, and the ratio of the circumference to the diameter of the circle.

³ Vide Readings (1991: pp.3-52) for an excellent introduction to Lyotard in general, and a thorough discussion of *Discours, Figure*, in particular.

signifier is not arbitrary, but rather that the referent of the poem (in this case, chance), instead of being purely signified (made understood), is visually presented as irregularities in the page layout. However, to be significant from the perspective of Lyotard’s (1971: 72) deconstructive analysis, signification and visual elements cannot be thought of in terms of complementariness but rather in terms of incommensurability, that is, neither visual presentation can be exhaustively signified nor can the arbitrariness of signification be dispensed with. Lyotard thus conceives of the expressiveness and critical value of *Un coup de dés* as lying in the conflict generated by the play of incommensurable elements. On the one hand, Mallarmé uses a structure (language), on the other hand, this structure is deconstructed by the emergence of the referent in the page as visual elements.

Lyotard’s account of a deconstruction of representation in painting is carried out with reference to the work of Cézanne and Klee in terms similar to the deconstructive work of poetry on the linguistic system. Just as in Mallarmé’s *Un coup de dés*, so in Cézanne and Klee, according to Lyotard (1971: p.159), sense is produced by the play of incommensurable elements. The significance of Cézanne or Klee, according to Lyotard, is to have deconstructed the unity of representation by either delaying a unified consciousness of the object or by introducing on the canvas the condition of sensory perception. In Klee, according to Lyotard (1971: p.231) the resistance to unity of representation is created specifically by a systematic deferral of the rules of perception; by the displacements of objects from their proper places; by the simultaneous presentation of the successive; by the affirmation of contraries; and by the condensation of distinct constituents. Regarding Cézanne, Lyotard stresses the deconstruction of form by colour. “The form is achieved”, Lyotard (1988a: p.19) writes, “when colour is at its fullest”. The aim of art is thus shifted in Cézanne’s work: no longer is the mastery of a recognisable form given priority but rather the “‘matter’ hidden in the ‘data’” (Lyotard 1988a: p.20). Another process of Cézanne’s deconstruction of representation is achieved, according to Lyotard (1971: p.158), by the clash of two heterogeneous spaces: the focal zone and the diffuse periphery. The co-presence of these spaces is irreducible to oppositional differences, according to Lyotard (1971: p.159): what is recognisable in one space is not recognisable in the other.

As a summary of Lyotard’s (1971; 1984; 1988a) remarks on the work of Mallarmé, Cézanne, and Klee, we would retain the co-existence of incommensurable elements. In both the linguistic and the plastic fields, Lyotard identifies elements that contribute to the unity and readability of the object, and of elements that delay this unity and readability. With

regard to literature, this is shown in the coexistence of a linguistic structure and visual elements. With regard to painting, the blocking of heterogeneous elements is theorized with reference to the deferral of rules of perception (in the case of Klee) and to the co-existence of the focal zone and of the diffuse periphery (in the case of Cézanne).

Understood in these terms, the artwork is a privileged medium of the critique of what is put forward by Lyotard as the totalizing rationality underlying modern thought. As argued at the beginning of this paper, the postmodern is neither an historical period nor a conceptual framework opposed to modern thought (cf. Lyotard 1993a: p.50) but rather a critical deconstruction of a normative and totalizing rationality (modernity) which operates by revealing the presence of incommensurable elements (Lyotard 1984: p.xxv). Conversely, art's critical potential is apparent: knowing that the postmodern is theorized by Lyotard as a resistance to 'metanarrative', and that the incommensurability of co-present elements in the artwork continually displaces a discourse under which all the elements could be understood, art contributes to the postponement of totalizing thought.

This understanding of the postmodern is shown to parallel the Adornian critical account of modernity. Similarly to the exposition of Lyotard's theorisation, the account of Adorno's thought is focused on art, namely on his critique of the post-war avant-garde. A brief exposition of theoretical principles put forward by the serial and experimental post-war composers serves simultaneously to understand better Adorno's critique.

II – Adorno on the post-war avant-garde

In a way similar to Lyotard's understanding of modernity, Adorno puts forward 'Enlightenment' as an intellectual practice of demythologization aiming at emancipation from mythical, religious, or magical representations of the world (cf. Jarvis 1998: p.24). According to Horkheimer and Adorno (DA), reason is in this process of emancipation paradoxically reversed into myth by being incapable of self-criticism and acquiring a totalizing character. This same unreflexive reason associated with Enlightenment is, according to Adorno (VMI) at work in integral serialism where subjectivity is avoided by the self-referentiality of the technique.

In fact, the glorification of reason and of an exhaustive rationale for compositional decision is well documented in the post-war avant-garde's most representative journal: *Die Reihe*. Referring to Messiaen's *Modes de Valeurs et d'Intensités*, Eimert (1959: p.4) praises the work of rationality

for, “Messiaen did not [...] arrive at the work’s organisation unconsciously [...] his insight consisted of applying an *a priori* method to give form to musical data”. By providing modal indications for various definite succession of notes (pitch), note-values (duration), and intensity values (loudness), plus modes of attack, Messiaen achieved, in Eimert’s (1959: p.4) perspective, the “[...] ‘scientifically’ exact way of defining a note – the negation of all idealistic thinking”. Performing a fundamental unity of all acoustic material by a system that worked within its fundamental terms of reference, ‘truth’ in composition, according to Eimert (1959: p.3), no longer lies merely in a plausible psychological symbolism, a ‘likeness’: “[...] it is also constructive resolution, ‘rightness’”.

By functioning under its own terms of reference, total serialism was thought by the post war avant-garde to provide emancipation from subjectivity and nature. Referring to electronic music as the ultimate stage of musical evolution, Stuckenschmidt (1958: p.13) proclaims that “[...] the natural is abolished”. Tracing the music evolution “[...] further and further away from its human origins [...]”, he writes, “[...] we are astonished and not without pride, to have before us an art totally controlled by the spirit of the man”.

However, the limited possibilities of serial technique soon became a concern for critics, and not least for the composers themselves. Both Boulez (1968) and Stockhausen (1961) recognize the entropic character of the musical discourse resulting from the initial objective of achieving total unity in musical possibilities. Boulez’s *Troisième Sonate* and Stockhausen’s *Klavierstück XI* were designed to correct that character by allowing the participation of the pianist in the formal design and thus providing an outcome variable from performance to performance. Choosing some segments or leaving an open order of succession of segments is a concession made to the performer which the composer conceives only within a well defined framework, however. Boulez (1968: p.153) uses the term “controlled freedom” for describing the role of the interpreter. In fact, no possibility exists which is not anticipated by the composer. The case would seem to be one of interchangeability rather than randomness. In fact, the parts and the totality are continually at stake, and mutually inferred, as acknowledged by the composers themselves. According to Stockhausen (in Harvey 1975: p.77): “Only when one has heard enough of the possible versions to gain an idea of the total musical space can one see the background against which a selection is displayed”. In the same direction, Boulez (1968: p.41) writes: “If the interpreter can modify the text in his own image, it is necessary that this modification be implied in the text, that it not be [...] imposed upon it.”

Vieira de Carvalho (1994; 1996: pp.191-194; 1997; 1999: pp.247ff.) theorized this compositional approach under the concept of autopoiesis. According to Vieira de Carvalho, serial composition prefigures a self-regulated system by aiming at a rationality exhausting meaningful relations of composition.⁴ Adorno describes this state of affairs as a 'double bind', the breaking of which would be the avant-garde's 'strategic task': if, on the one hand, the technique had become unreflexive, on the other hand, any attempt to ignore the level of control over the music material (such as Cage's 'abstract negation') would remain arbitrary (VMI: pp.277f.; GS 16: p.500f.).⁵ What is asked for is subjective mediation of compositional material, by articulating a configuration which neither discards unity nor reduces material to a total self-referential integration. The aim of composers, according to Adorno, should be to treat critically the level of domination of the material arrived at without withdrawing from rationality. This reflexive ability of reason would imply the undoing of the separation between rational and mimetic values and the integration of the latter in the compositional process (cf. Wellmer 1984: p.91).⁶

⁴ Interestingly enough, Vieira de Carvalho applies the same characterization to the symmetrical compositional approach – experimentalism, as practised and postulated by Cage. In fact, in contrast to the over-determination of total serialism, Cage aimed at withdrawing intentionality from the compositional process. Having defined 'experimentalism' as "[...] an act the outcome of which is unknown", Cage (1968: p.3) would apply indeterminacy regarding either the compositional process or performance. In the terminology of the composer, the first is designated "chance music" (a score which is determinate regarding performance but arrived at by means of random procedures); the latter, "indeterminate music" (a score which allows a variable number of significantly different realizations). In order to produce indeterminate music Cage used the I Ching or paper imperfections as compositional methods. The purpose was to allow sounds "[...] to be themselves [...]", in the same manner as "[...] a mountain unintentionally evoke [s] in us a sense of wonder" (Cage 1968: p.10). The compositional material is thus expected to be intelligible in itself, independently of subjective (purposive) compositional decisions. In this way, according to Vieira de Carvalho (1994; 1996: pp.191-194; 1997; 1999: pp.247ff.), the serial self-referential functioning of the material is arrived at albeit in the opposite way by experimentalism: in different manners, both the over-determination and the under-determination of compositional decisions result in an autopoietic understanding of the material.

⁵ Although stressing that it lacks critical content, Cage's music would, according to Adorno (VMI: p.315; GS 16: p.534) approach an informal music as regards its protest against what he calls a "[...] dogged complicity of music with the domination of nature" (...*die sture Komplizität von Musik mit Naturbeherrschung*). Similarly, Lyotard (1988a: p.20) evokes Cage's *Silence or A Year from Monday* as the ethical aspect of an (postmodern) art whose priority was no longer the mastery of form.

⁶ Within Adorno's thinking, mimesis denotes sensuous communication, according to Wellmer. Wellmer (1984: p.92) writes in respect of this: "Mimesis is the name for

In fact, the serialism of the 1950s was a case in point only of the separation of cognitive and mimetic values which Horkheimer and Adorno (DA) understand to be at the heart of the failed Enlightenment (cf. Jarvis 1988: pp.24ff.). The development of instrumental reason and its dominative and totalizing character is built precisely on such separation. Cognition, in the authors’ account, is directed towards the very emancipation from the senses: “Knowledge does not consist in mere perception, classification, and calculation, but precisely in the determining negation of whatever is directly at hand” (DA: p.20; GS 3: p.43).⁷ In this way, an object to be manageable to an enlightened consciousness must conform to the “standard of calculability” (*Maß von Berechenbarkeit*) (DA: p.3; GS 3: p.22) and this is possible in general only by making “dissimilar things [*Ungleichnamiges*] comparable” and reducing them to “abstract quantities” (DA: p.4; GS 3: p.23f.).

Like Weber (1958), Adorno understands music to reflect the rationalization process of civilization (cf. Paddison 1993: p.135). Of course, this relation should be understood in a dialectic manner: it is precisely because music integrates the rationalization process of civilization that music displays a valid potential as an instrument of cultural critique. In the post-war context, this dialectical relation between music and the wider cultural domain is invoked by Adorno both in the sense of identifying the uncritical reason at work in musical and culture alike and in the sense of challenging composers to set out upon a path in the direction of what must be understood as a negative image of freedom.

In fact, common principles operate both at the wider cultural domain and musical composition: Enlightenment’s reason, for which, according

those modes of behaviour which are receptive, expressive, and communicative in a sensuous fashion”. Paddison and Jarvis offer a nuanced understanding of mimesis and rationality by pointing out a dialectical relation between the two concepts. Paddison (1993: p.140) describes mimesis as adaptation to the environment, in the sense of a process in which the mimetic object moulds itself to the surrounding reality. As Paddison notes (1993: p.141), mimesis can be seen as an early form of rationality, knowing that the process of identification prefigures a process of domination of nature (means-ends optimality which fits the concept of instrumental reason). The difference between rational and mimetic domination of nature lies, according to Jarvis (1988: p.30) in that mimetic domination is practised by a still not fully self-differentiated subject. For Adorno, according to Jarvis (1988: p.30): “[...] mimesis [...] represent[s] a stage before the unity of the subject, but not before rationality or before domination”. The attempt to be like the object is replaced by putting the object at the service of a means-ends rationality (instrumental reason) once the subject differentiated itself from the object.

⁷ *Er [der ganze Anspruch der Erkenntnis] besteht nicht im bloßen Wahrnehmen, Klassifizieren und Berechnen, sondern gerade in der bestimmenden Negation des je Unmittelbaren.*

to Adorno “The *totum* is the totem” (ND: p.377; GS 6: p.370),⁸ is repeated in a post-war total serialism in which, according to Adorno “Differentiation and integration are reduced to the same formula and the composition contains nothing qualitatively different to set against them” (VMI: p.294f.; GS 16: p.516).⁹

Adorno’s proposal of a *musique informelle* aimed precisely at the undoing of both a naïve treatment of compositional materials (experimentalism) and the totalizing rationality of compositional decisions (serialism). In the same manner as in Adorno’s more general reflection on culture, this reflexivity is necessarily attained negatively: any positive conception of a ‘good’ art would liquidate the critical possibility of the new and so the production of the new is justified primarily as an artistic internal need for a critique of an otherwise reified technique. Art proceeds therefore in the ignorance of a positive idea of itself (cf. Jarvis 1998: p.100) and it is in this sense that Adorno’s aporetic definition of *musique informelle* as “[...] the idea of something not fully imagined” should be understood (VMI: p.303; GS 16: p.524).¹⁰

III – Modern as postmodern

The agreement between Lyotard and Adorno regarding the theorizing of modernity may now become apparent – both theorize the articulation of heterogeneous elements as a condition of critical thinking.

An exhaustive comparative examination of Adorno and Lyotard is well beyond the scope of this paper. The argument pursued here highlights common concerns regarding Adorno’s critique of the post-war avant-garde and Lyotard’s theorizing of the postmodern. However, some divergent thought pointed out by Paddison and Wellmer should be mentioned in order to situate these similarities. In fact, Paddison (1993) and Wellmer (1985), stress that Adorno and Lyotard (more so in his early writings) diverge with regard to the concepts of the subject and of history.

As Paddison (1993: p.12) points out, whereas historicity and the autonomy of the subject necessity are essential to critical theory, postmodern theory ignores the former and celebrates the disappearance of the latter. It should be said that Paddison is not referring specifically to Lyotard but to an area in general of cultural studies which is as rich in

⁸ *Das totum ist das Totem.*

⁹ *Differential und Integral werden auf dieselbe Formel gebracht, der die Komposition in sich nichts qualitativ Verschiedenes entgegengesetzt.*

¹⁰ *...die Vorstellung eines nicht ganz Vorgestellten...*

contributions as in lack of consensus (vide Featherstone [1988] for an overview) and that, in addition, ‘postmodern thought’ is a cover concept which Lyotard is frequently associated with but also one from which he sometimes distances himself (cf. Lyotard 1991: p.24). This notwithstanding, Paddison’s remarks regarding subjectivity would be fruitful for discussing Lyotard, especially the latter’s early writings. In fact, for Lyotard, (1974: p.128), subjectivity, representation, and dialectics itself are interdependent and the critique of one would lead to the fall of the others. This is what Adorno, according to Lyotard (1974: p.128) avoids at all cost. What Lyotard (1974: p.136) questions is whether dialectical conceptual tools can be used to criticize a system build on them. Wellmer (1984) offers a nuanced perspective on this issue by pointing out that Adorno may be thought to partially agree with Lyotard in so far as both posit alienation as the price of representation. As Wellmer (1984: p.91) notes, already in the *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, the epistemological triad of subject, object and concept is theorized as the conceptual mechanism of domination (either of exterior or of inner nature). For Adorno, however, as Hullot-Kentor (1988: p.92) points out, there is no alternative to this conceptual framework as the instrument of de-alienation. Adorno and Lyotard’s theoretical invectives pursue therefore a shared goal, namely, the critique of domination. The point – for the Lyotard of the 1970s – is whether the subjectivity and negativity proposed by Adorno are radical enough to achieve what was expected from them.

As regards historicity, the strategy rather than the goal would, again, seem to distance Lyotard from Adorno. For Lyotard (1991: p.25; 1993a: p.47f.), modernity is to be understood primarily as a mode of thought rather than a historical period. Coherently, Lyotard (1991: pp.24-35) characterizes his account of postmodern thought as a ‘rewriting of modernity’ for stressing that knowledge of the past (cognitive discourse leading to a new ‘meta-narrative’) is not searched for but rather the organising elements of historical discourse (Lyotard 1991: p.31). In *The Differend*, Lyotard (1988b: pp.151ff.) reinforces this perspective by theorizing the deconstruction of linear time in terms of narrativity. What Lyotard does is to attack the neutrality of narrative (epistemological validity lying on the absence of the narrator), by showing that every account of the past constitutes a reconstruction rather than a recovery of meaning. A final narrative is thus continually postponed, thereby rendering inoperative any totalizing discourse (‘meta-narrative’) (vide Readings 1988: pp.53-85 for a thorough discussion).

Similarly to Lyotard, Adorno is also concerned with interrupting linear time. However, what is put forward by the former in a descriptive

way appears in the latter with a critical character. In fact, whereas Lyotard's theorization of the 'now' (inscription of meaning) is devoted to show that a totalizing idea of history is as false as impossible, Adorno, after Benjamin (1992) would conceive of the 'now' as the moment of tension where the subject struggles with a past from which to be liberated with an indeterminate (negative) idea of freedom as his only tool. As a particular case, art comes to the fore in both authors as a privileged ground on which this interruption of history is played: in the same way as, according to Adorno art operates according to an indeterminate idea of itself (VMI: p.303: GS 16: p.523f.), so for Lyotard (1984: p.81) the artist finds himself in a position similar to that of the philosopher in so far as he works according to rules not yet established.¹¹

Lyotard and Adorno would therefore seem to converge in two respects: firstly, on the undoing of a totalizing rationality and, secondly, on art as a privileged field where this resistance is performed. In fact, Adorno and Lyotard view a critical consciousness as possible only as fragmented thinking. Lyotard (1984: p.xxv) states that the postmodern thought is devoted to the theorization of difference and the promotion of the tolerance of incommensurable elements. Accordingly, for Adorno both art and theory should testify to the irreconcilability of experience and reason rather than applying a normative thought to whatever in experience does not conform to a totalizing rationality (ND: pp.150, 362, 367; GS 6: pp.153, 354, 359f.).

In art, both authors find a privileged means of performing a critique of the uncritical rationality associated with modernity. Both authors disregard the search for unity of representation and both theorize the co-presence of heterogeneous elements as a critique of totalizing thought.

Lyotard's remarks on painting and literature provide evidence of the way art may decentre a unified consciousness. Without withdrawing from

¹¹ It should in addition be mentioned that the motivation for theorising in art resistance to a totalizing rationality is to be found, in both authors, outside theory, and here again we would find common ground between Adorno and Lyotard. As a recurrent concern, world-war events emerge in both Adorno (ND: pp.361-408; GS 6: pp.354-400) and Lyotard's (1992: p.40; 1988b: pp.97ff.) works as having shattered at its base modernity's claim of the emancipation of humanity through reason. After world-war events, according to Adorno reconciliation between a unified system of thought and experience is neither possible nor desirable (ND: p.362; GS 6: p.354f.). The purpose of theory should be, to testify to heterogeneity, rather than searching for the unity of thought. In the same line of thought, events of the world war present evidence, according to Lyotard as much of the failure of reason and the discredit of the idea of progress (Lyotard 1988b: p.179) as of a crisis of representation (Lyotard 1988b: pp.47ff.) in the sense that there is no narrative which can make justice to the victims.

elements contributing to the unity of representation, Lyotard stresses the way in which elements incommensurable with it delay a decidable representational discourse. With respect to literature, Lyotard shows the way in which visual elements deconstruct signification without dispensing with it: the referent is simultaneously signified (remaining thus exterior to representation) and presented as visual elements (the irregularities in the surface of representation). Similarly, the *musique informelle* proposed by Adorno critically resists both a naïve approach to the compositional material (in composition) and a technique exhausting meaningful relationships (assigning to the material an 'unresolved externality'). When Adorno asks for a double negation of composition and musical material, he is asking for what Lyotard demanded from a postmodern art: the blocking of incommensurable elements as the condition of truthfulness and critical reason.

From Adorno's critique of Enlightenment and Lyotard's theorizing of the 'postmodern' two common concerns can thus be identified. Firstly, both constitute a critique of a totalizing rationality and, secondly, both show the potential of art as an instrument of cultural criticism.

By showing that Adorno's proposal of a *musique informelle* may be thought of as a possibility of what Lyotard understands 'postmodern' thought to be, I hope also to have shown the relevance of Adorno's thought to later cultural theory and, conversely, to have shown that the concept of 'postmodern thought', far from being ill informed and under theorized is, at least as far as Lyotard's account of it is concerned, well rooted in prior and well accepted cultural theory.

Adorno without Quotation

Robert Hullot-Kentor

Rolf Tiedemann to Honor

When Samuel Beckett learned that he was to be awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature he disconnected the telephone, packed up and went south, to deepest elsewhere and foolproof incommunicado. That story is known to many. By contrast, a story known almost to none – until this moment – is that on September 11th of this year, prior to daybreak on the first full day of official Adorno celebrations, Rolf Tiedemann was already driving south from Frankfurt for an extended stay, across borders, in the Dolomitti. It is worth wondering how these stories may be related. If I can encourage readers to take sides here, some might insist – in this year of intense Frankfurt biographical research – that these acts are so similar that direct influence can be presumed. And evidence of this kind can be adduced: Adorno so closely trusted Tiedemann that, in the late ‘50s and early ‘60s, he brought him along to afternoon meetings with Beckett. Certainly the formidable Irish émigré, who would insist on speaking German, must have communicated much, along with many impulses, some perhaps unconsciously, to the still impressionable philosopher’s assistant. Yet to seek to attribute Tiedemann’s behavior on September 11th to these various afternoons, even speculatively, would logically be to presume that the origin of the human urge to flee was strictly Samuel Beckett’s invention. Shortschrift, then, for those who would find these stories genetically concatenated. On the other hand, there might be readers who would insist that the stories have nothing whatever in common, and should not be recounted in the same breath. After all, what Tiedemann would have seen disappearing in the rearview mirror on the morning of September 11th was a looming hundredth celebration conjuring Adorno’s presence, not his own. For the stories to be truly akin, we would need to be juxtaposing Adorno with Beckett, and this is not the case. A debunking tact determined to sunder story from story would only

need to assert that Tiedemann is not Adorno. The force of pure tautology could do the rest. But in this case tautology can even cite a substantial fund of evidence on its own behalf. This evidence deserves to be presented. For even if it means fully wrenching apart the two stories with which we began, it takes us straight to the heart of this *laudatio*.

The evidence is this, and draws directly from Tiedemann's lifework: In the preparation and editing of thousands of pages, Tiedemann never once tampered with the difference between himself and Adorno. The much trusted philosopher's assistant, the man whom Adorno would one day ask to bring things over to read while he lay in the hospital where he did later die; the assistant who later became the founder and director of the Adorno Archiv in Frankfurt, never hinted mysteriously at breath of soul instilled at the master's passing; he never made pretense of a mantel bestowed and invisibly worn. For decades he was the one person privy to the many drafts, to the intellectual sketchbooks that Adorno called his scribbles, to the letters, and diaries, but he never claimed that he alone was the innermost insider; that he held the only key to what all those books and fragments meant. Though prior to, and after Adorno's death, many students, among them some of Adorno's closest, were writing in a characteristically mannered, abrupt style, inverting the position of the reflexive pronoun, setting pronouns adrift unmoored, and so on, in pages heavily laced with quotation – a style tauntingly scorned as epigonal *Adornit* once popular opinion turned against Adorno himself – Tiedemann's own extensive writings, commentaries and essays, are written exclusively in his own voice, without borrowed cadence. Tiedemann, in short, seems never to have sought to imitate Adorno. This rejection of direct imitation must have always been an aspect of Tiedemann's character, one heightened and probably cultivated by an awful distaste for the forced allegiances and regimentations that the Nazis imposed on the youth of his generation, a distaste sharpened again as a quality of intellect. This perhaps goes some way to explaining the relation between Tiedemann and Adorno. For beyond the intelligence, the intensity of interest that Tiedemann expressed initially to Adorno in writing what became the first dissertation on Benjamin, published as *Studien zur Philosophie Walter Benjamins*; beyond the group of capacities that Adorno would have noted and that did, in fact, develop over the years into what George Steiner not long ago referred to as Tiedemann's "prodigious erudition,"¹ Adorno may well have chosen Tiedemann as his assistant fundamentally on the single basis of a shared affinity: a loathing of anything look-alike.

¹ *Times Literary Supplement (TLS)*, "Work in Progress," December 3, 1999, p.4.

The content of this affinity has been decisive for Tiedemann's best accomplishments. It is to be seen on every page of the many volumes edited. But readers of these works may well need something of a guide to recognize what is so right about them, because the achievement of these texts is just that they relieve readers of ever having to contemplate all that could have gone wrong. And while any volume could be used for this demonstrative purpose, the texts that are most illuminating in this regard are those that required the most intense editorial intervention – above all, *Ästhetische Theorie*. The posthumous completion of the text required that Tiedemann – working with Gretel Adorno and Adorno's secretary, Elfriede Olbrich – decode a manuscript that had become unwieldy and opaque even for Adorno in its heavily matted layers of minutely penned revisions. The deciphering of the text, however, was only the first part of its preparation; what followed required sifting through the many independently composed sections, organizing large divisions of the text, titling the sections in a stylistically consistent manner, and finding a way to structure a work whose ambiguous bulk presented variant possible organizations. This is well known, and certainly to those likely to read this essay. But what has rarely been remarked – and perhaps never in print – even by those intensely familiar with the work, is that from the hands of another editor, probably from the hands of *any* other editor, the book – and we are considering it here as an indication of the *Gesammelte Schriften* altogether – would have arrived hesitantly, limping, clotted with footnotes, marginalia and apparatus of all kinds, and likely with the persistent assertion of editorial *besserwisserei* on every page.

Consider for purposes of contrast, a recent English edition of the *Dialektik der Aufklärung*. This long-awaited volume, a generally excellent and dependable new translation – and a mark of the intensity of the contemporary interest in Adorno's work in the United States – is a text strewn with asterisks guiding readers off even to a stratum of footnotes marked as incorporated from the Italian translation. One layer of this editorial intervention is especially characteristic of the edition: the layer of asterisks inserted next to every word that was changed by Adorno and Horkheimer between the mimeographed version of 1944, and the first published edition of 1947. These changes have often been noted and discussed, and though they are of various kinds, the revision primarily involved the exclusion of Marxist economism. This might be worth signaling in a critical edition, or in dealing with a text on which censorship had directly impinged, as in the case of some of Galileo and Descartes' writings. But, this is not the case in the *Dialektik der Aufklärung* where the revisions to the mimeographed version, even if they were motivated by a degree of political prudence, excluded concepts

that had become vestigial to the general direction of the authors' understanding of a dialectic of regression. In its own terms, the book was improved by the revisions. To decide to signal editorially every shift of concept between the versions, as if it were a red-herring, only prods the reader to search through notes to figure out what is so important, while rewarding that effort with not much. This kind of editing fragments the text and in fact the interjected asterisks hide considerably more than they reveal: For in the guise of setting who knows what record straight, just enough generic *soupçon* is invoked for the guilt-context of the living to migrate into the text and assert its claim to words that owe the whole of their meaning and importance to their opposition to that context. The asterisks are an administrative mask of self-assertion for an editorial self that makes itself felt, yet remains as pushy but as nondescript as its obtuse references. What has happened in this new edition of the *Dialektik der Aufklärung* is the most familiar gesture of an economy that makes everything strange. For it uses each person's urgent need for something – in this case the need to understand markedly darkening times – as a power to invade the person with a need for something else.

Let us turn, then, to Tiedemann's edition of *Ästhetische Theorie*, which was produced out of a work massively fragmented in manuscript by its author's premature death. In publication every word and passage might have legitimately carried a double asterisk. But instead the book opens onto a page as sparse as anything that ever came from Adorno's hand during his own lifetime and the compact, sinuous fluency of his own thought. A reader might study through the entire work, start to finish, without ever needing to discover what was involved in the volume's construction until reaching a brief afterword that in few pages explains what was required and what was done, while leaving with bare mention how much work was involved, as if it had all been no trouble at all. When the lucidity of this text is considered, on one hand, and when its careful study, on the other, demonstrates to all serious readers that they have in no way been deceived as to the actual misfortune of the fragmentariness of the construction that inevitably emerges in all its angularities, repetitions and disproportions, Tiedemann's edition – and it will be remembered that we are discussing *Ästhetische Theorie* in detail as a model of the *Gesammelte Schriften* as a whole – ranks as an extraordinary achievement. While a certain kind of editing makes one wonder what intentions a diffuse and nondescript editor means to effect, and fear that what has been done to the text is just whatever could be done to it, the intention of Tiedemann's work is transparent. It is oriented to a metaphysics of editing: For if the fragmentation of *Ästhetische Theorie* is, as Adorno wrote, speaking of fragmentation as such, the hand of death in the text, Tiedemann has

intervened throughout the whole of Adorno's writings where the violence of that hand, though not to be hidden, could be mollified.

One does not need to have gone mad to experience the world as a device to deprive each and every one of us of what we are most looking for, but by complete contrast Tiedemann's edition of Adorno's work does what it can to provide us with what we were looking for from the start. But if so, this does not mean that the effort was warmly and unanimously cheered as it progressed. On the contrary, Tiedemann had to dig in his heels against a public opinion that long condescended to Adorno's work as *depassé* and politically futile. Struggles with publishers were a whole other preoccupation. And from another direction still, Tiedemann had to contend with those many, many who came to knock – one way or another – at the Archiv: there were those scrambling for writing samples of the genius hand; those wanting clues to first and last kiss; and all those wanting drafts of various kinds to be able to get right to the task of unraveling works – sometimes barely even published – back into what Nietzsche once called the ridiculous origins of all things important. Tiedemann's response in every direction was to establish as the distance between the Archiv and what surrounded it, something akin to the boundary that he himself maintained in his relation to Adorno. While the volumes were being prepared, and the substantial correspondence, the posthumous manuscripts organized, the taped lectures transcribed, the Adorno Archiv was mostly sealed to outsiders. Tiedemann's editorial metaphysics would have been seen, from many perspectives other than his, for what metaphysics has no doubt always been, a kind of blind stubbornness.

(2.)

There is no rush to establish an early understanding of the relationship between the two stories with which we began. But if we do know more about one aspect of why Tiedemann was bound to be driving south from Frankfurt on the morning of September 11th, so far nothing whatsoever has been said of the largely unforeseen but substantial interest in Adorno's work focally expressed on that occasion in Frankfurt, but internationally as well. What is genuinely sudden in this appearance is the result of a development over many decades. The most significant figure in this long development has of course been Tiedemann in the establishment of the edition, and after him two to three generations of scholars, teachers and translators in many countries who have reciprocally improved each other's work. Perhaps it is necessary to see such an event develop intimately to discover how long it can take for a complex body of thought to become known, one country to another. If

one wants to begin to imagine all that has weighed against Adorno's work becoming an object even of curiosity in the United States, consider that the whole of his thought deals with an idealist tradition to which there is nothing autochthonously comparable this side of the Atlantic, and that until only recently the tradition from Kant to Hegel could not be studied in depth even at major universities; that the music and literature that concern the majority of his writings are, with only several important exceptions, hardly familiar even to the educated; and that his critique of industrial entertainment antagonizes almost everyone in a nation where the ear is certainly the most stupidified, rawly integrated and exploited of the senses. Add to this that, for apparent reasons, the German language has long been the object of prejudice and generally shunned – again, even by the educated – and the conclusion would seem to follow, by its own logic, that Adorno's work would never be studied in the United States.

But on the contrary, and startlingly so, in spite of what might seem to be an almost complete cultural inappositeness and even antagonism, the interest is intense. And while there is no guessing where Adorno's thought will lead in contemporary Germany, it is susceptible there to many kinds of cultural embalming by its relation to given traditions and the status of intellect itself that – not without misfortune – are no part of life this side of the Atlantic. Here it seems that Adorno's oeuvre may now urgently be received and become a center of critical studies at universities. The crackling foreignness of a philosophy that is foremost a critique of barbarism – coming in contact with a nation whose most characteristic poet, Walt Whitman, espoused barbarian as a highest rank – may sharpen the perception of its philosophical contents. Historians are familiar with the fact that traditions are always established through their adoption from untraditional sources, particularly in moments of crisis. And that is where we are; indeed, we are now substantially beyond crisis and well into catastrophe. There are two levels of reasons for describing the situation in such strong terms. The close reasons are that Americans now find themselves in the midst of experiencing what it is to live in a country that has been seized by a minority that has drawn it into desperate events. This minority has every intention of exploiting these events to assure that the transfer of power that it achieved in a dubious election can be made irreversible and on all levels. The administration's eye is especially on the judiciary and aims to wear away the division between church and state. A detail, for instance, is the crowd that recently felt encouraged by the direction of national policy to occupy the steps of the Alabama State courthouse to blow rams' horns and offer to "lay down their lives" to protect a stone engraved with the ten commandments installed in the vestibule by the Chief Justice. In such minor, as well as in

major conflicts the administration aims at obliterating opposition. This is not to say that it necessarily succeeds; in a rather complex sense, it did not in Alabama. But the intention itself of wiping out opposition is unusual in the country's long-standing bipartite concept of democracy, and verges toward the unprecedented in intensity. One witnesses a country that is broadly deluded. In the wake of the terrorist attacks, the nation has as a whole suffered a further attack on its sense of reality by the leadership's own impoverished sense of the world. The situation borders on the uncanny. If one wanted to try to understand what it really meant for Germans during the Second World War to claim that they 'did not know' – it would be possible to study the United States right this moment, September 25th, and find in a vast majority the prevalence of ideas about the reasons for the invasion of Iraq that bear resemblances to the blindness in broad daylight and phantom reasonings of the earlier situation's murderous anti-Semitism.

These – one is sorry to say – are the close reasons for a sustained interest and examination of Adorno's writings. And though it seems hardly possible to imagine more comprising reasons than these, this is precisely the case: the overarching reasons to be considered fall outside the capacity of the thinking imagination. It would be hyperbole to go from such a statement, to simply talking about it, as if we could face it. So let us leave it aside and approach it indirectly, in alliance with our incapacity to think about it, and put it this way: Anyone who might have spent time this past summer in a major art museum – for instance the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City – visiting any room of what can be called modern in the largest sense of post-Renaissance, perhaps the Pissarro room, could directly notice that the whole of what there is to regard on canvas lives from the discovered sense of the cornucopia of nature, even in its variable negation. That sense of cornucopia – if you would like to check in your own sensorium – is now gone, along with any inkling of the utopian imaginings that accompanied what was once edifyingly called the modern rediscovery of nature, because the reality of the damage that has been done weighs too guiltily. It is extreme to think that in not too long those paintings themselves may change from art to bare mementos of unfamiliar local because the impulse that sustains them – which the whole of Adorno's *Ästhetische Theorie* sought to comprehend – could vanish. Still, however extreme this thought, what kind of extreme is the thought of the death of 11,000 people this summer in France from the unprecedented heat? or of the unprecedented flooding throughout Europe of the previous summer? There is a hole in the sky, glaciers are collapsing, and thirty to forty five percent of all species are in jeopardy, a set of proportions that, even if the

lower number is prudently preferred, necessarily deceives because it does not attempt to account for the condition of what really would be left after such vast subtraction. There is nothing of this dimension in human history; nothing so irreparable has ever happened; and for reasons that need to be, and can be understood, we are not enough able to come to our wits about the situation even to be able to panic in its estimation as any kind of reason would want to. And at the same time many people must be finding themselves inadvertently recurring to the thought, and testing it again to see how much real thinking it holds, that the disasters of the contemporary political situation and the anti-democratic transformation of society – even if there are good reasons to hope that the current administration will be voted out of office – have begun to fill in a middle distance of one summer, or some number of summers, between where we stand, and cataclysmic natural events on a world scale, that in fact are no longer to be avoided and implicate another form of society altogether.

(3.)

This thought can currently be read in many places, and in various degrees of sophistication – it is in the air – because it is itself a variant of an archaically repetitive idea, one so commonly instanced that examples can be chosen as much from Martin Luther's sixteenth-century plaint that human transgression had caused "even the sun and the moon put on sackcloth" or chosen again from African folk legends of the origin of death in the swindling of the gods. These are recurrently primitive thoughts because the times themselves recur primitively. And in the United States right now the sense of entering such times, of coming under a pall with modern velocities, is pervasive.

It is this experience of a dialectic of enlightenment that will certainly direct American interest in the work of Adorno and Horkheimer, especially to their central text, *Dialektik der Aufklärung*. The claim of that work to have understood the fundamental dynamic of why history fails to progress – why the mastery of nature fails to master nature – will be insistently questioned for what it does and does not comprehend of this reality. Under examination, the work will no doubt be found faulty and limited in many ways: its analysis of the convergence of domination with fascism, for instance, is not able to discern that fascism, whatever traces it leaves in the United States, has never been a substantial threat just because fascism requires an institutionalized fantasy of the nation as family, a fantasy that figures only haphazardly in a country made up exclusively of immigrants. Likewise, without considerable individual study, Americans can hardly guess at the strictures of formal authoritarianism known directly to the

generations of the Kaiserreich into which Adorno was born, a tradition of authority later usurped by Nazism. What a handshake could mean in those contexts, it has hardly ever meant here. And regardless of national perspective, it is clear that the book was written under such desperate pressure to comprehend the regressive force of enlightenment as an historical reality that – as the authors were aware – enlightenment itself as a value becomes hard to discern and comprehend. But all the same, there is no disputing how illuminating the work is.

The thesis of the *Dialektik der Aufklärung*, by its nature only partially stateable at any one point, is that history regresses because progress, as the progress of domination, is sacrificial. Sacrifice is seen to be a logic of substitution that develops as the principle of identity, in one regard the impulse of self-preservation itself, in an ever broadening web of the exchange relation. The exchange relation generically consumes the particular while the principal of identity constantly hides from view the sacrificial mayhem at the interior of the process. Reality is thus mastered while the purpose of mastery, the possible satisfaction of the particular, is squandered. In the face of resources achieved at great price, and which society could well employ to satisfy its many wants and needs, progress is instead ever more blind to its purpose and ineluctably driven to become a demand for the sacrifice of the sacrificial whole. Thus images of the Great Depression return to American minds as visions of farmers destroying plenty to survive want: of destroying produce and guttering tank-loads of milk into open fields. In crisis, an unreasonable reason continues to call for sacrifice as if that were the need, still new and unmet. And thus anyone who picks up a recent *New York Times* finds that paper – a distinguished opponent of the current administration – jousting on the editorial page with that administration for who can urge the most willed sacrifice on a much distressed people.² Yet the United States now produces so much more than it did in 1950 that, if the country lived at the comfortable standards of that year, the entire population could take half the year off. But instead, in spite of this prosperity, Americans work thirteen months for every twelve that Europeans put in, and what they have made is notorious for its blandness, which – in “its undifferentiated limbo of highways and drive-ins, garages and main streets, vandalized landscapes and faceless towns” – is perhaps the “saddest place on the wide earth.”³ And given what the country now tends toward, sadness may soon seem much the least of it.

² Editorial, September 9th, 2003, p. A28.

³ George Steiner, review of Truman Capote, *In Cold Blood* in *Guardian Unlimited*, December 2, 1965.

(4.)

Some readers may have noticed a similarity between Luther's apocalyptic and what has been described here as the overarching concern of the contemporary situation, and it may be worth a detour to wonder what that reveals, if anything. Why would a plaint of the corruption of all nature – written in an age when faith exalted over its power to move mountains while agriculture in fact had tools that, beyond a few gears and an axle, were barely in advance of the Neolithic – exhibit some similarity to what has happened? Is it coincidence, or prophecy fulfilling itself? If the latter were explored, it might even be remarked how much in the whole of this discussion Luther somehow envisioned. For his plaint is *avant la lettre* the central idea of Adorno and Horkheimer's dialectic of enlightenment: Distilled in Luther's thought is the idea that history founders because life has gone forward by way of incurring guilt, to the point that all of nature has been corrupted and as such gives a measure of the degree of repentance requisite. This is one version of Horkheimer and Adorno's claim that progress, as self-advancement, fails because it is pursued as a growing need for self-sacrifice in which nature is devastated.

The relation between these thinkers is actually not hard to discover, for there is no doubt at all that Luther's harsh doctrinal rejection of progress, developed in his opposition to Aristotle, established the basis of the long development of the German critique of enlightenment. This is the tradition of thought that profoundly informs Adorno and Horkheimer's work with a wariness of the ideal of progress. The only distinction to be kept in mind between Luther and the so-called Frankfurt thinkers is that there is nothing Lutheran about the latter: they plainly recognized in the Lutheran vision the destructive futility of sacrifice. And they grasped something more as well. They could see that in its critique of progress, the Lutheran plaint is other than it seems: it is a plan of action. This is apparent in the utter disproportion between image and reality, between the rough tools lying in the fields, and the vision of a destroyed cosmos: the plaint must be a measure of a distance to cover because the disproportion is itself megalomaniacal; it seeks the whole and, by its own form, with an industriousness in sorrow. Much in keeping with insights to be found in Nietzsche and Freud, Adorno and Horkheimer want to point out that if guilt is generally thought of as the feeling of having hurt what is loved, it is every bit as much the feeling of the assertion of the power of autonomy that has not found another way to establish itself other than sacrificially. The trap is complete. Thus it is possible to hear in Luther's plaint a mind without any alternative between the hidden exaltation of an assertion to rule all, and an inability to wake up from its own nightmare.

If in part we are involved here in making sense out of a German development of thought from an American perspective, it can be recognized that the German is remote in some of its feeling-states and many qualities of expression, and draws on a critique of progress that has no historical resonance at all on the western side of the Atlantic. But all the same, a historicist mentality that actually does originate in shared traditions of nominalism with Luther's own should not be allowed to insist that every world is another one, and dismiss the point that Adorno and Horkheimer have to make, which is that Americans do not really go to work in all that different a fashion. On one hand, the sky is falling, and on the other, every morning, after inspecting the shine on the shoes, the pleat on the pants, a face looks in a mirror to check the square set of the tie, and goes off to get things done, disregarding every disproportion.

(5.)

An essay whose motive is its alliance with two cars – and especially one of them – traveling south can move decisively in that direction by pointing out that there is only one reason to be all that interested in Adorno's work. The reason is generally recognized, but not always stated clearly: No other philosophy is able to set its finger with such precision, so unwaveringly, on the content of the historical moment. A question worth answering then is: how is it able to do this? How does it reach what it wants to reach? More is to say on this point, certainly, than can be said here. But what is almost deductively self-evident can be concisely indicated: if domination sloughs off its own aim in a web of covertly sacrificial exchange relations, domination could only be brought to its senses, and what its achieved powers could serve, through a critique that is the ally of what is otherwise generically sacrificed: the particular. This philosophy, in other words, considered itself nothing if not a materialism, though clearly one distinct from a long history of thought that is generally known to have amounted to the assertion that material is all there is, as if once that were acknowledged the ghosts would at last be driven out of the machine and with them, necessarily, all the demons as well.

The *Dialektik der Aufklärung* was not convinced by that logic and its own materialism disputes it. For Adorno, materialism meant restoring to the material – nature, even as second nature – the comprehension of its content. The particular is just the material, its content restored in that sense.

Though this materialism vies with Marx's own, it is distinctly a form of Marxism, and most of all in the sense that the restoration of the content relies on an insight that can be followed from antiquity, to Rousseau, to

Kant, and most of all to Marx: that there is nothing that can be traded for life that is its equal. Wage does not compensate in maximums or minimums; the internal structure of that relation is necessarily life robbed and sacrificed. This insight was a given for Adorno; pushed, it could be called the meaning of his thought. And while he was completely aware that Marx's theory of class struggle did not begin to comprehend the whole range of the forms of domination, still he could not have imagined that anything could be hoped for socially that would not somehow make good on the fundamental insight into the inequality of exchange.

But in the never absolute partings between Marx and Adorno, which could be delineated in terms of their concepts of materialism, the distinction between them that is most relevant to this essay – for understanding its preoccupation with the direction that Tiedemann was going on the morning of September 11th – is also the distinction that most bewildered the students who attacked Adorno in his last years. The issue is this: Marx's materialism is the basis of almost the only philosophy in the history of Western thought that carries with it a program of action; it is, by that same measure, almost the only philosophy that can in this sense be directly joined. It is not surprising, then, that the students, who rightly understood Adorno's philosophy to stand inextricably in the Marxist tradition, would suppose that here too it would be possible to join up. The expectation of joining that this implied is still painfully obvious in the photographs of the faces of those students who crammed into the lecture halls just to have a seat.

But however large the amphitheaters in which this philosophy was heard; however voluminous in page count its forty some volumes are, the thinking itself is strictly a one-man boat. Even the wide gunwales provide no space to sit. This philosophy models a stance that can only be held by one person. The thinking itself insists it can only put its finger on the historical moment just to the degree that it succeeds at shaping the experience of the particular as it suffers and is otherwise deprived of expression. Adorno evidently was not kidding when he repeated throughout the whole of his writings, that for this to be possible the social critic, and the artist as well – though in different ways – have no alternative but to work in isolation. Whatever the interdisciplinary claims of the Institute, the message in the bottle – which is all that Adorno was ever at work on – cannot in any way be drawn up collectively and put in that bottle by many hands reaching at once. Measured by the philosophy itself, heard by the listening ear, the idea of an Adorno conference is a *contradictio in adjektivum*. Certainly Tiedemann, whose ear has powers of Krausian accuracy, recognized this. Why else was he driving south prior to dawn on the morning of the 11th? The reason that no one will ever

read a book that has the name T. W. Adorno on its cover, without also finding there the name – Rolf Tiedemann – is because, as every page of the *Gesammelte Schriften* demonstrates, this second name so acutely insisted that it was not there by joining.

(6.)

An essay that wanted to get lost for keeps, might decide to take it on itself to elucidate Adorno's intellectual development. For it was not a process of development in the first place. If stages of a sort can be discerned in the writings, it cannot be said that one idea followed another in any kind of sequence. Adorno seems to have been so unimpeded in his intention toward the particular that, on the contrary, from early on his thinking life was a process that pulled in what it needed to materialize its own characteristic shape. It is no surprise that his colleagues could be disquieted by this. Leo Lowenthal, for one, was obliged to discover Adorno making himself so abundantly free with his own best insights, that they would disappear, one day to the next, into Adorno's own reflections without Adorno seeming to be all that concerned to write footnotes of citation. Certainly this could feel predatory, and evidence of something like this is apparent in the writing style. Open to any page of the *Gesammelte Schriften* and look for quotation marks: they can be found, but the later the text, the more they are scarce, and an eye noticing this will begin to discern techniques Adorno had for avoiding them. The most characteristic is his way of invoking large bodies of thought, or even a particular *Philosophem*, by means of a locution or imitated phrasal rhythm: no one needs to guess the who's who of the *retournons*, or what counterbalances those *starry heavens*, or how many changes could be rung on a thought *im Zeitalter seiner*, or where Adorno stood on the matter of whether you should say it if you can't talk about it and also like to whistle. A philosophy that is or isn't by its responsibility to the particular was not somehow too busy with itself to cite things properly; on the contrary, in its preoccupation with the particular, it had nothing to do unless it could name them. Adorno worked around quotation marks and footnotes of citation because he experienced them as the ropes and posts of thought that thinks of itself as a wrestling ring where it will be decided who got there first, and who owns what. Thinking, for Adorno, as for Hegel, is how we are bound up in what we are otherwise separate from; and the being bound up is itself a determination of the separation, as determinant negation. This is the contrary of the assertion of thinking as sitting on one's own property. The central-most paradox of a philosophy that has exactly enough room for one person – that is just as

stand-offish as it is unguarded – is that this restriction is the actual source of its capaciousness as a critique of possessive individualism. It is what intelligence can possibly do that has not spent its years getting the latch on the front gate to lock shut. The work as a whole, by a man who had no children, is ultimately a critique of the transcendental unity of apperception, the claim of the final mine-ness of each and every thought. That such an effort of thought is conceivable at all is apparent where line after line, sometimes for pages at a time, seems to make itself irresistible to the desire to quote it for what it has succeeded at putting its finger on. But succumb to the impulse, take it for aphorism, and in actual quotation the phrase or passage as soon changes to dust in one's hand and to nonsense on the wall for one's having failed to understand that everything about it said in the first place: There is nothing like this; reproduction prohibited, not by copyright but by reality.

(7.)

Because the fate of the particular is the matter of this philosophy, the writing has an exposed quality. Adorno was aware of this. The style is after all a self-consciously conceptual *Sprechstimme* and hardly separable from the fragility of its plaintive voice even in so abstract a thought as “the whole is the false” (MM: p.50; GS 4: p.55).⁴ Adorno considered the exposed fragility an achievement. His freedom to expression, his actual uninhibitedness, cut sharply into the limits of middle class life. He communicated something of what must have been his own experience when he wrote of the embarrassment caused by Schoenberg in his insensibility to the ancient taboo that barricades speech from song. For Adorno himself stepped easily by way of a syllable to, for instance, any section of the high-pitched passages of the *George Lieder*. The pinched chagrin felt by many around him in those moments still inspires birthday feuilletton that prefer to remember that feeling as something about the philosopher's obtuse condescension. The same freedom to himself is apparent from when he lived in New York City in the late thirties and early forties. Even though Milton Babbitt refused to accompany him, the foreign intellectual went to Harlem jazz clubs and, in a note to *Current of Music*, mentions dancing with African American women. And while those decades were another situation in race relations, it is still significant to consider how few Caucasian critical theorists, however confident in their pop culture documentation, would be likely to go dancing uptown in the same fashion.

⁴ *Das Ganze ist das Unwahre.*

(8.)

What asks to be quoted in Adorno's work is a capacity of self that might as well be acknowledged as rare. To find comparable figures – not in their personal attributes, but in a capacity to look whatever it is directly in the eye – one must think of the likes of Montaigne, Picasso, or Freud. And the comparison with Freud is at this point the most germane to what this essay means to trace. For in his materialism, Adorno – who wrote a dissertation on Freud that was one of the early philosophical investigations of the concept of the unconscious – developed an approach to the restoration of the content of the concept of nature that was built directly off of the psychoanalytical model of the relation of id to ego. It is a simplification but accurate to say that Adorno translated the concept of the id into history as the history of suffering nature; and correlatively, ego became the inflicting sacrificial structure of identity back of which the natural-historical content is utterly beyond direct scrutiny. As in the psychoanalytic model, where the ego is understood as a specially modified portion of the id that in its conflictual development becomes fixated by trauma, exhausted by defense and prone to regression, so in Adorno's *Dialektik der Aufklärung* domination is a portion of nature, modified by the urge for self-preservation, that struggles out of nature sacrificially and returns to it by the same measure. To describe this pattern, Adorno appropriated the psychoanalytic concept of regression.

Vis-à-vis this psychoanalytic background the aim of all of Adorno's writings is familiar as a specific kind of interpretation: where abstract identity had been, there shall consciousness of historical suffering be. The interpretive technique of Adorno's materialism shares with psychoanalysis: the avoidance of argumentative devices in favor of paratactic transition, a continual starting anew, a logic of association, the gauging of interpretation by its fruits more than by certitudes. Most of all they share an absolute frankness as requisite to immersion in the conflicts of the material as the only way to discover where it is trying to go: a frankness that necessarily attracts hostility. And just as psychoanalytic interpretations from any fifty minute hour, however apposite to their own moment and hard won from the unconscious on the couch would – if quoted out of context as a public essay from a transcript – be too trivially miscellaneous to follow and at the same time too peculiarly intimate, something similar can be noticed in a review of the results of Adorno's materialism. In various *aperçus* – such as, for instance, that Mondrian's paintings, in their apparent geometry, are a kind of crying without tears, or that the tenderness of Brahms's late *Intermezzi* could only have been composed by someone who had never actually experienced it – this materialism may

ring disappointingly meager and at the same time entwined with a distressingly vulnerable level of intimacy.

(9.)

Adorno's writings and psychoanalytic practice bear comparison in the difficulties of presenting their research into the unconscious to a public world that – even in reading an essay urging itself south – could easily forget that it is itself the censorious power of the whole. But this comparison of forms of research also provides an opportunity to note the obvious about Adorno's work that distinguishes it altogether from psychoanalysis: his writings are not psychoanalytic depositions. Lining up his various aperçus, whether about Mondrian and Brahms, or whomever, is not how these comments occur in their own context. That context is, on the contrary, a heavily constructed rhetorical and conceptual syntax, intensified to a degree that line after line might well read as aphorism. But if it seems that Adorno did what he could to make each thought as conveniently portable as possible, this is a misperception. The phrases stand apart in a kind of aphoristic isolation only because what ignites as their content blows them apart from each other in the structure in which they are organized. What Adorno's work has to say only lives as a critique of the whole by the capacity of that whole. It is a concentric textual structure that is almost always as extraordinarily elusive in its coherence as that coherence is binding.

The dependence of each phrase on the construction of the whole is confirmed by noticing how, deprived of this construction, the *aperçus* concerning Mondrian and Brahms seem to weep as pitifully as does any life deprived of expression. And though it is true that all important work taken out of context may easily go flat and sound foolish, these vulnerabilities are heightened by a magnitude in Adorno's case. Here even careful extraction from the text and reorganization seems guaranteed to backfire. Dislodged from its context, the content of Adorno's materialism is adjusted to the limits of the expression-shy and – if it does not just antagonize – can appeal to a distracted, fragmentary reading with a taste for the maudlin. Extracted and placed within quotation marks, Adorno's work rings with the authority of two measures of Beethoven recorded onto an answering machine. It is to the point that even those phrases that Adorno wrote explicitly as aphorism – such as that the whole is the false – seem to stand less independently, and to require the rest of his philosophy more than philosophical aphorism often does when it is genuinely that. To quote just one of them requires pages of explication to restore enough context to find its sense and make tolerable as well the voice that carries it.

(10.)

However fixed the directional compass of this essay, still it cannot just turn south at any point. Not in this case anyway. For although Adorno's philosophy is best known by the idea that the whole is the false, it would be as complete a misunderstanding to suppose that his writings are a collection of aphoristically quotable lines as that the philosophy itself commends fragmentation. That philosophy would collude with what fractures the self in urging it to co-operate in all that means to invade them with commercial purposes of its own. The dialectical content of the idea that the whole is the false needs to be emphasized. For if the whole is indeed the false, driven to the point that it is aware that it is not the absolute, the whole becomes the capacity of the truth. This is the central idea of Adorno's philosophy. It is worth restating: The idea that the whole is the false is by its own measure, by its own insight, the idea that the false is known only by the power of the whole. In this dialectic – Adorno and Horkheimer speculated – enlightenment comes to term. For if the identity of the whole is the capacity to grasp what is opposite itself, then domination is conceivably the capacity to suspend itself in self-relinquishment in the object it has always sought: it would be domination that as real mastery would no longer have any need of violence. This is the process that is perceived in Adorno's writing at its most compelling, line by line. A picture made of this process would look like a one man boat that is a critique of possessive individualism, one by means of its own individuality, its own wholeness, not by self-sacrifice. It does not intend to abrogate the transcendental unity of thought, but to complete it. By the measure of its own wholeness it would win the ability to put its finger on what is most real. Wallace Stevens sketches some part of this same idea in his *Esthétique du Mal*: "Except for us, Vesuvius might consume/ In solid fire the utmost earth and know/ No pain." (Stevens, 1997: p.277).

(11.)

The best reason to quote Adorno is in the recognition that the most legitimate urge to do so is every reason not to quote him at all: For this philosophy's best capacity for insight is in its development of an enlightenment skepticism toward self-sacrifice. By contrast, the quotation of Adorno is itself so often a sacrificial gesture of imitation. Identity that fails to come to term in what is other than itself is inevitably imitation of what is greater than itself as a power of self-assertion. What it wins it wins as property. The many essays clotted with quotations from Adorno, consign a philosophy to a neo-classicism that is its most substantial critic;

the quotations are the marks left behind by where the tension of the struggle for truth capitulates, seeking someone stronger in which it hopes to acquire a voice for itself. By that measure it is denied its own voice, which is all it has by virtue of which something might be pronounced other than the self. Adorno certainly did not mean to be the someone stronger who would interfere with this voice. And, incidentally, in this regard it is worth commenting here – to help keep things in perspective – that Adorno is not the only person who ever recognized some relation between maturity and a power of self-relinquishment. If we were to look for another example of this capacity, Rolf Tiedemann's edition of the *Gesammelte Schriften* would come directly to mind.

(12.)

Certainly the most interesting idea in the whole of Adorno's work is that identity, the power of tautology itself, can be cultivated as the capacity of its own critique. The point is one known to all musicians and certainly it is as a musician that Adorno had occasion to consider it: the self is the only ability for differentiation by which self-relinquishment can occur. It is the capacity that an audience has every reason to envy of the human at the key-board, even if nothing more comes of that feeling on the way home than making grimaces and gesturing large with the arms and hands held high in the air. The thesis that identity is the critique of identity, works a wedge into the grip of the claim that what is mine is strictly mine. It uses the capacity of that grip to loosen the hold, but not disparagingly, as if that grip were the low contrary to brotherly love. In its awareness of the fruitlessness of sacrifice, it takes the side of the struggle for self-preservation more seriously than that struggle often can for itself. Adorno's philosophy ultimately wants to show that the weight of the burden of self preservation is one we have long not needed to bear to the degree we have and certainly not in such a fashion as we have for almost a century so that we are now far past verging on annihilating ourselves and all that is around us. In the thesis of an emancipated tautology as the capacity of the self to immerse itself in what is other than itself, to follow the material where it wants to go, Adorno conceived his version of the ontological proof of god, which in his lectures on *Philosophische Terminologie* he named the most interesting problem in the history of philosophy. In the context of Adorno's thinking, Anselm's proof would become something like the proof of possibility itself. There are many ways to misconstrue this idea but if there is now some readiness to make sense of it then a kind of progress has in fact been made here. It is what Adorno would have thought progress might be. This essay has in

any case been an experiment in tautology, in wanting to be anything but tautology. From its first page it is a critique of the most obvious sorts of property relations. And by the same measure, without the capacity of identity, which wrenched completely apart the two stories with which we began, this essay would be unable to find the direction that it is now easily able to go.

South as Such

For a negative dialectics, the unpardonable sin would neither be unpardonable nor a sin, but the philosophy does share in the ancient recognition that every degree of despair is failed self-assertion evinced in the claim of being beyond any kind of help, as beyond possibility. Adorno's thinking as a whole is a materialist critique of historical despair. The puzzle it confronts is why the way out looks sealed, when the door swings wide on broken hinges. It owes to its particular solution of this puzzle its many limitations of historical and aesthetic differentiation and specifically its feeling of narrowness; a narrowness in the closely muffled clowning of the syntax; and a narrowness in every dialectical reversal that limits itself to bare shifts between black and white when the frank *voilà* of the gesture would rather transform these many colored handkerchiefs into those many colored birds. Adorno is right that possibility wins nothing by our astounding ourselves with numbers on the relative productivity of nations decade to decade. It depends, instead, on a kind of direction, in the movement of what is certainly a paradoxical one-man boat, as of various kinds of cars and allied essays going south. For if it were possible to flee on another's behalf, to take that person along *in absentia*, so to speak, as if Darwin had arranged that for us as a real potential, working perhaps in alliance with all that Levy-Bruhl knew of selves that are more than punctually themselves, who would not take the opportunity to go back to what the terrors of mid-century have left in our minds, and in pages out of a contemporary *Aeneid*, step through the rubble walls, the blown-apart ovens, chambers and human kilns, to take up burden after burden on our backs, and head towards an ultimate south, anywhere to escape, in lines stretching forth in latitudes and longitudes from all directions?

Abbreviations of Adorno's Works

- Adorno/Benjamin – Theodor W. Adorno / Walter Benjamin, *Briefwechsel 1928-1940*, ed. by Henri Lonitz, Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp, 1994.
- ANM – “The Aging of the New Music”, trans. Robert Hullot-Kentor, *Telos*, 77 (1988): pp. 79-93 (GS 4: pp.143-167).
- AT – *Aesthetic Theory*, trans. Robert Hullot-Kentor, London/New York: Continuum: 1997 (GS 7).
- BB – [Beethoven Book] *Beethoven: The Philosophy of Music*, trans. Edmund Jephcott, Cambridge: Polity Press, 2005 (NS, I.1.: *Beethoven. Philosophie der Musik*, ed. Rolf Tiedemann, Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1993).
- Berg – “Berg. Der Meister des kleinsten Übergangs” (GS 13: pp. 322-494).
- CM – *Critical Models. Interventions and Catchworks*, trans. Henry W. Pickford, New York: Columbia University Press, 2005 (GS 10.2).
- DA – *Dialectic of Enlightenment. Philosophical Fragments* (by Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno), trans. Edmund Jephcott, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002 (GS 3).
- Difficulties I – “Difficulties. I. In Composing”, in: EoM: pp. 664-660 (GS 17: pp. 253-273).
- Difficulties II – “Difficulties. II. In Understanding New Music”, in: EoM: pp. 660-679 (GS 17: pp. 273-291).
- EoM – *Essays on Music* (ed. Richard Leppert), Berkeley, etc.: University of California Press, 2002.
- F-Ch – “On the Fetish-Character in Music and the Regression of Listening”, in: EoM: pp.288-317 (GS 14: pp.14-50).
- FML – “Music and Language: A Fragment”, in QuF: pp.1-6 (GS 16: pp.251-256).
- Funktionalismus – “Funktionalismus heute” (GS 10.1: pp.375-395).
- GS – *Gesammelte Schriften*, ed. Rolf Tiedemann, Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1970ff.
- Hindemith – “*Ad vocem Hindemith*. Eine Dokumentation” (GS 17: pp. 210-246).
- ISM – *Introduction to the Sociology of Music*, trans. E. B. Ashton, New York: Continuum, 1988 (GS 14: pp.169-447).
- Kracauer – “Der wunderliche Realist. Über Siegfried Kracauer” (GS 11: pp. 388-408).
- KB – [Kierkegaard Book] *Kierkegaard: Construction of the Aesthetic*, trans. Robert Hullot-Kentor, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, (GS 2).
- Kriterien – “Kriterien der neuen Musik” (GS 16: pp.170-228).
- Kunst – “Die Kunst und die Künste” (GS 10.1: pp.432-453).
- Mahler – *Mahler: A Musical Physiognomy*, trans. Edmund Jephcott. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992 (GS 13: pp.149-320).

- MLC – “Music, Language, and Composition”, in: EoM: pp.113-126 (GS 16: pp.649-664).
- MM – *Minima Moralia: Reflections from Damaged Life*, trans. E. F. N. Jephcott, London / New York: Verso, 1974 (GS 4).
- MuM – “Über einige Relationen zwischen Musik und Malerei” (GS 16: pp.628-642).
- MLC – “Music, Language, and Composition”, in: EoM: pp.113-126 (GS 16: pp.649-664).
- ND – *Negative Dialectics*, trans. E. B. Ashton, New York / London: Continuum, 2005 (GS 6).
- NS – *Nachgelassene Schriften*, Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag.
- PhNM – *Philosophy of new music*, trans. Robert Hullot-Kentor, Minneapolis / London: University of Minnesota Press, 2006 (GS 12).
- PhT – *Philosophische Terminologie*, 2 vols. ed. Rudolf zur Lippe, Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp, 1973/1974.
- QuF – *Quasi una Fantasia. Essays on Modern Music*, trans. Rodney Livingstone, London / New York: Verso, 1992 (GS 16: pp.249-540).
- RPhM – “On the Contemporary Relationship of Philosophy and Music”, in: EoM: pp.135-161 (GS 18: pp.149-176).
- SFrag – “Sacred Fragment: Schoenberg’s *Moses und Aron*”, QuF, pp.225-248 (GS 16: pp.454-475).
- Schönberg – “Arnold Schönberg” (GS 10.1: pp. 152-180).
- Strauss I – “Richard Strauss at sixty”, in: Bryan Gilliam, *Richard Strauss and his world*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992: pp. 406-416 (GS 18: pp.254-262).
- Strauss II – “Richard Strauss: born 11 June 1864”, *Perspectives of New Music*, vol. 3 (1965), vol. 4 (1966): pp.14-32, pp.113-129 (GS 16: pp.565-606).
- ThG – *Philosophische Elemente einer Theorie der Gesellschaft* (eds. Tobias ten Brink and Marc Phillip Nogueira), Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 2008.
- TMR – *Zu einer Theorie der musikalischen Reproduktion*, ed. Henri Lonitz, Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 2001.
- VMI – “Vers une musique informelle”, in QuF, pp.269-322 (GS 16: pp.493-540).
- VW – *In Search of Wagner*, trans. Rodney Livingstone, London / New York: Verso, 1991 (GS 13: pp.7-148).

Bibliography

- Adorno, Theodor (1924), "Richard Strauss. Zum 60. Geburtstag: 11. Juni 1924", GS 18: pp.254-262 / trans. "Richard Strauss at sixty", in: Bryan Gilliam, *Richard Strauss and his world*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992: pp. 406-416.
- Adorno, Theodor W. (1927/1965), "Nadelkurven", GS 19: pp.525-529 / trans. "The Curves of the Needle", in Adorno (2002b): 271-276.
- Adorno, Theodor W. (1928), "Schubert", *Moments musicaux* (1964), GS 17: pp.18-33.
- Adorno, Theodor W. (1930), "Reaktion und Fortschritt", GS 17: pp.133-139.
- Adorno, Theodor W. (1931), "Die Aktualität der Philosophie", GS 1: pp.325-344.
- Adorno, Theodor (1932a), "Zur gesellschaftlichen Lage der Musik", GS 18: pp.729-777 / trans. "On the social situation of music", in Adorno (2002b): pp. 391-436.
- Adorno, Theodor W. (1932b), "Die Idee der Naturgeschichte", *Philosophische Frühschriften*. GS 1: pp.345-365 / "The idea of natural-history", trans. Robert Hullot-Kentor, in *Telos* 60 (Summer 1984), pp.111-24.
- Adorno, Theodor W. (1933a), *Kierkegaard. Konstruktion des Ästhetischen*, GS 2.
- Adorno, Theodor W. (1933b), "Notiz über Wagner", *Musikalische Schriften V*, GS 18: pp.204-209.
- Adorno, Theodor W. (1938a), "Über den Fetischcharakter in der Musik und die Regression des Hörens", GS 14: pp.14-50 / trans. "On the Fetish-Character in Music and the Regression of Listening", in Adorno (2002b): pp.288-317.
- Adorno, Theodor W. (1938b), "Ernest Newman, The Life of Richard Wagner II", *Musikalische Schriften VI*, GS 19: pp.371-372.
- Adorno, Theodor W. (1941), "Ernest Newman, The Life of Richard Wagner III", in *Musikalische Schriften VI*, GS 19: pp.400-403.
- Adorno, Theodor W. (1945), *Minima Moralia. Reflexionen aus dem beschädigten Leben*, GS 4 / trans. *Minima Moralia. Reflections on a Damaged Life*, trans. E.F.N. Jephcott, London/New York: Verso, 2005.
- Adorno, Theodor W. (1947), "Wagner, Nietzsche und Hitler", *Musikalische Schriften VI*, GS 19: pp.404-412.
- Adorno, Theodor W. (1949), "Hermann Grab", GS 20.2: pp.465-466.
- Adorno, Theodor W. (1950), "Zum Verhältnis von Malerei und Musik heute", in *Musikalische Schriften V*, GS 18: pp.140-148.
- Adorno, Theodor W. (1951), "Bach gegen seine Liebhaber verteidigt", GS 10.1: pp.138-151.
- Adorno, Theodor W. (1952a), "Versuch über Wagner", GS 13: pp. 7-148 / trans. Rodney Livingstone, *In Search of Wagner*, London/New York: Verso, 1991.
- Adorno, Theodor W. (1952b), "Arnold Schönberg", GS 10.1: pp. 152-180.

- Adorno, Theodor W. (1953), "Über das gegenwärtige Verhältnis von Philosophie und Musik", GS 18: pp. 149-176 / trans. "On the Contemporary Relationship of Philosophy and Music", in: Adorno (2002b): pp.135-161.
- Adorno, Theodor W. (1954), "Das Altern der Neuen Musik", GS 4: pp.143-167 / trans. "The Aging of the New Music", in: *Telos*, 77 (1988): pp. 79-93.
- Adorno, Theodor W. (1956a), "Musik, Sprache und ihr Verhältnis im gegenwärtigen Komponieren", GS 16: pp. 649-664 / trans. "Music, Language, and Composition", in Adorno (2002b): pp.113-126.
- Adorno, Theodor W. (1956b), "Fragment über Musik und Sprache", GS 16: pp.251-256 / trans. "Music and Language: A Fragment", in Adorno (1998): pp.1-6.
- Adorno, Theodor W. (1957), "Kriterien der neuen Musik", GS 16: pp.170-228.
- Adorno, Theodor W. (1958), "Der Essay als Form", *Noten zur Literatur*, GS 11: pp.9-33.
- Adorno, Theodor W. (1960), "Mahler. Eine musikalische Physiognomik", GS 13: pp.149-320 / trans. Edmund Jephcott, *Mahler: A Musical Physiognomy*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992.
- Adorno, Theodor W. (1961), "Vers une musique informelle", GS 16: pp.493-540 / trans.: "Vers une musique informelle", in Adorno (1998): pp.269-322.
- Adorno, Theodor W. (1962a), "Strawinsky: Ein dialektisches Bild", GS 16: pp.382-409 / trans. "Stravinsky: A Dialectical Portrait", in Adorno (1998): pp.145-175.
- Adorno, Theodor W. (1962b), "Einleitung in die Musiksoziologie", GS 14: pp.169-447 / trans. E. B. Ashton, *Introduction to the Sociology of Music*, New York: Continuum, 1988.
- Adorno, Theodor W. (1963a), "Sakrales Fragment: Über Schönbergs Moses und Aron", in: "Quasi una fantasia", GS 16: pp.454-475 / trans. "Sacred Fragment: Schoenberg's *Moses und Aron*", in Adorno (1998): pp.225-248.
- Adorno, Theodor W. (1963b), "Wagners Aktualität", in: *Musikalische Schriften III*, GS: 543-564 / trans. "Wagners Relevance for Today", in: Adorno (2002b): pp. 584-602.
- Adorno, Theodor W. (1964a), "Richard Strauss. Zum hundertsten Geburtstag". *Musikalische Schriften I-III*, GS 16: pp.565-606 / trans. "Richard Strauss: born 11 June 1864", *Perspectives of New Music*, vol. 3 (1965), vol. 4 (1966): pp.14-32, pp.113-129.
- Adorno, Theodor W. (1964b), "Nach Steuermanns Tod", GS 17, p. 311-317.
- Adorno, Theodor W. (1964c), 'Zur Physiognomik Křeneks', GS 17: pp.109-113.

- Adorno, Theodor W. (1964d), 'Vorrede', *Moments musicaux* (1964), GS 17: pp.9-12.
- Adorno, Theodor W. (1964e), "Der wunderliche Realist. Über Siegfried Kracauer", GS 11: pp. 388-408.
- Adorno, Theodor W. (1964f), "Jargon der Eigentlichkeit. Zur deutschen Ideologie", GS 6: pp. 413-526.
- Adorno, Theodor W. (1964g), "Schwierigkeiten. I. Beim Komponieren", GS 17: pp. 253-273 / trans. "Difficulties", in: Adorno (2002b): pp. 644-660.
- Adorno, Theodor W. (1965a), "Über einige Relationen zwischen Musik und Malerei", GS 16: pp.628-642.
- Adorno, Theodor W. (1965b), "Funktionalismus heute", GS 10.1: pp.375-395.
- Adorno, Theodor W. (1966a), *Negative Dialektik*, GS 6.
- Adorno, Theodor W. (1966b), "Wagner und Bayreuth", *Musikalische Schriften V*, GS 18: pp.210-225.
- Adorno, Theodor W. (1966c), "Schwierigkeiten. I. In der Auffassung neuer Musik", GS 17: pp. 273-291 / trans. "Difficulties", in Adorno (2002b): pp. 660-679.
- Adorno, Theodor W. (1967), "Die Kunst und die Künste", GS 10.1: pp.432-453.
- Adorno, Theodor W. (1968a), "Berg. Der Meister des kleinsten Übergangs", GS 13: pp. 322-494 / trans. Juliane Brand and Christopher Hailey, *Alban Berg: Master of the Smallest Link*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991.
- Adorno, Theodor W. (1968b), "Ad vocem Hindemith. Eine Dokumentation", GS 17: pp. 210-246.
- Adorno, Theodor W. (1969a), "Alban Berg: Oper und Moderne", GS 18: pp.650-672.
- Adorno, Theodor W. (1969b), "Einleitung zum 'Positivismusstreit in der deutschen Soziologie' ", GS 8: pp.280-353.
- Adorno, Theodor W. (1970), *Ästhetische Theorie*, GS 7 / trans. R. Hullot-Kentor, *Aesthetic Theory*, London/New York: Continuum, 1997.
- Adorno, Theodor W. (1973/1974), *Philosophische Terminologie*, 2 vols., ed. Rudolf zur Lippe, Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp,
- Adorno, Theodor W. (1977) "Dialektische Epilegomena: Zu Subjekt und Objekt; Marginalien zu Theorie und Praxis", GS 10.2: pp.739-782.
- Adorno, Theodor W. (1989), *Metaphysik. Begriff und Problem* (ed. by Rolf Tiedemann), Frankfurt a .M.: Suhrkamp.
- Adorno, Theodor W. (1993), *Beethoven. Philosophie der Musik*, ed. Rolf Tiedemann, Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag / trans. Edmund Jephcott, *Beethoven: The Philosophy of Music*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 1998.

- Adorno, Theodor W. (1998), *Quasi una fantasia. Essays on modern music*, London: Verso.
- Adorno, Theodor W. (2001), *Zu einer Theorie der musikalischen Reproduktion*. Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp.
- Adorno, Theodor W. (2002a), *Ontologie und Dialektik*. Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp.
- Adorno, Theodor W. (2002b), *Essays on Music*, ed. Richard Leppert. Berkeley, etc.: University of California Press.
- Adorno, Theodor W. (2008), *Philosophische Elemente eine Theorie der Gesellschaft* (eds. Tobias ten Brink and Marc Phillip Nogueira), Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 2008.
- Adorno, Theodor W., and Max Horkheimer (1944), *Dialektik der Aufklärung*, GS 3.
- Adorno, Theodor W., and Thomas Mann (2002), *Briefwechsel 1943-1945*, Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp.
- Adorno, Theodor W., and Walter Benjamin (1994), *Briefwechsel 1928-1940*, ed. Henri Lonitz, Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp,
- Agamben, Giorgio (2001), *Estancias. La palabra y el fantasma en la cultura occidental*, Spanish trans. Tomás Segovia, Valencia: Ediciones Pre-textos.
- Bachmann, Ingeborg (1993), "Musik und Dichtung". In: Ingeborg Bachmann, *Werke*, München / Zürich: Piper, vol. 4. pp.59-62.
- Banoun, Bernard (1992), *Richard Strauss, Hugo von Hofmannsthal, Correspondance 1900-1929*, Paris: Fayard.
- Banoun, Bernard (2000), *L'opéra selon Richard Strauss – un théâtre et son temps*, Paris: Fayard.
- Baricco, Alessandro (1992), *Constellations. Mozart, Rossini, Benjamin, Adorno*, Paris: Gallimard.
- Batteux, Charles (1746), *Les Beaux-Arts réduits à un même principe* (ed. Jean-Rémy Mantion), Paris: Aux Amateurs des Livres, 1989.
- Baudrillard, Jean (1972), *Pour une critique de l'économie politique du signe*, Paris: Gallimard.
- Benjamin, Walter (1928), *Ursprung des deutschen Trauerspiels*. In: *Gesammelte Schriften* 1.1, ed. Rolf Tiedemann, Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1974, pp.203-430.
- Benjamin Walter (1939), "On some Motifs in Baudelaire", *Illuminations*, ed. Hanna Arendt, trans. Harry Zohn, London: Fontana Press, pp.152-196.
- Benjamin, Walter (1977), *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*, trans. John Osborne, London & New York: Verso/NLB.
- Benjamin, Walter (1982), *Das Passagen-Werk, Gesammelte Schriften* V.1, Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp.
- Benjamin, Walter (1992), "Theses on the philosophy of history", *Illuminations*, pp.245-255. London: Fontana Press.

- Bernhard, Thomas (1991), *The Loser*. Translated from the German by Jack Dawson. Afterword by Mark M. Anderson. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.
- Boissière, Anne (1999), *Adorno. La vérité de la musique moderne*, Paris: Presses Universitaires du Septentrion.
- Born, Georgina (1994), *Rationalizing culture: IRCAM, Boulez, and the Institutionalization of the musical avant-garde*, Berkeley / London: UCP.
- Botstein, Leon (1992), "The enigmas of Richard Strauss: a revisionist view", in: Bryan Gilliam, *Richard Strauss and his world*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992: pp. 3-32.
- Boulez, Pierre (1968), *Notes of an apprenticeship*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.
- Boulez, Pierre (1981), *Points de repère*, Paris: Christian Bourgois.
- Broch, Hermann (1975), "Hofmannsthal und seine Zeit", *Schriften zur Literatur* I, Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp, pp. 111-284.
- Buck-Morss, Susan (1977), *The Origin of Negative Dialectics*, New York: Free Press.
- Butler, Christopher (2004), "Innovation and the avant-garde, 1900-20", in: Nicholas Cook, Anthony Pople (eds.), *The Cambridge history of twentieth-music*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 69-89.
- Cage, John (1968), *Silence*. London: Calder and Boyars.
- Clair, Jean (1988), *Paradoxe sur le conservateur, précédé de De la modernité conçue comme une religion*, Paris: L'Échoppe.
- Dahlhaus, Carl (1989), *Nineteenth-Century Music*, Berkeley, Los Angeles: University of California Press.
- Debussy, Claude (1987), *Mr. Croche et autres écrits*, Paris: Gallimard.
- Demmerling, Christoph (1994), *Sprache und Verdinglichung. Wittgenstein, Adorno und das Projekt einer kritischen Theorie*, Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp.
- Deutsch, Eliot (1996), *Essays on the Nature of Art*. Albany: State of New York University Press.
- Diamond, Cora (1989) (ed.), *Wittgenstein's Lectures on the Foundations of Mathematics. Cambridge, 1939*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Drury, Maurice O'C. (1996), "Conversations with Wittgenstein", *The Danger of Words and Writings on Wittgenstein*, Bristol: Thoemmes.
- Du Bos, Abbé (1719), *Réflexions Critiques sur la Poësie et sur la Peinture*, 6.^a édition, Paris: Chez Pissot, 1755.
- Duteurtre, Benoit (2000), *Requiem pour une avant-garde*, 2me Edition, Paris: Agora Pocket.
- Eimert, Herbert (1959), "The composer's freedom of choice". *Die Reihe* iii: 1-12. Pennsylvania: Theodore Presser Company.

- Engelmann, Paul (1970), *Ludwig Wittgenstein. Briefe und Begegnungen*, Wien/München: Oldenbourg.
- Featherstone, M. (1988), "In pursuit of the postmodern: an introduction". In *Theory, Culture & Society* 5: pp.195-215.
- Fingal, Günter (2000), "Zeit und Präsenz als ästhetische Kategorien" in: *Musik in der Zeit – Zeit in der Musik* (ed. by Richard Klein, Eckehard Kiem and Wolfram Ette), Weilerswist: Velbrück Wissenschaft, pp.11-20.
- Fink-Eitel, Hinrich (1992), "Dialektik der Macht" in: Emil Angehrn et al. (ed.), *Dialektischer Negativismus. Michael Theunissen zum 60. Geburtstag*, Frankfurt a .M.: Suhrkamp, p. 35-56.
- Frank, Manfred (1988), *Gott im Exil. Vorlesungen über die Neue Mythologie, 2. Teil*, Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp.
- Gadamer, Hans-Georg (1986), *The Relevance of the Beautiful and Other Essays*. Translated by Nicholas Walker. Edited with an Introduction by Robert Bernasconi, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Gilman, Sander L. (1988), "Strauss and the Pervert", in: Arthur Groos, Roger Parker (eds.), *Reading Opera*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, pp. 306-327.
- Goethe, J.W. (n.d.), *Gedichte*, Stuttgart: J.G. Cotta'sche Buchhandlung Nachfolger.
- Gould, Glenn (1983), "Une certaine idée de Richard Strauss", *Le dernier puritain*, Paris: Fayard.
- Guerreiro, António (2000), *O acento agudo do presente*, Lisbon: Edições Cotovia.
- Gumbrecht, Hans Ulrich (2003), "Epiphanien" in: *Dimensionen ästhetischer Erfahrung* (ed. by Joachim Küppers and Christoph Menke). Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp, pp. 203-222.
- Habermas, Jürgen (1985), *Der philosophische Diskurs der Moderne. Zwölf Vorlesungen*, Frankfurt a .M.: Suhrkamp.
- Haller, Rudolf (1999), "Wittgenstein, der Wiener Kreis und die Folgen. Ein Gespräch mit Franz Kreuzer", in Kurt Rudolf Fischer (ed.), *Österreichische Philosophie von Brentano bis Wittgenstein*, Wien: Universitätsverlag, 1999, pp. 357-423.
- Haller, Rudolf (1988), *Questions on Wittgenstein*, London: Routledge.
- Hanslick, Eduard (1990), *Vom Musikalisch-Schönen* [Teil 1: Historisch-kritische Ausgabe], Mainz: Schott.
- Harnoncourt, Nikolaus (1995), *Was ist Wahrheit?*, Salzburg/Vienna: Residenz Verlag.
- Harvey, Jonathan (1975), *The music of Stockhausen*, London: Faber & Faber.
- Hegel, G.W.F. (1989), *Vorlesungen über die Ästhetik*, Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp.
- Heidegger, Martin (1960), *Der Ursprung des Kunstwerkes*, Stuttgart: Reclam.

- Heller, Agnes (2002), "Moderne Hermeneutik und die Präsentation der Oper". In: *Die Musik als Medium von Beziehungsbefindlichkeiten. Mozarts und Wagners Musiktheater im aktuellen Deutungsgeschehen* (Studien zur Wertungsforschung; vol. 40). Ed. By Otto Kolleritsch. Vienna-Graz: Universal Edition, pp.15-32.
- Horkheimer, Max (1936), "Egoismus und Freiheitsbewegung. Zur Anthropologie des bürgerlichen Zeitalters", in *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung*, 5 (1936): pp.161-234.
- Holl, Hans-Günter (2001), "Postface", in Th. W. Adorno, *Dialectique négative*, Paris: Payot.
- Horkheimer, Max (1969), "Über seinen Gefährten". In: FAZ, faksimiliert in: *Adorno in Frankfurt*. Ed. by V. Wolfgang Schütte. Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 2003, p.364.
- Hullot-Kentor, Robert (1988) "Popular music and Adorno's 'The aging of the new music' ", *Telos* 77: pp.79-94.
- Hutcheon, Linda and Michael (1996), *Opera, desire, disease, death*, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.
- Janik, Allan, and Stephen Toulmin (1973), *Wittgenstein's Vienna*, New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Jarvis, Simon (1998), *Adorno: a critical introduction*. Oxford: Polity.
- Julius, Anthony (2002), *Transgressions – the offences of Art*, London: Thames and Hudson.
- Kant, Immanuel (1957), *Kritik der Urteilkraft und Schriften zur Naturphilosophie, Werke in Zwölf Bänden*, Band X, Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp Verlag.
- Kant, Immanuel (1987), *Critique of Judgment*, trans. Werner S. Pluhar, Indianapolis: Hackett.
- Kant, Immanuel (1990), *Kritik der Urteilkraft*, Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag.
- Klein, Richard (2003), "Das musikalische Werk und seine Interpretation". In: *Musikalische Produktion und Interpretation. Zur historischen Unaufhebbarkeit einer ästhetischen Konstellation* (Studien zur Wertungsforschung; vol. 43). Ed. by Otto Kolleritsch. Vienna-Graz: Universal Edition, pp.101-121.
- Knepler, Georg (1982), *Geschichte als Weg zum Musikverständnis*, Leipzig: Reclam.
- Kofman, Sarah (1973), *Camera obscura. De l'idéologie*, Paris: Éditions Galilée.
- Kolleritsch, Otto (2001), "Die Musik, das Leben und der Irrtum". In: *Die Musik, das Leben und der Irrtum. Thomas Bernhard und die Musik* (Studien zur Wertungsforschung; vol. 37). Ed. by Otto Kolleritsch, Vienna-Graz: Universal Edition, pp.10-20.

- Kolleritsch, Otto (2003), "Ein für alle Male / ists Orpheus, wenn es singt (Rilke)". In: *Musikalische Produktion und Interpretation. Zur historischen Unaufhebbarkeit einer ästhetischen Konstellation* (Studien zur Wertungsforschung; vol. 43). Ed. By Otto Kolleritsch, Vienna-Graz: Universal Edition, pp.8-14.
- Lacoue-Labarthe, Philippe (1991), *Musica Ficta (Figures de Wagner)*, Paris: Christian Bourgois Editeur.
- Lukács, Georg (1920), *Die Theorie des Romans*, Berlin: P. Cassirer.
- Lukács, Georg (1984), "Exkurs über Wittgenstein", in *Zur Ontologie des gesellschaftlichen Seins, Werke XIII*, Darmstadt/Neuwied: Luchterhand: pp. 371-375.
- Lukács, Georg (1971), *The Theory of the Novel*, trans. Anna Bostock, London: Merlin Press.
- Liotard, François (1971), *Discours, figure*, Paris: Klincksiek.
- Liotard, François (1974), "Adorno as the devil", *Telos* 19: pp.127-37.
- Liotard, François (1984), *The postmodern condition: a report on knowledge*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Liotard, François (1988a), *Peregrinations: Law, form, event*, New York: Columbia University Press.
- Liotard, François (1988b), *The Differend: Phrases in dispute*, Manchester: University Press.
- Liotard, François (1991), *The Inhuman: Reflection on time*, Cambridge: Blackwell.
- Liotard, François (1992), *The postmodern explained to children: Correspondence 1982-1985*, Sydney: Power Publications.
- Liotard, François (1993a), "Note in the meaning of 'post-' ". In *Postmodernism: A reader*, ed. Docherty, T., London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, pp. 47-50.
- Liotard, François (1993b), "The sublime and the avant-garde". In *Postmodernism: A reader*, ed. Docherty, T., London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, pp. 244-56.
- Mann, Thomas (1990), *Entstehung des Doktor Faustus*. In: Thomas Mann, *Reden und Aufsätze*, Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp.
- Mannoni, Laurent (2003), *A grande arte da luz e da sombra: arqueologia do cinema*, São Paulo: Editora SENAC.
- Marx, Karl (1974), *Das Kapital. Kritik der politischen Ökonomie*, in: *Marx-Engels Werke* (MEW), Berlin: Dietz Verlag, vol. 23.
- McGuinness, Brian (1991) (ed.), "Der Löwe spricht... und wir können ihn nicht verstehen", Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp.
- McGuinness, Brian (1990), *Wittgenstein: A Life. Young Ludwig 1889-1921*, London: Penguin.
- Morgan, Robert (1991), *Twentieth-Century Music: A History of Musical Style in Modern Europe & America*, New York: W.W. Norton & Company.

- Moses, Stéphane (1996), "Benjamin, Nietzsche et l'idée de l'éternel retour", in *Europe – revue littéraire mensuelle* (April 1996).
- Nietzsche, Friedrich (1911), *The Case of Wagner*, trans. Anthony M. Ludovici, Edinburgh and London: T.N. Foulis.
- Ouattara, Bourahima (1999), *Adorno: philosophie et éthique*, Paris: L'Harmattan.
- Paddison, Max (1993), *Adorno's Aesthetics of Music*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Pinho Vargas, António (2002), *Sobre Música*, Porto: Afrontamento.
- Pinho Vargas, António (2004), "Guia para Os Dias", translation by Ivan Moody, in: Booklet to the CD *Os Dias Levantados*, EMI Classics.
- Puffett, Derrick (1989), *Richard Strauss, Elektra*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Pynchon, Thomas (2002), *Mason & Dixon*, New York: Henry Holt & Company.
- Readings, Bill (1991), *Introducing Lyotard: art and politics*, London: Routledge.
- Rilke, Rainer Maria (1980), *Die Sonette an Orpheus*. In: *Werke*, vol. 1,2 (Gedicht-Zyklen), Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp.
- Rolland, Romain (1951), *Correspondance, fragments de Journal*, Paris: Albin Michel.
- Rose, Gillian (1978), *The Melancholy Science: An Introduction to the Thought of Theodor W. Adorno*, London: Macmillan.
- Rousseau, Jean-Jacques (1781), "Essai sur l'origine des langues", in: *Oeuvres Complètes* (eds. Bernard Gagnebin / Marcel Raymond), Paris: Gallimard (1964ss.): V, 371-429.
- Schopenhauer, Arthur (1969), *The World as Will and Representation I*, trans. E. F. J. Payne, New York: Dover.
- Schulte, Joachim (1990), "Chor und Gesetz. Zur 'morphologischen Methode' bei Goethe und Wittgenstein", in *Chor und Gesetz. Wittgenstein im Kontext*, Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp, 1990: pp. 11-42.
- Seel, Martin (2000), *Ästhetik des Erscheinens*, Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp.
- Sinopoli, Giuseppe (2003), "Einige Bemerkungen über Gesundheit und Krankheit in Schumanns Erfindungskraft, betreffend die zweite Sinfonie". In: *Programmheft zum 22. Abonnementzyklus der Universität für Musik und darstellende Kunst Graz*, Graz, 2003.
- Spitzer, Michael (2006), *Music as Philosophy: Adorno and Beethoven's Late Style*, Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.
- Steinberg, Michael P. (1993), "Introduction: Music, Language, and Culture", *The Musical Quarterly* 77: pp. 397-400.
- Steiner, George (1998), *Après Babel*, Paris: Edition Albin Michel.
- Steinert, Heinz (1993), *Adorno in Wien. Über die (Un-)Möglichkeit von Kunst, Kultur und Befreiung*, Frankfurt a. M.: Fischer.

- Stenius, Erik (1960), *Wittgenstein's Tractatus. A Critical Exposition of the Main Lines of Thought*, Oxford: Blackwell.
- Steinberg, Michael P. (1993), "Introduction: Music, Language, and Culture", *The Musical Quarterly* 77 (1993): pp.397-400.
- Stevens, Wallace (1997), *Collected Poetry and Prose*, New York: The Library of America.
- Stockhausen, Karlheinz (1961), "Two Lectures". *Die Reihe*, Pennsylvania: Theodore Presser Company, pp.59-82.
- Stuckenschmidt, H. H. (1958), "The third stage". *Die Reihe*, Pennsylvania: Theodore Presser Company, pp.11-13
- Taruskin, Richard (1997), *Defining Russia Musically*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Tietz, Udo (2002), *Ontologie und Dialektik. Heidegger und Adorno über das Sein, das Nichtidentische, die Synthesis und die Kopula*, Vienna: Passagen.
- Uehlein, Friedrich A. (1998), "Beethoven ist die Hegelsche Philosophie: sie ist aber zugleich wahrer..." in: Richard Klein/Claus-Steffen Mahnkopf (ed.): *Mit den Ohren denken. Adornos Philosophie der Musik*, Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp, pp. 206-228.
- Unger, Anette (1992), *Welt, Leben und Kunst als Themen der "Zarathustra-Kompositionen" von Richard Strauß und Gustav Mahler*, Frankfurt am Main-Bern: Peter Lang.
- Vieira de Carvalho, Mário (1994), "Aesthetic autonomy from Enlightenment to New Music". Communication held at the *XIIIth World Congress of Sociology*, Bielefeld: July 18-23.
- Vieira de Carvalho, Mário (1996), "No hay caminos? – Luigi Nonos *Verhältnis zur Geschichte*". *Das aufgesprengte Kontinuum. Über die Geschichtsfähigkeit der Musik (Studien zur Wertungsforschung*, ed. Otto Kolleritsch), Graz-Vienna: Universal Edition, pp.187-219.
- Vieira de Carvalho, Mário (1997), "A continuidade estilizada: História e actualidade na obra de Luigi Nono". In: *Sentido que a vida faz. Estudos para Óscar Lopes*, Porto: Campo das Letras, pp.137-156.
- Vieira de Carvalho, Mário (1999a), "Towards dialectic listening: quotation and montage in the work of Luigi Nono", *Contemporary Music Review* 18/2: pp.37-85.
- Vieira de Carvalho, Mário (1999b), *Razão e sentimento na comunicação musical. Estudos sobre a dialéctica do Iluminismo*, Lisboa: Relógio de Água.
- Wagner, Richard (1841) "The Artist and Publicity", in: *Richard Wagner's Prose Works*, vol.7, trans. William Ashton Ellis, London: 1897: pp.134-141.
- Wagner, Richard (1852), *Opera and Drama*, in: *Richard Wagner's Prose Works*, vol. 2, trans. William Ashton Ellis, London: 1893.

- Wattenbarger, Richard (2001), "A 'very German process': the contexts of Adorno's Strauss critique", *19th Century Music*, XXV (Fall/Spring 2001-2002): pp. 313-336.
- Weber, Max (1958), *The Rational and Social Foundations of Music*, Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press.
- Wellmer, Albrecht (1983), "Vérité-Apparence-Reconciliation: Adorno et le sauvetage esthétique de la modernité" in: *Théories Esthétiques après Adorno* (ed. Rainer Rochlitz), Toulouse: Actes du Sud, pp. 247-293.
- Wellmer, Albrecht (1984), "Truth, semblance, reconciliation: Adorno's aesthetic redemption of modernity", *Telos* 62: pp.89-116.
- Wellmer, Albrecht (1985), "On the dialectics of modernism and postmodernism", *Praxis International* 4/4: 337-62.
- Wellmer, Albrecht (1997), "Adorno, Modernity, and the Sublime", in Max Pensky (ed.), *The Actuality of Adorno: Critical Essays on Adorno and the Postmodern*, New York: SUNY Press, 1997, pp.112-134.
- Wellmer, Albrecht (2003), "Sprache – (Neue) Musik – Kommunikation" in: *L'orizzonte filosofica del comporre nel ventesimo secolo* (ed. by Gianmario Borio), Venezia: Il Mulino, p. 249-281.
- Wiggershaus, Rolf (1988), *Die Frankfurter Schule. Geschichte, Theoretische Entwicklung, Politische Bedeutung*, Munich/Vienna: Carl Hanser Verlag.
- Wiggershaus, Rolf (2000), *Wittgenstein und Adorno. Zwei Spielarten modernen Philosophierens*, Göttingen: Wallstein.
- Wittgenstein, Ludwig (1969), *The Blue and Brown Books*, Oxford: Blackwell.
- Wittgenstein, Ludwig (1980), *Briefe*, Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp.
- Wittgenstein, Ludwig (1989), *Logisch-philosophische Abhandlung/Tractatus logico-philosophicus* (Critical Edition), Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp.
- Wittgenstein, Ludwig (1993), "A Lecture on Ethics" [1929], in *Philosophical Occasions 1912-1951*, Indianapolis: Hackett: pp. 36-44.
- Wittgenstein, Ludwig (1993b), *Philosophische Grammatik*, in *Werkausgabe* IV, Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp.
- Wittgenstein, Ludwig (1995), *Cambridge Letters*, Oxford: Blackwell.
- Wittgenstein, Ludwig (1996), *Philosophische Bemerkungen* [1930], in *Werkausgabe* II, Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp.
- Wittgenstein, Ludwig (1996b), *Lectures and Conversations on Aesthetics, Psychology and Religious Belief*, Oxford: Blackwell.
- Wittgenstein, Ludwig (1997), *Tagebücher 1914-1916*, in *Werkausgabe* I, Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp, pp.87-187.
- Wittgenstein, Ludwig (1997), *Philosophische Untersuchungen*, in *Werkausgabe* I, Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp, pp. 225ff.
- Wittgenstein, Ludwig (1997b), *Denkbewegungen. Tagebücher 1930-1932/1936-1937*, Innsbruck: Haymon.

Wittgenstein, Ludwig, (1997c), *Zettel*, in *Werkausgabe* VIII, Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp, pp. 259-443.

Wittgenstein, Ludwig (1998), *Culture and Value*, trans. Peter Winch, Oxford: Blackwell.

Žižek, Slavoj (1998), *Das Unbehagen im Subjekt*, Vienna: Passagen.

Žižek, Slavoj (2001), *Die gnadenlose Liebe*, Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp.

INDEX

Compiled by Dinis Silva

- Adorno, Gretel, 223
Agamben, Giorgio, 110, 246
Altenberg, Peter, 139
Anselm, Saint, 238
Apel, Karl-Otto, 192
Aristotle, 167, 230
Babbitt, Milton, 234
Bach, J. S., 83, 93, 243
Bachmann, Ingeborg, 66, 246
Bacon, Francis, 13, 161, 162
Bakhtin, Mikhail, 116
Banoun, Bernard, 148, 149, 158, 246
Baricco, Alessandro, 110, 246
Bartók, Bela, 44
Batteux, Charles, 86, 246
Baudelaire, Charles, 107, 109, 110, 116, 117, 246
Baudrillard, Jean, 109, 246
Becker, Paul, 106
Beckett, Samuel, 221
Beethoven, Ludwig van, 24, 44, 45, 49, 51, 53, 55-57, 73, 144, 160, 177-183, 236, 241, 245, 251, 252
Benjamin, W., 22, 41, 42, 43, 44, 46, 47, 49, 51, 57, 85, 87, 94, 105, 109, 110, 117, 119, 124, 195, 200, 203, 218, 222, 241, 246, 247, 251
Berg, Alban, 5, 23, 33, 44, 57, 136, 138, 139, 141-144, 195, 245
Bergson, Henri, 155
Berio, Luciano, 126
Bernhard, Thomas, 61, 62, 63, 247, 250
Bertelsmann, Richard, 82, 187
Boissière, Anne, 96, 104, 123, 247
Boléo, Pedro, 7, 9, 22, 95
Borges, Jorge Luís, 129
Borgia, Cesare, 148
Born, Giordina, 117, 247
Botstein, Leon, 147, 158, 247
Boulez, Pierre, 105, 117, 123, 124, 126, 213, 247
Bowie, Andrew, 207
Brahms, Johannes, 64, 198, 235, 236
Brecht, Bertolt, 93, 125
Broch, Hermann, 204, 247
Bruce, Richard, 52
Büchner, Georg, 141
Buck-Morss, Susan, 195, 202, 247
Busoni, Ferruccio, 64
Cage, John, 104, 214, 247
Callas, Maria, 81, 82
Capote, Truman, 229
Caruso, Enrico, 81
Casals, Pablo, 198
Casanova, Giacomo, 149
Cézanne, Paul, 210, 211, 212
Clair, Jean, 118, 247
Cocteau, Jean, 156
Comte, A., 13
Court, Raymond, 122
Cranmer, David, 207
Dahlhaus, Carl, 146, 247
Damásio, António, 90
Darwin, Charles, 238
Debussy, Claude, 58, 152, 247
Deleuze, Gilles, 136
Del Mar, Norman, 146
Demmerling, Christoph, 192, 247
Descartes, R., 13, 38, 123, 153, 223
Deutsch, Eliot, 28, 247
Diamond, Cora, 194, 247
Dierks, Sonja, 7, 9, 21, 71
Drury, Maurice O'C., 205, 247

- Du Bos, Jean-Baptiste, 86, 247
 Duarte, Rodrigo, 7, 9, 20, 27
 Duteurtre, Benoit, 126, 247
 Eimert, Herbert, 212, 213, 248
 Eisler, Hanns, 44
 Engelmann, Paul, 191, 192
 Engels, Friedrich, 116, 250
 Ette, Wolfram, 166, 248
 Ferreira de Castro, Paulo, 7, 10, 24, 189
 Fichte, J. G., 13, 165
 Ficker, Ludwig von, 197
 Fingal, Günter, 166, 248
 Fink-Eitel, Hinrich, 162, 248
 Foucault, Michel, 113, 125
 Frank, Manfred, 63
 Freud, S., 16, 230, 235
 Friedrich, Caspar David, 50, 177, 251, 252
 Gadamer, Hans-Georg, 66, 67, 169, 192, 248
 Galilei, Galileo, 223
 García Marques, Gabriel, 129
 George, Stefan, 128, 196, 222, 234, 252
 Gilman, Sander L., 150, 248
 Goehr, Lydia, 50, 118
 Goethe, J. W., 11, 21, 43, 51-55, 61, 138, 149, 194, 198, 248, 251
 Goodman, Nelson, 116
 Gould, Glenn, 62, 63, 158, 248
 Grab, Hermann, 29, 243
 Gramsci, António, 205
 Guerreiro, António, 109, 248
 Habermas, Jürgen, 117, 164, 185, 192, 248
 Halbreich, Harry, 126
 Haller, Rudolf, 193, 248
 Hanslick, Eduard, 198, 201, 248
 Harer, Ingeborg, 69
 Harnoncourt, Nikolaus, 93, 248
 Harvey, Jonathan, 213, 248
 Haydn, Joseph, 198
 Hegel, G. W. F., 8, 13, 27, 28, 30, 48, 55, 101, 116, 117, 132, 135, 165, 183, 189, 206, 226, 233, 249
 Heidegger, Martin, 8, 31, 39, 40, 166, 167, 169, 174, 249, 252
 Heller, Agnes, 67, 249
 Hindemith, Paul, 35, 44, 66, 241, 245
 Hitler, Adolf, 95, 243
 Hofmannsthal, Hugo von, 149, 195, 204, 246, 247
 Holl, Günter, 142, 249
 Homero, 168
 Horkheimer, Max, 7, 28, 60, 111, 132, 160, 161, 163, 165, 169, 212, 215, 223, 228, 230, 231, 237, 241, 246, 249
 Horowitz, Vladimir, 62
 Horst, Carl, 49
 Hullot-Kentor, Robert, 7, 10, 24, 25, 217, 221, 241, 242, 243, 245, 249
 Humboldt, A., 5, 20
 Hutcheon, L. / M., 152, 249
 Janik, Allan, 193, 249
 Jarvis, Simon, 212, 215, 216, 249
 Jimenez, Marc, 122
 Joachim, Joseph, 198, 207, 248, 251
 Kafka, Franz, 136, 202
 Kant, I., 15, 21, 27, 28, 43, 49, 50, 116, 167, 193, 200, 226, 232, 249
 Kierkegaard, S., 7, 8, 44, 48, 61, 67, 166, 194, 241, 243
 Klee, Paul, 76, 210, 211, 212
 Klein, Richard, 66, 67, 164, 166, 248, 249, 252
 Knepler, Georg, 87, 249
 Kofman, Sarah, 109, 249
 Kolisch, Rudolf, 66
 Kolleritsch, Otto, 6, 9, 21, 59, 62, 63, 249, 250, 252
 Kracauer, Siegfried, 36, 241, 245
 Kraus, Karl, 20, 31, 87, 195, 232
 Křenek, Ernst, 44, 47
 Kreuzer, Johann, 166, 248
 Labor, Josef, 198
 Lacoue-Labarthe, Philippe, 107

- Leibniz, G., 38
 Levy-Bruhl, Lucien, 239
 Lhomme, Alain, 123
 Lhomme, Michèle, 123
 Livingstone, Rodney, 156, 242, 243
 Loos, Adolph, 31, 198
 Lopes, José Júlio, 5, 9, 22
 Lowenthal, Leo, 233
 Lueken, Gert-Lueke, 192
 Lukács, Georg, 43, 44, 46-48, 57, 191, 192, 250
 Luther, Martin, 228, 230, 231
 Lyotard, François, 10, 24, 125, 209, 210, 211, 212, 214, 216, 217, 218, 219, 250, 251
 Mahler, Gustav, 23, 32, 42, 57, 92, 93, 135-138, 140, 141, 143, 144, 198, 204, 241, 244, 252
 Mallarmé, Stéphane, 210, 211
 Mann, Thomas, 59, 67, 68, 246, 250
 Mannoni, Laurent, 102, 250
 Marcuse, Herbert, 118, 191
 Martingo, Ângelo, 5, 10, 24, 209
 Marx, Karl, 7, 13, 18, 22, 25, 44, 109, 116, 124, 166, 189, 205, 223, 231, 232, 250
 McClary, Susan, 125
 McGuinness, Brian, 192, 250
 Merleau-Ponty, Maurice, 169
 Messiaen, Olivier, 212, 213
 Mondrian, Piet, 235, 236
 Montaigne, Michel de, 235
 Morgan, Robert, 146, 251
 Moses, Stéphane, 109, 242, 244, 251
 Mozart, Wolfgang Amadeus, 28, 54, 61, 67, 172, 246
 Müller, Wilhelm, 45, 46
 Musil, Robert., 63
 Newman, Ernest, 95, 243
 Nietzsche, F., 22, 55, 60, 95, 107-109, 115, 116, 150, 155, 175, 194, 197, 225, 230, 243, 251
 Novalis, 59
 Olbrich, Elfriede, 223
 Olive, Jean-Paul, 5, 9, 23, 131
 Outtara, Bouharima, 132
 Paddison, Max, 6, 9, 21, 41, 47, 121, 215-217, 251
 Padoux, Cosette, 152
 Parsons, T., 16
 Pater, Walter, 200
 Penderecki, Krzysztof, 126
 Pfitzner, Hans, 66
 Picasso, Pablo, 28, 235
 Pinho Vargas, António, 5, 9, 23, 121, 127, 251
 Pissarro, Camille, 227
 Prokofiev, Serguei, 198
 Proust, Marcel, 87
 Puffet, Derrick, 158
 Pynchon, Thomas, 71, 72, 251
 Ravel, Maurice, 198
 Readings, Bill, 210, 217, 251
 Rentsch, Thomas, 192
 Ribeiro, Paula, 6, 10, 23, 145
 Ricardo, David, 4, 13
 Rilke, Rainer Maria, 63, 69, 202, 250, 251
 Robertson (Etienne-Gaspard Robert), 101
 Rolland, Romain, 150, 152, 251
 Rose, Gillian, 51, 125, 251
 Rousseau, Jean-Jacques, 86, 231, 251
 Russell, Bertrand, 189, 194
 Saint-Simon, C.-H., 13
 Satie, Erik, 57
 Saul, King, 148
 Saussure, Ferdinand de, 210
 Savonarola, Girolamo, 148
 Schiller, Friedrich, 194
 Schlegel, August W., 59
 Schlegel, Friedrich, 59
 Schleiermacher, Friedrich, 59
 Schnabel, Arthur, 64, 65
 Schoenberg, Arnold, 28, 31, 32, 33, 34, 38, 44, 64, 123, 124, 126, 139, 146, 147, 196, 198, 201, 234, 242, 244
 Schopenhauer, Arthur, 166, 193, 194, 196, 198-200, 251

- Schubert, Franz, 9, 21, 41-58, 178, 243
 Schulte, Joachim, 198, 207, 251
 Schumann, Clara, 198
 Schumann, Robert, 65
 Semiramis, Queen, 148
 Simmel, Georg, 155
 Sinopoli, Giuseppe, 65, 251
 Socrates, 162
 Spitzer, Michael, 51, 52, 251
 Straffa, Piero, 205
 Stalin, Josef, 126
 Steinberg, Michael P., 200, 252
 Steiner, Georg, 128, 129, 222, 229, 252
 Steinert, Heinz, 200, 252
 Stenius, Erik, 193, 252
 Steuermann, Eduard, 64, 65, 66
 Stevens, Wallace, 237, 252
 Stockhausen, Karlheinz, 103, 104, 124, 126, 213, 248, 252
 Strauss, Richard, 9, 23, 24, 60, 65, 145-158, 198, 242-244, 246-248, 251, 253
 Stravinsky, Igor, 25, 33, 34, 35, 40, 42, 58, 83, 93, 107, 125, 129, 140, 244
 Stuckenschmidt, H.-H., 213
 Subotnik, Rose Rosengard, 125
 Swinburne, Algernon Charles, 202
 Taruskin, Richard, 129, 252
 Tchaikovsky, P. I., 129
 Telemann, Georg-Philip, 93
 Tieck, Ludwig, 59
 Tiedemann, Rolf, 73, 221-225, 232, 233, 238, 241, 245, 246
 Tietz, Udo, 166, 252
 Tolstoy, L., 201, 203
 Toulmin, Stephen, 193, 249
 Uehlein, Friedrich A., 177, 252
 Unger, Anette, 156, 158, 252
 Vargas Llosa, Mario, 129
 Verdi, Giuseppe, 65
 Vieira de Carvalho, Mário, 9, 11, 22, 25, 214, 252
 Wagner, Richard, 9, 58, 60, 67, 95-111, 114-116, 145, 165, 242, 243, 245, 250, 251, 253
 Waldenfels, Bernhard, 169
 Walter, Bruno, 41, 42, 43, 44, 46, 94, 105, 109, 110, 198, 200, 203, 222, 241, 246, 247
 Watteau, Antoine, 149
 Wattenbarger, Richard, 147, 155, 156, 253
 Weber, Max, 17, 19, 38, 39, 86, 88, 215, 253
 Webern, Anton, 33, 44, 198
 Weill, Kurt, 44, 125
 Wellmer, Albrecht, 58, 122, 125, 170, 192, 214, 216, 217, 253
 Wesche, Tilo, 8, 10, 24, 159, 163
 Whitman, Walt, 226
 Wiggershaus, Rolf, 170, 192, 253
 Wilde, Óscar, 151
 Wittgenstein, Ludwig, 24, 166, 189-207, 248
 Wittgenstein, Paul, 198
 Xenakis, Iannis, 126
 Žižek, Slavoj, 71, 72, 81, 254

COLIBRI – ARTES GRÁFICAS

Rua Major João Luís de Moura, Famões Park
– ARMAZEM AB – 1685 - 650 Famões
TELEFONE | (+351) **21 931 74 99**
www.edi-colibri.pt | colibri@edi-colibri.pt
