

REIFICATION, MUSIC AND
PROBLEMS OF MODERN
PHILOSOPHY

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DECLARATION OF AUTHORSHIP

I, Jonathan Lewis, hereby declare that this thesis and the work presented in it is entirely my own. Where I have consulted the work of others, this is always clearly stated.

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation aims to show how the relationship between reification and music discloses problems in modern philosophy and critical musicology. In chapter one, I attempt to articulate the relationship between reification and music in order to put forward a vision for a non-reified engagement with musical praxis. Accordingly, I suggest that once we distance ourselves from theoretical attempts to characterise the object ‘music’ in analytic aesthetics, instead, seeking to make sense of concrete musical events within the varying contexts of our everyday practices, then music can be conceived as an inherently meaningful phenomena that discloses the worlds in which it is created, performed and received.

The following two chapters explore problems surrounding the interpretation of musical praxis in relation to the world-disclosive vision of music offered in chapter one. By looking at the debates surrounding Richard Wagner’s works, chapter two explains how interpretive difference is a hermeneutic problem, one which allows us to accept the musical work as something that can ‘change in itself’, thus dissolving a number of problems associated with classical conceptions of musical meaning.

It is in the light of these traditional approaches to the issue of aesthetic meaning that the third chapter seeks to consider how the philosophy of music brings about the reification of musical praxis. By situating the philosophy of music in relation to the world-disclosive vision of musical engagement articulated in previous chapters, I demonstrate how musical meaning can be understood in the context of socially- and culturally-cultivated tacit norms and practices.

Subsequently, following discussions of the philosophical problems surrounding the association between music and reification, the fourth chapter examines the relationship in the context of critical musicology. Specifically, I attempt to show how music analysis, in an age where ‘postmodern’ New Musicology has largely given way to a critical musicology that is willing to accept and work with

aspects of its 'modernist' past, can be included within a world-disclosive conception of music. The issue remains, however, that although critical musicology attempts to understand music in the context of everyday practices, it has simultaneously opened itself up to the charge of having condoned relativism.

It follows that chapter five seeks to address the ethical and political problems that arise in 'postmodern' musicology as a result of the pressures of cultural relativism. I argue that in order to avoid 'postmodernising' itself out of existence, critical musicology, if it is to continue to give the institutional go-ahead for the interactions between 'modernisms' and 'postmodernisms', must face up to the questions of intersubjective legitimacy which maintain it as an institution and which presuppose its very existence. By turning to trans-cultural and trans-historical basis of interpretive validity, the future of critical musicology becomes entangled in contemporary philosophical debates surrounding the emergence, maintenance and transcendence of socio-cultural norms.

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For Paula
The Music to my Philosophy

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INTRODUCTION

PHILOSOPHY AND MUSICOLOGY

In the German Middle Ages too, singing and dancing crowds, ever increasing in number, whirled themselves from place to place under this same Dionysian impulse...There are some who, from obtuseness or lack of experience, turn away from such phenomena as from “folk-diseases” with contempt or pity born of the consciousness of their own “healthy mindedness”. But of course such poor wretches have no idea how corpse-like and ghostly their so-called “health-mindedness” looks when the glowing life of the Dionysian revellers roars past them.
(Nietzsche 1967, 36-37)

This dissertation aims to show how the relationship between reification and music discloses problems in modern philosophy and critical musicology.¹ Although philosophical engagement with music is nothing new, some may find my use of reification – as a common factor in the debates between critical musicology and contemporary philosophy – obscure. The issue, to a certain extent, is that the term ‘reification’ is intimately entwined with Western Marxism and its focus on emancipatory class politics and social ontology. In order to accept the relevance of reification for current debates within and between musicology and philosophy, we must, to a certain degree, free the term from its place in Marxist theory in order to show why music should be linked at all to the notion. This process of emancipation is helped by the fact that even within what could broadly be defined as the Western Marxist tradition, which emerged with the rise of the New Left and included Georg Lukács, some of the members of the Institute of Social Research in Frankfurt (otherwise known as the Frankfurt School of Critical Theory) and such theorists as

¹ The dialogue between philosophy and musicology has been assisted since 2011 by well-attended annual conferences at King’s College, London organised by the Royal Musical Association’s Music and Philosophy Study Group and the American Musicological Society’s Music and Philosophy Study Group. I’d like to thank the committee of the RMA Music and Philosophy Study Group for giving me the opportunity to present parts of this dissertation at its conferences and workshops.

Joseph Gabel, Lucien Goldmann and Karel Kosik, there also exists a problematic relationship between reification and aesthetics, a relationship that paves the way for discussions concerning the connection between music and reification in this study.

But what do I mean by reification? Although the term might crudely be referred to as both the process by which a non-thing becomes a thing as well as the result of that process, it has different senses depending on the contexts in which it is employed; a particularity and heterogeneity that, ironically, reifying thought tries to suppress. In the context of music, the twentieth- and twenty-first centuries have seen the emergence and development of methods of musical enquiry that attempt to philosophically demystify the ‘nature’ of music; its being, its meaning and its value. The rise of analytic aesthetics in Anglo-American philosophy, which, when it comes to music, seems to have followed in the footsteps of nineteenth-century formalist aesthetics and related projects that have brought about and affirmed the primacy of music’s autonomy and the work concept, has been accompanied by efforts to theoretically characterise musical works. The typical issues that have concerned analytic aestheticians have included the nature of music, the location and character of musical meaning, the nature of the relationship between music and emotion and the ontology of the work. Such questions have resulted in the production of philosophical theories that attempt to account for the ontology, meaning and value of artworks. But what have been shouldered out in attempts to definitively characterise works of art are the specific questions of why art concerns us, why it matters to us as part of our daily lives. In other words, in attempting to explain the ‘nature’ of aesthetic experience or the ‘nature’ of art *itself*, what remains unarticulated by analytic aestheticians are the qualities of our specific aesthetic experiences – those particular and individual experiences which happen when we are around art. Ultimately, analytic aesthetics is a form of artistic engagement that is concerned with prizing theory production over and above attempts to explain aesthetic praxis in terms of its everyday meaningfulness. Indeed, it is largely on the basis that much of what is understood about art in analytical aesthetics is, as Adorno states in his unpublished lectures on aesthetics, ‘abstractly’ and ‘mechanically’ derived from ‘pre-given philosophical theories’ that ‘theoretical aesthetics’ has fallen. Of course, we have to remember that such a fall can only be understood as a ‘fall’ when compared with the constitution of aesthetics as a philosophical subject in the second half of the eighteenth century. Indeed, as we see time and time again in the works of, for

example, F. W. J. Schelling, J. C. F. von Schiller, F. D. E. Schleiermacher and K. W. F. von Schlegel, the critical and hermeneutic dimensions of post-Kantian German Romanticism arise from what is seen to be art's ability to articulate and express our relations to ourselves and the world in ever new ways rather than conform to the rules as laid out in some philosophical theory. As we shall see, theory construction and attempts to account for the characteristics of music, by failing to take account of the meaningfulness of our specific experiences with musical praxis, are, I will argue, forms of reification. Indeed, although the term 'reification', in the specific sense that I shall make clear, might seem to be most applicable to analytic aesthetics, we shall also see how musicology, through its concerns with, for example, formalism, musical autonomy and the meaning-determining nature of an artist's intentions, has also been tied up with concept.

Even from these briefest of sketches, how I intend to use the term 'reification' seems to bear little resemblance to those class redemptive projects that once were sustained by and, simultaneously, renewed the Marxist conceptual apparatus of reification. But although the fading of the New Left has been accompanied by the demise of reification as a tool for radical political and social critique, my appropriation of the term, as a means of coming to terms with philosophical and musicological enquiry, cannot be entirely divorced from the orthodox Marxist movements from which it emerged.² Indeed, my use of the term hinges upon Theodor W. Adorno's account of reification as 'identity-thinking', which is also one of the starting points for Axel Honneth's recent book on the topic.³ However, the

² Honneth acknowledges that Lukács put forward an account of reification as objectification. However, the former also observes that Lukács proposed a second 'unofficial' explanation for his recourse to a true, undistorted form of human praxis. In this second version, Lukács 'judges the defect of reifying agency against an ideal of praxis characterised by empathetic and existential engagement' (Honneth 2008, 29). Such an interpretation forms the basis for Honneth's own account of reification.

³ Commentators have sought to challenge Honneth's reformulation of the term, a challenge that has coincided with a revisionist approach towards Lukács' reification essay. For example, Timothy Hall has recently suggested that while Honneth is right to seek to broaden the debate in contemporary social and political thought by returning to Lukács' concept of reification, 'he misses the opportunity to broaden this debate still further by underestimating the crisis of political subjectivity that Lukács foresaw' (Hall 2011, 197). Lukács' concept of reification has a wider application and suggests a path towards the general transformation of modernity and the emergence of a new form of social rationality. The complex relationships between Western capitalism, technology, instrumental reason and reified consciousness that were discussed during the heyday of the Frankfurt School, which, as Andrew Feenberg (1981) has observed, were prefigured by Lukács' sociological broadening of Marxism through Weberian sociology and philosophical deepening of Marxism through Hegelian idealism, are only hinted at in Honneth's analysis by means of a brief nod to Adorno's idea of 'identity-thinking'. For Feenberg, 'the social pathology that concerns Lukács is not the lack of recognition, important though that may be, but rather the overwhelming predominance of rational structures that distort and

applicability of Honneth's account of the concept 'reification' to aesthetics is problematic due to its ties to philosophically inspired social criticism as informed by Lukács' study of social ontology in *History and Class Consciousness* (1923).⁴ Adorno's account of reification, which is intimately entwined with his critique of the nature of philosophy late in his career, suffers from no such problem. Indeed, as well as using the term as the basis for his critique of metaphysics, it also surfaces in his studies on aesthetics, epistemology, ethics and moral philosophy. As shall be observed, it is with Adorno and Martin Heidegger that the aesthetic relevance of reification is articulated, specifically, the notion that artworks protest against reification, yet they also rely upon something like reification to exist.

The tension between a non-reified engagement with artworks and the 'reification' that allows us to comprehend aesthetic praxis can be observed today in the contrasting approaches to art that separate Anglo-American analytical philosophy from more European/Continental philosophical traditions. Although it is doubtful whether we can draw any genuine line between the two philosophical enterprises,

oppress the human lives they contain' (Feenberg 2011b, 101). The revisionists have attempted to read Lukács' essay along the lines of the second 'unofficial' analysis of reification, which Honneth draws upon. According to this account, Lukács was not antagonistic to objectivity and detachment but pointed towards a specific mode of objectivity and detachment attributed to reified thought. Hall and Feenberg both agree that Lukács, like Adorno, was searching for forms of thought and action that do not suppress the qualitative content of our conceptual schemes. 'In Lukács the proletariat appears as the "object" repressed by its reified "concept."' The proletariat overflows its concept almost literally in rejecting its own commodification. Its revolt is not motivated by an allergy to reification as Adorno charges but by the restriction of its life process, by unemployment, hunger, and injustice comprehended as consequences of the commodity form of labor. Revolution in Lukács is Adornian nonidentity with a vengeance. It fulfills Adorno's demand for respect for the dignity of the concrete' (Feenberg 2011a, 190).

⁴ There are some problems with Honneth's account when it comes to the relationship between reification and aesthetics. Honneth admits that he uses the term 'reification' in a *direct* sense only when referring to our relations with other persons (Honneth 2008, 63). He claims that he hardly sees any support for the strong hypothesis that an 'objectification of nature could in any way harm the primacy of care or qualitative experience' (ibid., 61). As Honneth explains, 'we may regard the possibility of interactive, recognitional dealings with animals, plants and even things to be ethically desirable, but this normative preference cannot provide any sound arguments for claiming that society cannot go beyond these forms of interaction' (ibid., 61-62). Nevertheless, Honneth does propose that our relation to nature can be called reified only in an *indirect* or *derivative* sense when we lose sight of the multiplicity of ways in which the world has significance for those we have recognised. It follows that Honneth introduces the idea of the intersubjective mode of engagement with the natural world as the basis for his account of the reification of other things besides human beings. For example, by chopping down a tree on which you and your first love scrawled each other's names, I, in effect, have failed to recognise the ways in which that tree holds special significance or existential meaning for you. Such an act, because it violates my recognitional dealings with other beings, is, for Honneth, the reification of nature. The problem is that when it comes to dealing with works of art, Honneth cannot simply claim that 'we can take up a reifying stance toward the objective world without losing the possibility of cognitively disclosing it' (ibid., 64). We cannot say that we do not violate any practical preconditions of our cognitive relationship to artworks when we take up an objectifying stance toward them.

they, as Lee Braver observes, can be seen to diverge ‘significantly on such basic matters as what is means to philosophise, which topics are philosophically important, and what counts as a legitimate reason or argument’ (Braver 2012, 2).⁵ The divergence between analytic positions and others formed within European traditions is something Andrew Bowie also discerns, arguing that ‘there might seem to be an unbridgeable distance between, on the one hand, analytical positions which seek answers to supposedly perennial questions about truth, meaning, and rationality and, on the other, positions deriving from Nietzsche and others in the European tradition which seek to show that rationality is a manifestation of the attempt to exercise power over the Other’ (Bowie 2013, 4). Simon Critchley affirms Bowie’s characterisation of analytic philosophy whilst acknowledging those thinkers that have adopted a critical stance towards Anglo-American ways of doing from within those same traditions. For Critchley, philosophical scientism as a common feature of analytical approaches to the world, based on the beliefs that the procedures of the natural sciences can and should provide a model for philosophical method and that the natural sciences provide our primary or most significant access to the world, ‘fails to see the role that science and technology play in the alienation of human beings from the world through the latter’s objectification into a causally determined realm of nature or, more egregiously, into a reified realm of commodities manipulated by an instrumental rationality’ (Critchley 1998, 13). Indeed, as Critchley claims, the problem of rationality in modernity is such that Continental traditions can be contrasted with analytic traditions of philosophy though their focus on *practice*. He goes on to argue that ‘it is this touchstone of practice that leads philosophy towards a critique of present conditions, as conditions not amenable to freedom, and to the Utopian demand that things be otherwise, the demand for a transformative practice of philosophy, art, poetry and thinking’ (ibid., 12). In the respective cases of Braver and Bowie, both thinkers go on to show how the divide between analytical philosophy and Continental/European philosophy can be traversed and, indeed, called into question by prominent figures in both traditions.

⁵ Braver goes on to show that Ludwig Wittgenstein and Martin Heidegger, two principal representatives of either side of the analytic-Continental divide, made similar arguments for similar views on a wide range of fundamental issues. Braver proposes that ‘if a load-bearing bridge can be built between Heidegger and Wittgenstein, perhaps this will facilitate dialogue between analytic and continental thinkers in general, making the traditions intelligible to each other, thus allowing a fruitful crosspollination’ (Braver 2012, 2).

What I want to show throughout this thesis is that in some quarters of analytic philosophy, a certain type of rational or cognitive engagement with music, an engagement derived from what Braver calls ‘disengaged contemplation’ of the nature and characteristics of music, its meaning and its value, brings about the reification of music and musical works. Indeed, it is precisely because certain thinkers within more European traditions of philosophy call into question the position accorded theoretical reflection in Western modernity that they can open up alternative spaces of possibility for a non-reified engagement with music.

Peter Kivy, for example, illustrates his allegiance to the former camp. For Kivy, the so-called philosophy of music is founded on ‘a system of precepts and propositions, perhaps, on first reflection, vacuous truisms not worthy of being made explicit, but, on reflection, richly illuminating the practices they underlie’ (Kivy 2002, 12). Aaron Ridley suggests that the philosophical analysis of concepts, which Kivy is proposing and which Ridley admits he used to subscribe to, as a suitable means for understanding music entails separating music off ‘as much as possible from everything else and to investigate it in what might be called its “pure state”’ (Ridley 2004, 2). In other words, to attempt conceptual analysis of music-related concepts is to ‘isolate music entirely, to try to leech or prise out of its context-laden character, and indeed the very nature of one’s own context-laden engagement with it’ (ibid., 3). Although we will explore why analytic aesthetics – of which the philosophy of music is a specialised branch of study – has been attracted to this ‘pure state’ conception of music in chapter one, what can be observed at this early stage is how analytic aesthetics of the kind advocated by Kivy, by suggesting that the analysis of ‘precepts and propositions’ can illuminate musical praxis, can come under Adorno’s critique of reification as identity-thinking.

For Adorno, a particular type of reifying thought – amongst other forms of identity-thinking which include Hegel’s idealism and Marx’s materialism – can be attributed to philosophical metaphysics, which, ‘to cut a long story short’, he claimed, ‘is simply reason asserting itself absolutely; that is to say, reason which regards its own use as the warranty of truth, quite independently of the materials it has to work on’ (Adorno 2001, 38). In other words, ‘metaphysics is all knowledge that owes its existence to pure speculation’ – ‘a form of knowledge that is acquired purely by the

application of reason' (ibid., 48).⁶ More importantly, metaphysics, by reason alone, aims for an account of the ahistorical truths of world that, in a way, function as the foundation on which the contingent world of everyday existence is based. Metaphysics, therefore, as Adorno observed, is concerned with a particular idea of truth, mainly that 'truth is always what remains when you eliminate the apparently ephemeral, transitory and historical' (ibid., 41). Metaphysics, Adorno went on to claim, brings about a theoretical context in which 'this terribly impoverished and deprived' conception of truth becomes 'the entire substance of philosophy'. In other words, philosophy assumes that its propositions 'do not refer to changing contents, but instead make[s] the claim that they are absolutely valid for all time' (ibid., 46).

Within this context where the goal of philosophical enquiry is the discovery of acultural and ahistorical truths, metaphysical thought – resting on 'mere concepts' (Kant *CPR*, B xiv) – does not derive 'any sustenance or limits or *anything non-identical* from experience' [italics added] (Adorno 2001, 48). Because it 'rigidly severs all links between the concept and any possible experience, any possible content' (ibid., 49), metaphysics assumes that a concept is identical to its object, that concept and reality are aligned, thus bringing 'all concepts in the world to a standstill simultaneously and to fetishize them' (Adorno 2008, 24). Generalising the problem of identity in metaphysical thought to include what he called 'traditional thought in general' (ibid. 20), Adorno claimed that 'in philosophy we are obliged to make use of concepts to talk *about* concepts, And this means that what we are concerned with in philosophy – namely the non-conceptual, that which concepts refer to – is excluded from philosophy from the outset' (ibid., 62) In other words, metaphysics 'is actually nothing but form which misapprehends itself as content' (Adorno 2001, 50). However, even though, according to Adorno, the separation of metaphysics and experience 'is taken to be self-evident', that is not to say that 'the contents of every concretely available or even conceivable metaphysics' would be possible without matters of experience (ibid., 53). This is, according to Albrecht Wellmer, the 'truth' about metaphysics that Adorno observes at the moment of its 'fall'.⁷ As Adorno went on to observe, 'if I were to rely on existing metaphysics in the way in which Kant

⁶ For Adorno, the meaning of the term 'metaphysics' is distinctly Kantian in origin. Indeed, in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant claimed that metaphysics is 'a wholly isolated speculative cognition of reason that elevates itself entirely above all instruction from experience' (Kant *CPR*, B xiv).

⁷ See Wellmer 1993, 204-223.

thinks he can rely on the natural sciences in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, we would discover that this rigid dichotomy of experience and reason does not exist in the form he imagines' (ibid.). Ultimately, the delusion of metaphysics, that is, that 'pure speculation' can be separated from experience, emerges as a result of what Adorno called the 'mania for foundations' [*Fundierungswahn*] – 'the idea that no piece of knowledge can be understood simply within the framework in which it just happens to be located. I can only be satisfied with it once I have pursued it back to infinity, to the point where nothing further can happen' (ibid., 52). It is this 'mania for foundations' which, for Adorno, 'actually implies that there is a match between the knowing mind and the objects of possible knowledge that allows us to reduce every object of cognition to such an absolute' (ibid.).

Using metaphysics as an example, we can see that, for Adorno, reification is considered to be an act of identity-thinking whereby the subsumption of reality under a philosophical theory – an 'intellectual narcissism' (Adorno 2008, 25) – fails to account for the existence of 'non-conceptual' 'individuals', 'particulars' and 'heterogeneities' that are specific to certain social, cultural and historical practices. Thus, what Adorno meant by reification 'is that concepts...are no longer measured against their contents, but instead are taken in isolation' (ibid., 23-24). In other words, the mind 'makes absolutes of the things it has created. And it achieves this by tearing them from their context and then ceasing to think of them further' (ibid., 24).⁸ In the case of the type of musical engagement advocated by Kivy, what is clear in the light of Adorno's critique of identity-thinking is that by analysing music-related concepts, what remains unacknowledged are those 'ephemeral, transitory and historical' moments of musical praxis which constitute our everyday engagement with music. Nevertheless, as Adorno was also aware, because concepts are needed to bring things we encounter in the world into the inferential sphere, to communicate, to articulate meaning and purpose, to avoid falling into complete incomprehensibility, something like reification is also a necessary part of humanity 'not merely as condition from which liberation is possible but also positively, as the form in which, however brittle

⁸ Adorno also noted that concepts can also be more than the particular thing that is included under it, thus allowing for certain aspects of reality to be kept alive despite the fact that these aspects may be unacknowledged or unrealised when it comes to our current understanding of the object. We will come to this in chapter four.

and inadequate it may be, subjective impulses are realised, but only by being objectified' (Adorno GS 10.1, 108).⁹

The reification that arises through what Kivy calls a 'reflection' on music-related concepts makes it difficult to understand the important roles music and musical praxis play in our everyday existence. Why did my father choose to play Bobby McFerrin's 'Don't Worry, Be Happy' at my grandfather's funeral? Why was the last movement of Beethoven's Symphony No. 9 and Samuel Barber's *Adagio for Strings* performed at the 'Last Night of the Proms' days after 11 September 2001? Why does spiritual status or divine intercession determine an individual's ability to perform art music in North India? It is doubtful whether such questions can be answered by analysis of music-related concepts such as 'meaning', 'expression', 'work' and 'value' with no regard for actual performances and the events surrounding them. This begs the question whether these concepts really do, as Kivy claims, illuminate the practice they underlie. Indeed, it is, at times, hard to see what is at stake in attempts to analyse music-related concepts. As Bowie claims, 'analytical aesthetics rarely if at all addresses the question of why art matters' (Bowie 2013, 136). Part of the problem is that the questions of music's ontology, meaning and value overlap with or are seen as germane to wider problems in analytic philosophy. Thus, Kathleen Stock claims that 'musical works are thought to present special ontological problems, and are often of interest as such to the metaphysician; the issue of what it is to experience music as expressive tends to interest those working on issues in the philosophy of emotion; the question of musical meaning tends to attract those active in the philosophy of language; and so on' (Stock 2007, 1). The danger with this approach is that whatever problems exist in the method of philosophising about language, metaphysics and emotion are, subsequently, transplanted onto music. It seems presumptuous to believe that metaphysicians, philosophers of language and philosophers of emotion have their own theoretical shop in order such that they can fully disenchant music, especially, as Bowie observes, when 'the ever-growing

⁹ Peter Dews (1994) observes that Adorno's critique of identity-thinking offers a challenge to post-structuralist thought that, in the face of deceptive identity, demands an engagement with ineffably singular points of immediacy. For Adorno, according to Dews, post-structuralist solutions to the problem of identity were largely mistaken – 'pure singularity is itself an abstraction, the waste-product of identity-thinking' (Dews 1994, 57). By acknowledging that reification is a necessary condition for society, Adorno realised that what is thought of as immediacy is, in fact, highly mediated. As Dews explains, 'if every moment is prized purely for its uniqueness, without reference to a purpose or a meaning, to a before or an after, without a reference to anything which goes beyond itself, then what is enjoyed in each moment becomes paradoxically and monotonously the same' (ibid.).

volume of incompatible theories in such areas suggests that something is awry with seeing philosophy predominantly in terms of theory construction based on the “analysis” of concepts’ (Bowie 2013, 3).

Although some philosophers schooled in analytic traditions of philosophy, such as Hilary Putnam, Richard Rorty, Robert Brandom and John McDowell, have made a concerted effort to engage with the work of Continental philosophers, the two branches, Braver argues, ‘have grown so far apart that many who are educated in one know little about the other (beyond the fact that it isn’t worth wasting time on)’ (Braver 2012, 2). It is from this position that Braver offers a challenge to analytic philosophy in particular by showing how the two traditions can be brought into dialogue. Indeed, it is because Braver offers this challenge in part response to the work of Heidegger that his account of Anglo-American philosophy becomes a valuable source of critique for these current discussions surrounding reification.

Earlier I mentioned that both Adorno and Heidegger had addressed the relationship between reification and aesthetics. Although this may seem obvious in the case of Adorno, the link between Heidegger and reification is anything but clear owing to the briefest of references to the term in the latter’s works. However, as Lucien Goldmann argues, for those that espy the few references to *Verdinglichung* in *Being and Time* or ponder the discussions of the ‘thingliness’ of the artwork in the 1936 lectures on ‘The Origin of the Work of Art’, ‘the problem of reification’ can be seen to be ‘a central problem of the discussion for Heidegger’ (Goldmann 1977, 28). So, Goldmann argues, ‘Heidegger...will only tell us that the spontaneous consciousness tends to understand “Being-there” [*Dasein*] on the basis of the world as *Vorhanden* [present-at-hand], which is none other than the Marxist and Lukácsian analysis which tells us that, in reification, human reality and social facts are understood as things’ (ibid., 12-13). Goldmann argues that the perception of the world as ‘present-at-hand’ is ‘found at the basis of every objectivist interpretation and especially, all metaphysics as *theory* of being’ (ibid., 12). In the light of Goldmann’s interpretation of reification, we can see that Braver is accusing certain quarters of analytic philosophy of making ‘objectivist interpretations’ that yield ‘present-at-hand objects’. Such interpretations are what Braver calls ‘Retrospective Rational Reconstructions’ (‘RRRs’). He argues that both Heidegger and Wittgenstein ‘locate the fundamental problem in the way philosophising suspends our engaged behaviour in the world, with its tacit knowledge of how to use words and interact appropriately

with different types of entities, to take up a disengaged theoretical stance' (Braver 2012, 10). Part of the issue with contemplative theorising, Braver claims, is that such ways of making sense fail to account for the fact that our concepts are 'tunnelled through with vagueness', a vagueness which defies explicit articulation or philosophical analysis but which does not hinder our tacit mastery of language use. It is this vagueness that, according to Braver, philosophy *qua* disengaged, contemplative thought seeks to distil through reifying theory construction. It seems, therefore, that the detached contemplation of objects, which Braver accuses Anglo-American analytic philosophy of upholding, is a specific manifestation of reification whereby 'upon halting an activity to stare, the richly meaningful, interconnected world we live and act in recedes, leaving behind beached inert, present-at-hand objects' (ibid., 31). As Honneth explains, 'the subject is no longer empathetically engaged in interaction with his surroundings, but is instead placed in the perspective of a neutral observer, psychically and existentially untouched by his surroundings' (Honneth 2008, 24). Indeed, Lukács, along these lines, referred to an individual who takes up such a reifying stance towards the world as an 'unchanged observer' (Lukács 1971, 142). Thus, Honneth suggests that Lukács 'understands "reification" to be a habit of mere contemplation and observation, in which one's natural surroundings, social environment, and personal characteristics come to be apprehended in a detached and emotionless manner – in short, as things' (Honneth 2008, 25).

Ultimately, according to Braver, the 'search for a definitive knowledge that allows us to glimpse the innermost, crystalline structure of logic, language, existence, and thought all at once – this desire to peel back the skin of the world to take measure of its organs and bones – this is philosophy's origin and, from one perspective, its original sin' (Braver 2012, 224). Theory construction, as an attempt to peel back the skin of world and take measure of what is inside, leaves phenomena diluted rather than distilled - '*really* lumps of inert stuff' onto which we project meaning. Such an act of disengaged 'staring', which sounds suspiciously like the kind of theoretical enterprise labelled by Adorno as 'metaphysics', falls prey to the charge of reification for failing to account for those non-conceptual particulars, individuals and heterogeneities of experience that can only be understood, if at all, within certain social, cultural and historical practices.

Braver provides a critique of the kind of contemplative, 'armchair' philosophy found in analytic aesthetics. He argues that 'explicitly thinking' about an

object of thought, what Adorno termed ‘pure speculation’, shoulders out the far more common mode of how that ‘object’ forms part of our everyday practices. Braver problematises any act of philosophising whereby our ongoing engaged behaviour in the world is suspended in order to take up a disengaged theoretical stance. Having said that, the act of theory construction need not just entail conceptual analysis. Indeed, some analytic aestheticians may argue that, unlike Kivy, they are no longer concerned with a *definition* of aesthetic- or music-related terms. As Nick Zangwill claims, ‘conceptual analysis is not a satisfactory approach to *philosophical reflection on art*: either it makes questionable assumptions or else it is too limited’ [italics added] (Zangwill 2007, 5). Nevertheless, even if he rules out conceptual analysis, Zangwill still defends the idea of being able to ‘philosophically reflect on art’ by ‘fashion[ing] concepts’ (ibid., 8). Ultimately, as we shall see in chapter one, Zangwill aims to produce a ‘good rational explanatory story’ to account for the ‘nature’ of art and artworks. Such a story leaves Zangwill open to the charge of reifying art and artworks because he admits to coming up with a ‘theoretically reconstructed concept of art’ derived from reason alone. The consequences of attempting to produce a ‘good rational explanatory story’ of art leaves Zangwill open to Braver’s criticisms of disengaged, contemplative theory construction as well as Adorno’s criticisms of metaphysics *qua* pure speculation.

In short, whether searching for the separately necessary and jointly sufficient conditions of music-related concepts or attempting to construct theories that will provide answers to the questions of music’s ontology, meaning and value, what is still being prized is a form of philosophical engagement with music that precludes an understanding of musical praxis and why it matters to everyday practices. For example, by defining music as ‘intentionally organised sound’, Gordon Graham (2007) questions whether electro-sonic art works of Varèse and Lutoslawski can be thought of as music ‘properly so called’. As shall be explored in greater detail in chapters one and three, such theoretical attempts to draw distinctions between music and non-music on the basis of a definition of the former creates a problem that does not exist to ordinary participants in musical praxis. Such disengaged contemplation of a philosophical pseudo-problem ignores the question of why avant-garde music matters in the context of twenty- and twenty-first-century modernity. Ultimately, it does not address the contexts and practices in which such music was both produced and received. Consequently, the issue is such that Bowie claims that ‘anyone wishing

to reflect on...the meanings of modern art, questions of ethics after the Holocaust, or why epistemology became so dominant in modern philosophy, is these days unlikely to make their first port of call theories by analytic philosophers of art, ethics, or epistemology' (Bowie 2013, 2-3).

Both conceptual analysis and philosophical theory construction, which, as Ridley observes, invariably regard music as an object removed from its place in everyday practices, are problematic for those who, like musicologists, are concerned with musical production, performance or reception. However, music does not preclude the use of concepts that attempt to make sense of aesthetic experiences and that articulate the meaningfulness of musical events. The seemingly unresolvable tension surrounding reification – between an articulation of musical praxis for the purpose of communication and comprehensibility and what Adorno called 'metaphysical propositions' that attempt to characterise the 'object' – is a problem when it comes to engaging with musical works. How do we talk about musical works without damaging their irreducibility? How, in other words, do we avoid making deaestheticising judgments that strip musical works of what makes them music in the first place? Furthermore, and similarly related, how do we make claims regarding manifestations of musical praxis that preserve their heterogeneity and capaciousness?

One of the reasons to engage with more European/Continental traditions of philosophy might be, as Bowie and Braver illustrate, to show how thinkers within these traditions develop powerful critiques of traditional philosophical theories as well as provide plausible alternatives. In the case of Heidegger and Wittgenstein, Braver illustrates how traditional problems within philosophy of the kind that involve contemplative theory construction can be dissolved when we acknowledge how we actually cope with the world in everyday situations – a skilful, practical coping that does not necessarily require us to make such coping explicit. For Bowie, the irony is that the present way of theorising in certain quarters of Anglo-American analytic philosophy results in an ever-expanding body of contradictory theories the likes of which such philosophers aim to resolve.¹⁰ Through the work of Adorno, Bowie demonstrates how the experience of contradiction is vital to day-to-day living; we go through life confronting and working with personal, social, cultural and political

¹⁰ Gary Gutting (2009) has recently shown that despite the perception that philosophy consists of fundamental disagreements about the central philosophical questions, ideas put forward by the likes of Quine, Kripke, Gettier, Lewis, Kuhn, Rawls and Rorty have generated a substantive body of knowledge with great cultural significance.

contradictions that are never definitively resolved. Indeed, for Adorno, as Bowie explains, ‘contradictions become the very content of our self-understanding’ (Bowie 2013, 7). It would seem, therefore, that for those such as Bowie and Braver, who look to bring opposing philosophical traditions into dialogue with one another, Continental philosophy provides more opportunities to turn accepted ideas inside out rather than looking to develop them towards a resolution of contradictions. Bowie even suggests that ‘this situation is one source of the interest in the work of European/Continental philosophers elsewhere in the humanities, arts, and social sciences’ (ibid., 3).

It is doubtful whether the ‘turn’ towards theory in the general sense in musicology of the early 1990s was inspired directly by the problems of disengaged, contemplative theorising in Anglo-American analytic philosophy. However, it seems to be the case that some of the principles and goals of analytic philosophy as discussed by Bowie and Braver, such as the supreme authority of reason in human affairs, the centred subject, the authority of the natural sciences and the demystification of life, which Robert B. Pippin (1991) sees as aspects of a distinctly ‘modern sensibility’, can be worked into the rather reductive narrative surrounding the development of both ‘New Musicology’ and ‘critical musicology’.

Musicologists, when discussing the history of twentieth-century musicology, generally, albeit crudely, distinguish an ‘old’, ‘modern’, fact-governed musicology and ‘formalistic’ music analysis from what was to be a ‘postmodern’ New Musicology, which tends to be seen as having commenced in the early 1990s. As will be explored in greater detail in chapter four, the turn from a historical musicology that had been perceived to be about the articulation of so-called musical facts and the analysis of autonomous, canonic works to New Musicology led to what Alastair Williams calls ‘a set of postmodernist beliefs that are sometimes as dogmatic as their purportedly outmoded predecessors’ (Williams 2000, 386). What emerged through this ‘postmodern’ turn was – despite the frequent debates about how such theoretical positions should be put into practice – a musicology that asserted the existence of a plurality of interpretive and evaluative styles of description and explanation, that defended the contingency of claims to knowledge, that affirmed an open-ended approach to the character of music’s meaning and ontology and that seemingly advocated cultural relativism. Furthermore, with the development of what Lawrence Kramer characterises as ‘critical musicology’, which adopted the gains made by the New Musicology without completely rejecting its ‘modernist’ past, it became clear

that the opportunities for ‘postmodern’ Continental theory had not been exhausted by the New Musicology.

The turn towards ‘postmodernist’ ways of doing and thinking in musicology is generally perceived to be a move brought about because of the dissatisfactions with what were thought of to be outmoded, ‘modern’ musicological positions, sensibilities and methodologies. As Giles Hooper observes:

The more crude, reductionist account of this development is sometimes presented in the manner of a quasi-redemptive narrative: once upon a time scholars laboured under outmoded, ideologically tainted, patriarchal, hegemonic, imperialistic, Western, positivist, formalist – in short, ‘modernist’ – presumption(s); until, some time around 1990, a handful of ‘new’ (mostly US) musicologists, armed with a battery of ‘postmodern’ and other literary or cultural theoretical devices, came forth to save musicology from itself (Hooper 2006, 5).

Although musicologists seem to enjoy calling into question this quasi-redemptive narrative with reference to various historiographical particulars that do not affirm the general trend, it seems likely that the paradigm shift in musicology in the early 1990s would not have created the furore it did if there was not an element of truth to the story.

Although interest in postmodernism has generated a diverse and fragmented body of issues in-keeping with its own aims, there are, according to Pippin, ‘sufficiently representative themes (or “traces” of themes) in the general debate inspired by such radical hermeneutical styles’ (Pippin 1991, 158). Wellmer, for example, sees the concept of postmodernism as belonging to a network of ‘postist’ concepts, all of which seem to be articulating the experience of the ‘death of reason’ for cultural modernism, the European Enlightenment and, indeed, the entire span of Western civilisation (Wellmer 1985, 48). So, Ihab Hassan claims:

It [postmodernism] is an antinomian moment that assumes a vast unmaking in the Western mind – what Michel Foucault might call a postmodern *épistème*. I say “unmaking” though other terms are now *de rigueur*: for instance, deconstruction, decentering, disappearance, dissemination, demystification, discontinuity, difference, dispersion, etc. Such terms express an ontological rejection of the traditional full subject, the cogito of Western philosophy. They express, too, an epistemological obsession with fragments or fractures, and a corresponding ideological commitment to minorities in politics, sex, and language (Hassan 1977, 19).

Some of the themes or ‘traces of themes’ that we see surrounding the notion of the ‘death of reason’ are manifested in (New and critical) musicological ways of doing. For example, Pippin claims that with postmodernism ‘there is, on the one hand, a

continuing Nietzschean suspicion about the intractable resistance of the “other”, difference, or becoming to any rule or function, any ordering principle’ (Pippin 1991, 158). For Pippin, such ‘ordering’ is a will to power, a subjugation of the Other – ‘totality, or holistic (and so “terroristic”) thinking of all forms is the enemy’ (ibid., 159). Instead, ‘a “pagan polytheism” [is] is the new hero’ (ibid.). He goes on to state that ‘we must respect instead the absolute (the new “absolute”) primacy of difference, the heterogeneity of language games, and so accept an “agnostics”, a permanently unreconciled “play” of opposition’ (ibid.). Alternatively, if such a view appears too fragmentary and potentially conservative, that is, respecting the Other by benevolently leaving him or her to their own impoverished games, Pippin suggests we might prefer what Rorty termed a ‘de-theoreticised sense of community’ – a ‘Deweyan attempt to make concrete concerns with the daily problems of one’s community’ without bothering to provide a theory that ‘grounds’ that community (Rorty 1991a, 175). Pippin, however, acknowledges that such (anti-)theoretical positions do not bring about a resolution of any of the problems encountered in early critiques of modernity nor do they offer an advance beyond the dialectical programme suggested by Hegel in response to those early critiques. For example, Pippin shows how Jacques Derrida’s efforts at deconstruction are merely a return to some of the unresolved issues in Heidegger’s works, mainly that both Derrida and Heidegger wish to invoke ‘an autonomous *arche*’.¹¹ For Pippin, Derrida and Heidegger appeal to the notion of the unconditioned condition as a way of grounding our actions, beliefs and justifications. Such a notion evokes the Kantian aporia whereby if we impose a principle on ourselves, then presumably we must have a reason to do so; but, if there was an antecedent reason to adopt that principle, then that reason would not itself be self-imposed; yet for it to be binding on us, it had to be self-imposed.¹² It follows that Heidegger and Derrida are, according to Pippin, neither removed from the problems that plagued ‘modern’, post-Kantian philosophy nor ‘postmodernists’ according to the ‘traces of themes’ he discerns.¹³

¹¹ For a similar critique of Heidegger and Derrida, see Rorty 1982, 90-109.

¹² See Pippin 1991, 160-164.

¹³ Too often, Björn Heile contends, has ‘postmodernism’, in the context of music and musicology, been ‘reduced to either a simple chronological successor to modernism...or a crude antithesis to it’ (Heile 2009, 1-2). It is because of an inability to clearly separate modernism from postmodernism that, in what follows, when referring to ‘postmodern’ musicology, inverted commas or ‘scare quotes’ will be used. This, I hope, will serve to remind the reader that some of the ways of doing and thinking which characterise ‘postmodern’ musicology are, despite, as Pippin observes, being commonly thought

These latter claims leave us in danger of heading into a detailed discussion of Kantian metaphysics and the history of two hundred years' worth of philosophical thought. Suffice it to say, however, that without the availability of some unconditioned condition which, as Rorty claims, 'will serve as a criterion for the judging the transitory products of our transitory needs and interests' (Rorty 1999, xvi) and with 'the great Nietzschean emphasis on the contingency of interpretive schemata, on power, the *agon* of competing interpretations, the attack on unity or the "violence" of ordering systems, all in favour of difference, the Other, the body, etc.' (Pippin 1991, 158), postmodern themes tend to articulate ways of doing and thinking that affirm cultural relativism. Under postmodernism, Pippin proposes, 'we require, in legitimating what we do, only the "local" narratives of heterogeneous language games' (ibid., 159). The main issue, however, and it is one that we will keep coming back to in this thesis, is that if we are only to justify our actions within a framework of 'local narratives', 'we still don't know what could count as the unity or success of such narratives, or what Nietzsche called more honestly the "legislation" of values. We don't know what counts as one game, as opposed to others, or why playing it is any less hegemonistic or "terrorist" than a "grander" game' (ibid.). Ultimately, Pippin suggests, 'if we just happen to be playing it, recognise that, and continue playing it, then questions of power and validity have been grossly confused without any motivation' (ibid.).

A not uncontested term, relativism, for Rorty, is, at its simplest level, that 'which will beset us if we give up our attachment to objectivity, and to the idea of rationality as obedience to criteria' (Rorty 1991b, 38). As shall be explored in greater detail in chapter five, relativism can be seen as existing in tension with objectivity, that is, in tension with such contrasting notions as what Thomas Nagel calls the 'view from nowhere', what Hilary Putnam refers to as the 'God's-eye point of view', pragmatic, neo-Hegelian accounts of truth *qua* norms and what Rorty refers to as 'unforced agreement' or 'solidarity' (ibid.). When it comes to musicology, support

of as typically 'postmodern' ideas and forms of practice, actually fundamental problems in Western modernity. Jonathan D. Kramer echoes such claims with regards to postmodern music, that is, music 'that is understood in a postmodern manner, that calls forth postmodern listening strategies, that provides postmodern listening experiences, or that exhibits postmodern compositional practices' (J. Kramer 2002, 16). He proposes that postmodern music 'is not simply a repudiation of modernism or its continuation, but has aspects of both a break and an extension' (ibid.). Echoing Kramer, Heile proposes that rather than regarding postmodernism as 'a period with a distinctive style', it could be viewed as a 'particular aspect in the ongoing history of musical modernity, an aspect that is connected to a specific phase but not necessarily restricted to it' (Heile 2013, 119).

for the relativity of truth and meaning tends to find its basis, as Judy Lochhead suggests, in Jean-François Lyotard's and Donna Haraway's respective accounts of postmodernism. For Lochhead, the 'postmodern' musicologist conceives of knowledge as 'situated' as opposed to 'absolute' and eschews 'grand narratives' by embracing instead 'local stories of understanding' (Lochhead 2002, 6). It is in this 'postmodern' context that musicology, according to Hooper, emphasises 'the provisionality of its readings, the unavoidable plurality of interpretation or the contingent "situatedness" of its multiple subject positions' (Hooper 2006, 39). Nevertheless, some or all of these 'postmodern' themes could also be the results of Derridean deconstruction, Adornian negative dialectics, Lacanian psychoanalytic evaluations and hermeneutic readings.¹⁴ As we shall see in chapter five, a relativized concept of truth is what seems to distinguish Lyotard's postmodernism from these other specific critiques of modernity.

Hooper claims that 'unease with the status of knowledge sees avowedly "postmodern" protagonists battling with one another to prove their own brand of knowledge more reflective, more knowingly problematic and *more absolutely non-absolute than any other*' [italics added] (ibid.). Ultimately, for Hooper, musicology is concerned with an epistemological relativism, specifically, that 'no mode of knowledge is ever to be privileged over any other' (ibid.). As Lochhead proposes, 'if all knowledge reflects the cultural and historical place and time of the one who knows, then no single perspectival knowledge is privileged and hence no particular way of understanding the world is true in any absolute sense' (Lochhead 2002, 6).¹⁵

¹⁴ Wellmer demonstrates how postmodernism, as existing only within the context of a dialectical relationship with modernism, can, to a certain degree, be seen as a 'critique of modernity' rather than just an outright refutation of the latter. So, Wellmer argues, 'what I want to say is that postmodernism...participates in an ambiguity which is deeply rooted in social phenomena themselves. It is the ambiguity of a critique of modernity – and by "critique" I mean not only theoretically articulated criticism, but also a social transformation involving change of attitudes and orientations – in which we might detect a self-transcendence of modernity in the direction of a truly "open" society just as much as a break with the "project of modernity" (Habermas) – and this should not be confused with a refutation of the steely electronic casing of the modern world – i.e. a transformation of enlightenment into cynicism, irrationalism and particularism' (Wellmer 1985, 57). It is in this sense that the postmodern movement can be seen, to a certain degree, to be performing a similar function to the types of philosophical practice that explicitly set themselves up in a critical position to the social, philosophical, cultural, aesthetic and political problems surrounding modernity.

¹⁵ From a philosophical point of view, relativism – of the kind that every belief is as good as every other – is self-refuting. As Putnam knowingly asks, 'after all, is it not *obviously* contradictory to *hold* a point of view while at the same time holding that *no* point of view is more justified or right than any other?' (Putnam 1981, 119). For Putnam, relativism is based on the idea 'that every person (or, in a modern "sociological" formulation, every culture, or sometimes every "discourse") has his (its) own views, standards, presuppositions, and that truth (and also justification) are relative to *these*' (ibid.,

But such self-refuting concern for the ‘absolutely, non-absolute’ status of knowledge claims, as Hooper notes, and as Lochhead illustrates, also, and perhaps more importantly, has a relativizing impact on musicology’s treatment of truth. For example, as we shall go on to observe in chapter four, Gary Tomlinson puts forward a particular brand of ‘postmodern’ musicology that focuses on ‘contextualism’, which ‘*will aim to describe a local set of meanings in as full a volume as possible*. It will not pose as a reconstruction of some putative and unitary “original” situation the music inhabited but will recognise the myriad situations we as historians might construct around a musical utterance and the plurality of meanings the music might thus engage’ [italics added] (Tomlinson 1993, 22). Granted Tomlinson does not explicitly condone relativism, but by espousing a brand of ‘postmodern’ musicology that aims to articulate *locally developed meanings*, the question that remains is, as Mark Everist asks, ‘how are we to judge the value of one interpretation over that of another?’ (Everist 2001, 400). The same question can be asked in response to Jonathan D. Kramer’s subjectivist claim that postmodern music ‘*locates meaning and even structure in listeners*, more than in scores, performances, or composers’ [italics added] (J. Kramer 2002, 17). Similarly, the problem haunts Björn Heile’s recent claim that ‘questions of canon and taste are *obviously subjective* and contentious’ [italics added] (Heile 2013, 118). The fact that Everist addresses the above question as the ‘problem of relativism’ demonstrates that the notion of legitimacy is vital to understanding some of the central issues in reception history and canonic discourse. I want to take Everist’s idea a step further and claim that what Braver calls the ‘groundless grounds’ of interpretive validity is something the institution of musicology must address if it is to affirm what Tomlinson calls the ‘plurality of meanings’ that surround a musical event.

Although meaning pluralism comes with any hermeneutic enterprise, it does not follow that no particular reading should be considered to be more legitimate than any other. In terms of musicology, relativism is, as Everist observes, a *problem* because, as Williams proposes, ‘diversity as an end in itself would attribute to the most patriarchal and exclusive reading of music the same validity as any other’

121). The problem is that ‘if statements of the form “X is true (justified) relative to person P” are themselves true or false *absolutely*, then there *is*, after all, an absolute notion of truth (or of justification) and only of truth-for-me, truth-for-Nozick, truth-for-you etc. A *total* relativist would have to say that whether or not X is true *relative* to P is *itself* relative’ (ibid.). As Putnam observes, ‘the relativist cannot understand talk about truth in terms of *objective* justification-conditions’ (ibid., 123).

(Williams 2001, 120). One of the issues, as Pippin observes, is that, with postmodernism, ‘fragmentation and anomie, the *Zerissung* of culture long ago identified by Hegel as the chief effect of modernisation, are simply to be accepted as some sort of (ironically) “grand” and final resolution of history, and the issue of a possible relation between the “actual” and the “possible”, the concrete need for, and potentiality of, forms of reconciliation is, as it were, “transcendentally” ruled out of court’ (Pippin 1991, 159). In the words of Jonathan Kramer, ‘Fragmentation. Discontinuity. Lack of connection. Lack of linear logic. Postmodernism’ (J. Kramer 2002, 20).

If ‘New’ and ‘critical’ musicologies have given a voice to those subcultures and minorities that had previously been excluded from ‘modernist’ musicology, it seems counter-intuitive to deny those voices the right to make claims to legitimacy in a trans-cultural and trans-historical political sphere of evaluation, justification and critique. If relativizing approaches to truth call into question the notion of *legitimate* musical interpretations, they do so, in part, because what has been forgotten or ignored is the idea that historical development has allowed for the validation of certain meanings, values and truths whilst denying the validity of morally repugnant positions. Racism, sexism and homophobia, for example, are parts of our everyday practices, but to accord racist, sexist and homophobic readings of musical praxis validity is no longer morally permissible. The relativist’s problem, as Williams observes, is that ‘to think that multiple narratives have replaced meta-narratives is to assume that large-scale historical processes are largely fictitious and can countenance no internal differentiation. Such a claim would have to argue, against all the evidence, that there are no discernible characteristics of global integration’ (Williams 2001, 119). Rorty goes some way to clarifying the issue. He believes that conceptions of truth based on what Putnam calls ‘local cultural norms’ or what Tomlinson calls ‘locally developed meanings’ have ‘offensively parochial overtones’ (Rorty 1991b, 26). As we shall see in this study through the respective ideas of Heidegger and Gadamer, to call into question ideas that support the relativity of truth does not just require us to justify our beliefs to those that belong to our own culture, whatever that may be, but to debate, contest and justify norms within a shared political sphere of contrasting, trans-cultural and trans-historical worldviews, which, *après* Wittgenstein, we may call a ‘form of life’. Rorty, ultimately, affirms the notion of the intercultural exchange and ‘testing’ of locally developed norms. In terms of dealing with the

validity of judgements – a matter that is vital to understanding not just musical reception history but also how moral and ethical life functions and develops over time – he suggests that ‘beliefs suggested by another culture must be tested by trying to weave them together with beliefs we already have’ (ibid., 30).¹⁶ That is, locally developed norms and meanings do not operate independently from norms developed in other cultures. Different cultures and their norms come together all the time, whether in the sphere of global politics or the global media, through human migration, through social media, through the trading of goods, through finance capitalism or through the distribution of cultural artefacts and symbols. For Rorty, ‘alternative cultures are not to be thought of on the model of alternative geometries’ (ibid.). As he explains, ‘alternative geometries are irreconcilable because they have axiomatic structures, and contradictory axioms. They are *designed* to be irreconcilable. Cultures are not so designed, and do not have axiomatic structures’ (ibid.).

Although musicology has, by appealing to ‘postmodern’ ways of doing and thinking, distanced itself from reifying theory construction associated with analytic aesthetics, it can articulate the individuality or contingency of meaningfulness only up until a certain point before such assertions begin to undermine the validity of the very institution to which they belong. Rorty, for example, in defending himself from the charge of being a relativist, proposed that those trying to deflect such a charge by appealing to the tropes of ‘making knowledge’, ‘inventing knowledge’ or the ‘subjectivity of claims to knowledge’ are ‘being merely whimsical’ (Rorty 1999, xviii). For Rorty, to claim that we have ‘invented’ truths, morals, meanings and knowledge is to question whether anybody should take us seriously. In order to avoid ‘postmodernising’ itself out of existence, which could happen if the structures of power on which the institution of musicology relies were to find out that musicologists invent subjective truths – something that few contemporary musicologists would wish to condone let alone admit – critical musicology must articulate its awareness of Rorty’s idea that to advocate cultural relativism is to acknowledge that one is ‘irrational’. Indeed, Rorty, like Pippin, suggests that certain post-Nietzschean European philosophers that have found their way into the

¹⁶ Such claims are, arguably, undermined when Rorty suggests that we must be ‘ethnocentric’, whereby ‘to be ethnocentric is to divide the human race into people to whom one must justify one’s beliefs and the others’ (Rorty 1991b, 30).

theoretical handbook of ‘postmodern’ musicology, including Heidegger, Sartre, Gadamer, Derrida and Foucault, are neither relativists nor postmodernists.

Rorty argues that ‘our opponents [those opponents of post-Nietzschean European philosophy and American pragmatism] like to suggest that to abandon that vocabulary [the vocabulary of Plato and Aristotle] is to abandon rationality – that to be rational consists precisely in respecting the distinctions between the absolute and the relative, the found and the made, object and subject, nature and convention, reality and appearance’ (Rorty 1999, xviii-xix). Rorty claims that if we conceive of rationality in this way, then those that advocate relativism are, indeed, irrationalists. Ultimately, the point Rorty is making is that if we conceive of rationality in terms of a ‘neutral ground illuminated only by the natural light of reason’, then the idea ‘that “true” means something different in different societies’ starts to make sense (Rorty 1991b, 25). For Rorty, the terms of the debate between what he calls realists and relativists revolve around whether ‘knowledge, man, and nature *have* real essences which are relevant to the problem at hand’ (ibid., 24). As he claims, ‘for only such a person could imagine that there was *anything to pick out* to which one might make “true” relative’ [italics added] (ibid., 25). Rorty gives the following example: ‘only if one shares the logical positivists’ idea that we all carry around things called “rules of language” which regulate what we say, will one suggest that there is no way to break out of one’s culture’ (ibid., 25-26). However, if we deny that knowledge, language, truth, man and nature have some sort of ‘intrinsic natures’ to which our views and ideas must correspond and if we deny that we can come up with some self-refuting, ‘positive theory which says that something is relative to something else’ – that, for example, ‘truth is simply the contemporary opinion of a chosen individual or group’ – then the pragmatist can be seen ‘as a partisan of solidarity, his account of the value of cooperative human enquiry has only an ethical base, not an epistemological or metaphysical one’ (ibid., 24). The crux of the matter, for Rorty, is that ‘not having *any* epistemology, *a fortiori* he [the pragmatist] does not have a relativistic one’ (ibid.). Rorty, therefore, with reference to his own pragmatist position, shrugs off charges that he is either a ‘relativist’ or an ‘irrationalist’ ‘by saying that these charges presuppose precisely the distinctions we reject’ (Rorty 1999, xix). That is not to say that Rorty rejects conceptual distinctions – between ‘good Xs and the bad non-Xs’ – but he is against a certain specific set of distinctions, ‘the Platonic distinctions’.

Part of this study will be concerned with demonstrating how musicology, in defying the reifying impulses of analytic aesthetics, can continue to affirm the gains made by Continental theory in its ethical approach to the Other only by relinquishing the Platonic and Kantian distinctions as the bases for thinking about the world. If, as Rorty claims, accusations of relativism only make sense within a framework of the traditional philosophical distinctions between ‘subject’ and ‘object’, ‘rationality’ and ‘irrationality’, ‘means’ and ‘ends’, ‘absolute’ and ‘relative’, ‘reality’ and ‘appearance’ and ‘nature’ and ‘convention’, then part of musicology’s role will be to engage with those philosophical traditions that aim to dissolve the problems that arise when these distinctions are made. As I will demonstrate in chapters one, two and three, the secrets to a non-reified engagement with music and musical praxis that avoid the charges of relativism are to be found in more phenomenological and hermeneutic traditions of modern philosophy. In chapter five I will also argue that in order for the institution of musicology to throw off the ‘postmodern’ label it seems to have inherited from the New Musicology it will need to recognise, as certain areas of analytic philosophy have done following Brandom’s work, that a plurality of worldviews and multiple claims to legitimacy can only be understood within a trans-cultural and trans-historical sphere of norms, normalisation and norm-transcendence.

It is because of the fundamental differences between analytic philosophy and contemporary musicology in their respective engagements with music that this thesis is conceived as an intervention, one which attempts to articulate the principles and presuppositions of both disciplines and to make each discipline aware of the other’s strengths, difficulties and failings. As an intervention this study should not be thought of as either a strictly philosophical treatise on music or a purely musicological articulation of certain forms of musical praxis. There will be, in the eyes of the philosopher, contentious theoretical issues put forward which perhaps do not pay sufficient attention to the conceptual complexities or genealogies of certain positions. For this, I can only seek forgiveness. Similarly, a musicologist may feel that my intense engagement with the theoretical questions of musical ontology, meaning and value at the expense of critical accounts of texts and events, ignores the historiographical particulars of musical praxis and casts doubt on the philosophical conclusions arrived at. As a reply I argue that where I discuss musical works and their contexts, I do so not to provide a purely critical treatment of the musical events themselves but in order to call into doubt dogmatic philosophical positions.

Trying to bring about discourse between separate disciplines is no easy task. For one, each discipline comes with its own theories, fields and frames cultivated within specific traditions that defy casual understanding, instead demanding continuous, practical engagement over the course of a lifetime. The task becomes even more complex when we consider that disciplines are not monolithic entities comprised of a single methodology, terminology or subject matter. What constitutes ‘analytic philosophy’ seems like an ever-reconfiguring constellation of what are thought to be contextually independent problems and ways of doing but with little or no agreement on where the boundaries of the discipline begin and end.¹⁷ Indeed, as Critchley observes, any attempt to draw a distinction between analytic and Continental traditions of philosophy in terms of superficial differences between proper names, philosophical problems, geography, methodologies and prominent figures does not really get to the nub of the issue – mainly that, for Critchley, Continental philosophy has something like an ‘emancipatory intent’ not found in analytic philosophy (Critchley 1998, 10-13). Similarly, to understand the meaning of ‘music analysis’ in a disciplinary climate where intradisciplinary divides are becoming increasingly blurred is to envisage some idea whose material particulars continuously call into question the existence of some stable concept. It follows that as well as being challenged by a seemingly alien body of knowledge and ways of doing, someone seeking to engage with another discipline will not be able to know for certain whether what they are engaged with can neatly be subsumed under the concepts of ‘musicology’, ‘music analysis’, ‘ethnomusicology’, ‘music theory’, ‘aesthetics’, ‘Continental philosophy’, ‘analytic philosophy’ and so on. Furthermore, interdisciplinary dialogue is also a hermeneutic problem. How do those who wish to participate in interdisciplinary discourse allow the other discipline to be wholly Other, to be different to the discipline in which one would place oneself whilst still trying to understand that discipline, its subject matters, methods of doing and ways of thinking, from the standpoint of one’s own disciplinary situatedness? In attempting to bring about a dialogue between critical musicology and contemporary philosophy based upon a common issue of the reification of music and musical praxis, this study will attempt to show how contemporary philosophy, particularly analytic aesthetics, can learn much from the study of music by musicologists, broadly construed, as well

¹⁷ See, for example, Biletzki and Matar ed. 1998 and Glock 2008.

as from musical praxis itself. However, I will also demonstrate that the musicologist can also learn from ideas that have developed in analytic circles but which, as we shall see, are in many ways more appropriate to the study of music than those currently posited in analytic aesthetics or the so-called philosophy of music. In other words, I think there are reasons to believe that certain aspects of analytic philosophy can assist musicologists in ethical and political problems currently facing the discipline, problems of normativity that challenge the relativizing impulses of ‘postmodern’ musicology.

In chapter one I develop my account of the relationship between reification and aesthetics through the work of Heidegger and Adorno in order to offer a vision for a non-reified engagement with musical praxis. Accordingly, by focusing my theoretical discussions on Karlheinz Stockhausen and Pierre Schaeffer’s respective analyses of their own works, I expose the problems surrounding recent debates on the ontology of the artwork in analytic aesthetics. Subsequently, I demonstrate how once we distance ourselves from theoretical attempts to characterise the object ‘music’ in analytic aesthetics and start to understand music within the context of our everyday practices, then music can be conceived as an inherently meaningful phenomena that discloses the world’s in which it is created, performed and received. Through recent analytical research on Heidegger, I show how musical practices relate to a normative framework for understanding how we come to make sense of the world. I conclude by illustrating how a world-disclosive vision for artworks, in terms of their ability to shed light on how things in the world hang together, to make sense of how communities make sense of the world and to create new sense, can be seen as crucial to philosophical metaphysics.

The following two chapters explore problems surrounding the interpretation of musical praxis in relation to the world-disclosive vision of music offered in chapter one. By looking at the debates surrounding Richard Wagner’s music dramas, chapter two illustrates how an understanding of aesthetic meaning in the context of social norms can challenge some of the classic conceptions of meaning in analytic aesthetics. By examining recurring interpretations of Wagner’s works and by drawing on the work of Adorno, Heidegger and Gadamer, as well as what I see to be related ideas in the work of Wittgenstein, Wellmer, Brandom and Huw Price, what this chapter seeks to clarify is the idea that interpretations of aesthetic experiences – experiences that take place when we are actually engaging with musical praxis rather

than merely thinking about music – shed light on both the artwork's and the interpreter's situatedness in social and cultural practices. With reference to Wittgenstein's discussions on rules, it follows that, in the absence of metaphysical anchors with which rule-following can terminate, our interpretations of musical praxis can either articulate norms developed through communal practices or go against them. I conclude that radical practices can themselves become normalized through the historical changes that they helped initiate.

Having attempted to make sense of the normative basis of musical meaning in chapter two, the third chapter considers how the philosophy of music is related to the concept of reification by drawing upon more traditional theories of meaning as developed in analytic aesthetics. The basis for linking the philosophy of music to reification is the idea that the philosophical theorising of Stephen Davies, Peter Kivy, R. A. Sharpe and Robert Stecker both presupposes and affirms what Samuel C. Wheeler III (2000) (writing on the relationship between Donald Davidson and Jacques Derrida) calls a 'presence' account of aesthetic meaning, that is, what empiricist theories of meaning rely on, specifically what W. V. O. Quine (1980) referred to as 'obscure intermediary entities'. I attempt to show how a 'presence' conception of meaning is entwined with the notion of meaning realism whereby the meaning that is present to us forces us to take it in exactly one way, and which means itself – 'a direct and unmediated presence of sense' (Wheeler 2000, 16). I provide a challenge to such a way of thinking about aesthetic meaning by drawing upon Quine and Davidson's respective critiques of the 'dogmas of empiricism' in the context of the Anglo-American philosophy of language. Turning to recent discussions on the disclosive aspects of language in the work of David Cooper (2003) and Charles Taylor (2011), I demonstrate how similar ideas can be found in Heidegger's output. Through recent analytical work on Heidegger by Mark Wrathall (2011) and Steven Crowell (2013), the chapter concludes by both affirming and expanding upon the relationship of aesthetic meaning to socially- and culturally-cultivated norms.

Following discussions of the philosophical problems surrounding the association between aesthetics and reification, the fourth chapter examines the relationship in the context of critical musicology. The first section will attempt to take a snapshot of current musicology using the ideas of some of its leading proponents, whilst, at the same time, attempting to situate this snapshot within a 'story' of twentieth-century musicology. This rather reductive story concerns the emancipation

of musicology and music analysis from the bonds of text-based, ‘positivistic’ research and ‘formalist’ analysis, the rise of the ‘New Musicology’ followed by its overdue confrontation with an alienated sibling – music analysis. Within the context of this widespread narrative, I clarify how contemporary musicology can be seen to overcome the reifying impulses of its ‘modernist’ past. Subsequently, I discuss how music analysis can be appropriately included within the world-disclosive vision for music articulated in the previous chapters. Such a vision can be seen to challenge some of the most emphatic claims made by Carolyn Abbate (2004) and Leo Treitler (2001). The chapter concludes by highlighting the problem that although musicology has opened itself up to postmodern theory it has simultaneously articulated a relativized conception of truth, thus presenting itself with a disciplinary dilemma.

It follows that chapter five addresses and expands upon the idea concerning the devaluation of truth in contemporary musicology. It situates this specific disciplinary issue within the context of postmodern thought in general. Through concrete examples drawn from the work of Kenneth Gloag (2012), Jonathan D. Kramer (2002), Lawrence Kramer (2011), Judy Lochhead (2002) and Derek B. Scott (2001), I illustrate how the ‘postmodern’ turn in musicology can be understood in the wider theoretical context of twentieth-century European philosophy. I also present detailed arguments for how Rorty’s critique of cultural relativism can be seen to apply to contemporary musicology. Consequently, the chapter calls into doubt the more emphatic ideas generated in postmodern thought by illustrating, through Manfred Frank (1988) and Wellmer’s (1993) critiques of Lyotard, how relativizing conceptions of truth present a performative contradiction. Through both the work of Gadamer and related ideas from Rorty, Davidson, McDowell, Taylor and Price, I demonstrate how the world-disclosive vision for music articulated in the previous chapters can provide a critique of cultural relativism by illustrating how certain meanings can transcend cultural, historical and geographical boundaries as a result of being bound up with structures of power. Subsequently, by focussing on the artistic practices of Schaeffer, Stockhausen, Richard Strauss, Jamaican soundsystem and contemporary noise artists, I argue that after reifying and relativizing approaches to aesthetic practice and aesthetic meaning what is to be valued about artistic practices are their ability to create new ways of making sense that provide an opportunity for critical engagement with aesthetic, social and philosophical norms. Because it avoids being reified, I argue that aesthetic praxis not only (when it really matters) aims to

challenge certain aesthetic norms, such as stylistic, formal and interpretive conventions, but also, as a result of being embedded in social and cultural practices, can be an important means of questioning what we consider to be philosophically and socially true. I conclude that art is both world-disclosive and, at the same time, critical.

REIFYING MUSIC

In the introduction I briefly discussed the tension that exists between music and reification. Music defies attempts to be characterised or theorised about through disengaged contemplation but yet requires articulation in conceptual terms in order to be made comprehensible. The issue is that by explicitly thinking about what kind of object music is, and thereby attempting to provide a theory for its meaning, ontology and value, what is ignored is the important role specific manifestations of musical praxis play in everyday life. However, in order to bring music into the inferential sphere of the giving of and asking for reasons, in order that we can discuss and debate musical interpretations, we need to be able to articulate musical praxis in linguistic terms. Indeed, as liner notes, reviews and musicological articles illustrate, the discussion of musical utterances is vitally important to the illumination of music in general. Nevertheless, for some, the uncertainty that surrounds the nature of the ‘object’ music can lead, as Richard Bernstein (1983) observes, to the search for foundationalist refuge in realism or idealism. On the one hand, for example, formalist attitudes are based on a conception of music as purely an object of perception, an object whose autonomy and untranslatability ensure that if it is a language, it is its own language, incapable of being permeated by thought. Similarly, under the sway of musical autonomy and a conception of music as substance with properties, certain philosophers look to turn music into some kind of abstract ideal, to remove it from all contingencies, and, subsequently, to create theories that will account for the meaning, value and ontology of each musical utterance. We will encounter both types of musical engagement in our discussions of contemporary analytic aesthetics and formalist music analysis – the latter to be investigated in chapter four. I will demonstrate how both disciplines struggle with the idea of music’s embeddedness in

social and cultural practices because, in order to engage with music in the ways they do, music must be isolated from the ephemeral, the transitory and the historical. On the other hand, commentators may choose to discuss the material conditions that surround the creation of specific works, focusing on matters such as patronage, publishing, living conditions, social context, cultural norms and political institutions, but with little or no regard for the music itself. The problem with musical engagement that avoids reference to manifestations of specifically *musical* praxis is that it becomes difficult to distinguish between music and other world-disclosive phenomena such as other forms of art, gestures and images, symbolic forms, language and philosophy. The tension between music and reification demands that we consider the issue of how to discuss musical works in conceptual terms without damaging their irreducibility as music. In other words, we need to consider how to avoid making objectifications that attempt to characterise music but still allow for concepts to illuminate musical praxis.

Music is to some degree an object of perception consisting of socially and culturally formative styles and sonic norms without which it would be incomprehensible. However, music is more than its sonic configuration. Music is composed, practiced, performed, received and commented upon, it has changing social functions, it plays a role in political and cultural transformations, it is historically, socially and culturally contingent, it discloses the worlds we live in and is also something we use for entertainment, spiritual, subversive and cathartic purposes. It follows that the frame for this chapter is to explore the consequences of a non-reified musical engagement, that is to say, a post-metaphysical understanding of music and its place in the world. Such a post-metaphysical conception of music demands that we distance ourselves from analytic aesthetics and its attempts to account for the real nature of music through theories of meaning, ontology and value. The starting point for a non-reified engagement with music is to understand it as an inherently meaningful part of our everyday practices – as something that matters to us. Music that is understood as embedded in socio-cultural practices and that cannot be abstracted away from the specific experiences we have with it can be considered in world-disclosive terms – as a form of meaningful articulation that can be illuminated through and, indeed, cannot be isolated from interpretation, analysis and criticism.

Internal Negativity as a Challenge to Reification

Adorno's account of reification as identity-thinking, as discussed in the introduction, rests upon the idea that there is a divergence – a non-identity – between our concepts and the reality we subsume beneath them. With metaphysics, which Adorno associated with 'pure speculation', with 'reason asserting itself absolutely', the unreconciled state of concept and object, which he also referred to as the 'non-conceptual substance of concepts', 'particularity', 'heterogeneity', 'individuality' and 'matter', is overcome such that objects are likened to our concepts. As he claimed, 'philosophy acquires its identity only by conjuring away the non-conceptual from the very outset' (Adorno 2008, 62). Indeed, Adorno saw identity-thinking as vital for the metaphysician whose goal it is to disclose truths stripped of all that is 'ephemeral, transitory and historical'. In making the acquisition of acultural and ahistorical truths 'the entire substance of philosophy', whereby metaphysics is propelled towards what Nagel calls the 'view from nowhere' or what Putnam refers to as the 'God's-eye point of view', what is denied, even though, as Adorno demonstrated, metaphysical ideas would be empty without them, is the important role our experiences of objects play in coming to understand them. In other words, identity-thinking, of which metaphysics is just one manifestation, is, for Adorno, a form of conceptual imperialism that impoverishes our experience of phenomena because diversity becomes reduced to unity and homogenous form becomes misapprehended as content. Thus, in relation to 'philosophy' – 'traditional thought in general', Hegel's 'idealism' 'metaphysics' and even Marx's 'materialism', all of which he considered to be more or less concerned with 'speculative concepts' – Adorno claimed that 'by virtue of its own methodology [a methodology that makes "use of concepts to talk *about* concepts"] philosophy bars its own way to what it wishes to achieve. Namely to be in a position to judge matters that are not itself, that are not concepts' (ibid.) In this sense, identity-thinking, which, for Adorno, determines the nature of traditional philosophical ways of doing, is considered to be an instrumental form of reason based on the 'principle of mastery' – 'the mastery of nature, which spreads its influence, which continues in the mastery of men by other men and which finds its mental reflex in the principle of identity' (ibid., 9). It follows that the key to understanding Adorno's meta-philosophical ideas on negative dialectics is to be found in the opening lines of his inaugural lecture; specifically, that philosophy must 'reject the illusion that earlier philosophical

enterprises began with: that the power of thought is sufficient to grasp the totality of the real' (Adorno GS 1, 325).

Adorno's critique of identity-thinking is, to a certain extent, reprised in Braver's account of Retrospective Rational Reconstructions ('RRRs') whereby experience is retrospectively reinterpreted according to the demands of particular theories one is committed to. In advancing his notion of 'original finitude' – the idea that our ways of thinking cannot outgrow their dependence on society, nature and our own human nature – Braver affirms the idea that metaphysics tries to transcend our experience of common life by retrospectively reinterpreting familiar words and things and placing them into contexts where we cannot rely on our usual understanding. Quoting James C. Edwards, Braver argues that metaphysics constitutes 'a denial of the animal in favour of the godlike' (Braver 2012, 226). Detached contemplation of reality yields 'present-at-hand objects' which, by definition, are 'unchanging entities...unaffected by their surroundings' (ibid., 10). As Braver goes on to claim, 'we endeavour to examine reality as it really is by eliminating all disruptive distractions and prejudices, but...the very attempt to study the subject undisturbed produces a profound transformation in it, making the present-at-hand object the metaphysical model for everything' (ibid., 66). Because, for Braver, metaphysics focuses on 'unvarying features' and 'the atemporal in general', thus stripping a phenomenon of those aspects that come from locating it in the context of socio-cultural practices, he argues that we must wean ourselves off such metaphysical aspirations of the view from nowhere or the God's eye view of the world.¹ It follows

¹ Braver's interpretation of Retrospective Rational Reconstructions depends upon the work of both the later Wittgenstein and the 'pre-turn' Heidegger. For Heidegger, objectivity is a consequence of metaphysics, understood as 'the oblivion of being' (Heidegger 1973, 85). According to Heidegger, in the works of the metaphysical thinkers the understanding of being is divided into 'thatness' and 'whatness', a division between *existentia* and *essentia*, between 'actuality', 'reality', 'objectivity' and 'existence', on the one hand, and 'idea', 'thing-in-itself' and 'representation', on the other. According to Heidegger, when the Greek word 'ὄντεια', broadly construed as presence and grounded in unconcealment [*αληθεια*], developed along various paths into the concepts of *energeia*, *actualitas*, *substantia* and *existentia* – what suffices for reality and constancy – the gradual emergence of *subiectum*, *ego cogito*, subjectivity and I-ness ensured that what was real and constant was inconceivable without a subject 'which already lies present in all representing and for all representing, and is what is constant and standing in the sphere of indubitable representational thinking' (Heidegger 1973, 28). It follows that 'only when man becomes subject, that is, where the subject becomes the ego and the ego becomes the *ego cogito*, only where this *cogitare* is understood in its essence as "original synthetic unity of transcendental apperception," only where the culmination for "logic" is reached...only there is the essence of the object revealed in its objectivity' (ibid., 60). For Heidegger, it is objectivity that testifies to the essence of being in metaphysical thought. According to Heidegger, metaphysics became, with Kant, the 'metaphysics of the object, that is, of beings as object, of the object for the subject' (ibid., 89). The problem is that when it comes to those thinkers that still deal

that for both Braver and Adorno, metaphysics, as a form of disengaged contemplation, sacrifices those aspects of phenomena that emerge with our experience of them in everyday circumstances. For Adorno, the result is that objects are reduced to concepts, whereas, for Braver, inherently meaningful phenomena are relegated to decontextualized, unchanging entities. In both cases something about the object of thought is considered to be missing, namely, our inherently meaningful experiences of such a phenomenon – what Adorno called ‘particulars’, ‘heterogeneities’ and ‘individuals’ – remain unaccounted for as a result of our pure speculation or disengaged contemplation. The key methodological point here, which calls into question philosophy’s attempts to demystify art and artworks, is that philosophical understanding of art itself depends on the prior sense made by specific, concrete aesthetic practices for those engaged in them, and this dependence cannot be reversed, because the substance of that sense would be lost in the process. As a result, the reifying impulses of metaphysics and of what Adorno called ‘traditional thought in general’ led him to suggest that ‘the assertion of the identity of being and thought,

with the world as subjects in relation to objects, they, according to Heidegger, work out of an understanding of being that characterises the age but which is, for them, unquestionable. As Heidegger explained, ‘the manner of human representation which is metaphysically characterised finds everywhere only the metaphysically constructed world’ (ibid., 87). In other words, according to Wrathall, ‘because metaphysicians do not understand that there is a background, which is not itself an entity, that constitutes the foreground as what it is, they interpret the unity of the foreground in terms of some uniform thing or feature in virtue of which everything is what it is’ (Wrathall 2011, 181).

For Heidegger, ‘we must return to the being and think about it itself in its being. At the same time, however, we must allow it to rest in its own nature’ (Heidegger 2003, 16). To see a hammer as a piece of equipment is to see it as part of a world in which it is significant. The hammer refers to other entities in the workshop resulting in a significant whole rather than just a random collection of entities. However, the workshop is not a self-enclosed world, but one that constantly refers beyond itself to the worlds of those that occupy the workshop, that depend upon the workshop or that allow the workshop to be in the first place. If we reject accounts of the world as full of just isolable, extended entities, then we become committed to a different view of being. As Hubert Dreyfus and Wrathall observe, ‘Heidegger argues that traditional treatments of being have failed to distinguish two different kinds of questions we can ask: the ontic question that asks about the properties of beings, and the ontological question that asks about ways or modes of being’ (Dreyfus and Wrathall 2005, 3). It follows that Heidegger’s critique of metaphysics comes from the observation that the ontological mode of being cannot be reduced to what we discover in ontic inquiry. Being, so Heidegger believed, had been misconstrued when it had been considered in the past to be some sort of predicate or entity. Rather than looking at the properties of beings, therefore, Heidegger looked to produce an account of the structures that make being possible in the first place, an account that ‘lay[s] out the structure of our access to entities and account[s] for our ability to make sense of making sense’ (Dreyfus 1991, 11). Ultimately, Heidegger’s concern was to locate being within the world and to show how it is that being is intimately bound up with the world. In the case of the hammer, we first encounter the hammer as available, as involved with nails and wood and as significant within the world of the workshop rather than as a causally delineated and meaningless entity. Thus, according to Dreyfus and Wrathall, ‘worldly things...have a different mode of being than the causally delineated entities that make up the *universe* and which are the concern of the natural sciences. To understand worldly entities – entities, in other words, that are inherently meaningfully constituted – requires a hermeneutic approach’ (Dreyfus and Wrathall 2005, 4).

which stands behind the entire philosophical tradition, has succumbed irrevocably to the protests against it' – 'philosophy in its highest form hitherto, and that was Hegelian philosophy with its attempt to comprehend the non-identical, albeit to comprehend it by *identifying* with it – this philosophy is beyond redemption' (Adorno 2008, 59). For Adorno, philosophy, 'particularly when measured against its thesis of the identity of thinking and being, is shaken to the core by the historical experience of their separation' (ibid.). Both Braver and Adorno's critiques of metaphysics, of reason alone attempting to comprehend reality by identifying with it, as we shall see, have a direct bearing on how we understand the engagement with music and musical works that takes place in analytic aesthetics.

Despite Adorno's critique of identity-thinking, he was not a naïve realist who entertained 'the notion of a sphere of objectivity that is independent of thought' (ibid., 8). Conceptual thinking is needed to bring things we encounter in the world into the inferential sphere, to communicate, to articulate meaning and purpose, to avoid falling into complete incomprehensibility. This relationship between the intelligible realm and experience is, according to Adorno, what is ignored by metaphysical projects based on transcendental ideas. As Wellmer suggests, 'on the one hand he [Adorno] shows that the "fall" of metaphysical ideas is irreversible; on the other he argues that the truth of metaphysics can only be grasped at the moment of its fall' (Wellmer 1993, 204). For Adorno, the whole point is that that the transcendental ideas of metaphysics would be empty if they were not understood from the standpoint of possible experience. But, as Adorno was aware, that is not to say that any of these transcendental ideas were knowable. Indeed, Wellmer even suggests that the transcendent impulse of metaphysics and thought in general is not aimed at a realm beyond the world in which we find ourselves, but rather at an altered state of this world. The issue for Adorno is that metaphysics is a constellation of both immanence and transcendence, of both non-conceptual and conceptual, which is both necessary and yet inconceivable. It is on the basis of this intricate dialectical relationship between reason and experience that, as Wellmer illustrates, Adorno, to a certain degree, attempts to dispel the aporia through his ideas concerning a materialistically modified concept of transcendence, one that takes us beyond the realm of purely sensuous experiences. As Honneth suggests, after the 'fall' of metaphysics, the object 'can no longer be intellectually subsumed under a single "scheme" or categorically tailored to a particular standpoint but, rather, when possible, registered in as many of

its aspects and qualities as the indispensable “medium of conceptual reflection” allows’ (Honneth 2009, 79). Adorno went on to claim that what he was striving for ‘includes a salvaging of empiricism, albeit in a somewhat convoluted, dialectical fashion. That means that cognition always proceeds in principle from below to above, and not from top down; it is concerned with leaving things to themselves and not with a process of deduction’ (Adorno 2008, 82). Negative dialectics does not abolish conceptuality or replace it with knowledge of an altogether different sort, nor does it merely reflect on reality, but reflects on the impossibility of having the type of knowledge of things that forms the goal of metaphysics. As Adorno claimed, ‘negative dialectics as critique means above all criticism of precisely this claim to identity’ (ibid., 20). Rather than accept ‘the identity of concept and thing’ as the ‘vital nerve’ of metaphysical thought, idealist thought, Marx’s materialism ‘and indeed thought in general’ (ibid.), Adorno proposed that ‘philosophy should seek its contents in the unlimited diversity of its objects. It should become fully receptive to them without looking to any system of coordinates or its so-called postulates for backing. It must not use its objects as the mirrors from which it constantly reads its own image and it must not confuse its own reflection with the true object of cognition’ (ibid., 81-82). If there can be anything like a succinct statement for Adorno’s project, a positive side to his negative dialectics, then it would be something like: ‘the utopia of knowledge would be to open up the non-conceptual with concepts without making it their equal’ (Adorno GS 6, 21). Suffice it to say that he still demanded that we make identifications even if there is a tendency for identifications to fail to capture those qualitative ‘particulars’, ‘individuals’ and ‘heterogeneities’ of objects that come from engaging with them in everyday experiences.

Adorno proposed that this materialistically modified relationship between the conceptual and the non-conceptual, between the subject and the object, between reason and experience, plays a vital role in the creation and reception of works of art. Adorno’s anti-realist claim that objectivity is mediated – that there is no ultimate separation of subject from object – manifests itself, for example, in the critical relationship between the composer and the stylistic norms with which they work. Through the composer’s critical engagement with the handed-down musical materials of history – genres, formal types and tonal schemata – together with the new material that arises from such an engagement, individual creativity enters the work and becomes visible; ‘expression, objectivated in the work and objective in itself, enters

as a subjective impulse; form, if it is not to have a mechanical relationship to what is formed, must be produced subjectively according to the demands of the object' (Adorno 2004, 218-219). The subjective mediation of objective material can be perceived in the immanent workings of the artwork. For example, Adorno argued that the force of subjectivity in late Beethoven 'breaks through the roundedness of form for the sake of expression' leaving behind conventional 'splinters, derelict and abandoned'. When we listen to the first movement of Beethoven's Quartet in A minor, Op. 132, for example, we are aware of this fragmentary landscape whereby, as Joseph Kerman observes, 'contrast is not rationalised but endured; more than any other experience, frustration sets the mood' (Kerman 1966, 243). Whether it is through the use of abrupt silence (the development section of the first movement of Op. 132), the manipulation of traditional sonata-form structure, the repetition of motifs ('*Muss es sein?*' in Op. 135) or the lack of any extended development such as we find in the first movement of the Fifth Symphony, 'contrast', as Kerman observes, 'has been pressed to the brink' (ibid.). For Adorno, 'the fragmented landscape is objective, while the light in which it alone it glows is subjective. He [Beethoven] does not bring about their harmonious synthesis' (Adorno 1998, 126). It follows that this dialectical interaction between subjective and objective forces forms the basis of Adorno's sociology of music, whereby the products of artistic creation offer a model of what an emancipated manipulation of socially and culturally cultivated material might look like outside the realm of art and artworks. In the case of late Beethoven, Adorno argued that the fragmented and stark musical landscape sheds light on the contradiction between the would-be reconciled musical work and 'the actual unreconciled object in the outside world' (Adorno GS 11, 261). He argued that, 'paradoxically, art must testify to the unreconciled and at the same time envision its reconciliation' (Adorno 2004, 221). It is because the artwork resists against the tendency to be used as what Wellmer calls the 'lubricant for social reproduction' that it comes to be viewed as critical of reality (Wellmer 2004, 117). Adorno suggested that we might speak of the contradiction between the artwork and social reality as 'aesthetic difference' and it was 'only by virtue of this difference, and not by denying it, does the work of art become both work of art and correct consciousness' (Adorno GS 11, 261). Modern autonomous art, then, according to Adorno, allows for the experience of societal contradictions by being *immanently* social as opposed to *immediately* social: 'Art becomes social by its opposition to society, and it occupies

this position as autonomous art. By crystallising *in itself* as something unique to itself, rather than complying with existing social norms and qualifying as “socially useful”, it criticises society by merely existing’ [*italics added*] (Adorno 2004, 296).²

Despite the problems with Adorno’s sociology of music, which have been well documented,³ it can be seen that the goal of the subjective mediation of the objective musical material is, in terms of the music, to explore new sounds and sound-relationships and to give new content to worn-out conventions. In short, to discover new musical terrain by transcending stylistic and formative norms and by unburdening musical listening from the clichés of the culture industry. Subjectivity becomes objective in the work of art through the ‘subjective mediation of all its elements’ (Adorno 2004, 21) – the manipulation of the historical, artistic materials, self-alienation and concealment. It is through this prior act of objectification that the artwork, according to Adorno, becomes an object of perception. As he explained, ‘the insight of the critique of knowledge that subjectivity and reification are correlative receives unparalleled confirmation in aesthetics’ (ibid., 221-222). Modern autonomous art, therefore, provides a model for how the non-conceptual can interact with the conceptual in new ways as a result of the creative potential of the subject without being entirely subsumed by the subject. Thus, in late Beethoven, the creative

² Adorno’s aesthetic theory can only be understood in the context of a developed, specifically Western, capitalist society, a position that can no longer be acceptable in a world of transnational capitalism and neoliberal politics. This would explain why Adorno is so bad at doing justice to jazz and composers like Richard Strauss, Sibelius and Stravinsky, whose style and ways of composing cannot be reconciled with Adorno’s historicist approach to the musical material or understood in terms of those aspects of modernism that Adorno used to criticise them. Indeed, Adorno’s championing of the advanced state of the artistic material poses some problematic questions when it comes to claims suggesting that art fulfils its social function more precisely through the manipulation of artistic forms and structures. For example, how does Adorno’s account explain why a Western piece of pop music, which might not be the most stylistically ‘advanced’ work, can be highly critical of state authority with emancipatory possibilities in other parts of the world? Who is to say that social critique must emerge from the artwork’s formal structures? Do not performance techniques, recording processes, distribution means, packaging and branding and the interaction of music and public image also speak about a certain piece of music’s relationship to society? Furthermore, Adorno’s position fails to account for those works that were central to Adorno’s Occidental account of the advanced state of the musical material but have since fallen into the hands of the culture industry. His culture industry theory now looks decidedly dated since, for example, Mozart, Beethoven, Wagner, Schoenberg and Ligeti all became part of Hollywood filmmaking. We also need to question whether we respond to music the way Adorno analyses it. For Adorno, we can comprehend and analyse subjective responses to music by reading determinable content off the work’s formal structures. But, as Adorno was also aware, the question of whether the content that was revealed by music analysis was also grasped by the listener, was only a matter that could be proven empirically. As Bowie observes, ‘if there is no connection between subjective responses and the objective material, many of Adorno’s insights in the work on musical reproduction and elsewhere into how the subjective is formed by the objective, and vice versa, become impossible to defend’ (Bowie 2007, 344-345).

³ See, for example, Bowie 2003b, 234-244, Bowie 2004, 248-278 and Bowie 2007, 309-375.

act whereby the object is mediated through the artist's manipulation of the formative norms of musical composition still leaves visible the traditional stylistic conventions that have been handed down through history – the use of sonata form, tonal harmony, short sections of motivic development, and so on. In other words, stylistic and formative norms have not been renounced or overcome in late Beethoven; the non-conceptual, objective conventions still remain although manipulated and criticised through Beethoven's engagement with them.

It is the subjective mediation of the non-conceptual, objective musical materials that Adorno equated with the 'thingly' aspects of works. Indeed, just as he argued that an artwork achieves 'opposition only through identification with that against which it remonstrates' (Adorno 2004, 176), Adorno also claimed that 'only as things do artworks become antithesis of the reified monstrosity' (ibid., 220). In other words, artworks only surpass the world of things by what is thing-like in them, 'their artificial objectivation'. The fact that Adorno referred to this form of objectivity as 'artificial' implies that there is more to artworks than what is thing-like in them. Indeed, according to Adorno, it is essential that an artwork negates its own status as a thing because a 'totally objectivated work would congeal into a mere thing' (ibid., 230). Nevertheless, if a work evaded objectification altogether 'it would regress to an impotently powerless subjective impulse and flounder in the empirical world' (ibid.). Here we reach the crux of the matter. For Adorno, artworks can neither be completely objective such that the enquiring subject can look upon the object of enquiry from a standpoint of disengaged contemplation nor can what is considered to be 'artificially objective' or 'thing-like' about a work of art be entirely renounced through interaction with a subject. Furthermore, artworks cannot be completely free from subjective interference because such interference is necessary in order to create artworks as well as to talk about artworks and shed light on their meaningfulness.

Moving away from the production of musical works to their reception, when we articulate the meaningfulness of the work it is arguable that we have already moved beyond the conception of music as an object of perception because, as both Heidegger and Wittgenstein suggest, it is the meaningful aspects of the work that we first encounter in everyday life. Braver, for example, argues that 'the richly meaningful is the *first* layer of experience, whereas seeing it as merely data requires a discrete and rather sophisticated act of abstraction... We don't infuse grey stuff with significance but immediately grasp a meaningful *world*, as Heidegger repeatedly

lectures Husserl under the mask of Descartes. Bare perception and its interpretation only come apart in detached contemplation' (Braver 2012, 141-142). The worldliness of the artwork – those aspects of specific works which are entwined with and inseparable from our experiences with them – demands, according to Braver's line of thought, that the work of art is already tunnelled through with meaning when we first perceive it as a result of us inhabiting a shared world, one that, amongst other things, is made up of concrete aesthetic practices. Nevertheless, what Wellmer calls the 'object quality' of the artwork is still a vital part of our inherently meaningful aesthetic experiences. The object quality of the artwork is the basis for the worldliness of the work whilst, itself, reliant upon our aesthetic experiences to exist. The fact is, however, that as soon as we begin to talk about the worldliness of the artwork or the work of art as dependent upon inherently meaningful aesthetic experiences, we come to see that artworks are more than just things; that they are more than what is presented to the senses. This idea that works of art are more than just their 'object quality', that they are more than just objects of perception, is what Wellmer refers to as art's 'internal negativity'.

For Wellmer, the fact that artworks contradict their supposedly objective existence is enough to suggest that 'works of art are what they are, in the way that they are, only as objective correlates of an *aesthetic experience*. This *aesthetic experience* is a fundamental aspect of the works themselves' [italics added] (Wellmer 2004, 111). To understand musical works as 'objective correlates of an aesthetic experience' is vital to making sense of the relationship between music and reification. As we have seen, to subsume musical works of art beneath a theoretical, contemplative gaze is to discount the experienced significance of a work. Detached contemplation of inherently meaningful phenomena yields 'things' or 'present-at-hand objects' stripped of their particularity and individuality. This non-conceptual substance of the concept of music cannot, by definition, be captured by detached contemplation of the object 'music' for the reason that, in ways that will become clear throughout the course of this study, it is ontologically and logically required in order for us to recognise that something is *musically* significant. In other words, the non-conceptual are those ways of making sense 'flowing through our behaviour which evaporate under the light of theoretical reason' (Braver 2012, 27). Nevertheless, that is not to say that what we are referring to as music's meaningfulness – how it matters to our everyday lives – should be allowed to regress to what Adorno called an

‘impotently powerless subjective impulse’ (Adorno 2004, 230). For Wellmer, aesthetic experiences expand ‘our *faculty* of perception, conceptualisation and communication’, that is, ‘the work of art breaks through the bonds of our accustomed ways of perceiving and thinking, and opens up a new dimension of meaning for us in doing so; only by shocking us, touching emotionally, or setting us in motion, can it communicate to us’ (Wellmer 1985, 65). The point to realise here is that, for Wellmer, we cannot consign art to a world beyond signification or representational depiction. ‘Art’, as Wellmer claims, ‘is not the Other of reason or of meaning, nor is it unadulterated pure meaning or reason in its truest shape’ (ibid., 69). Indeed, ‘an art that was purified of the last vestige of signification, of representation, of meaning, would be indistinguishable from pleasant ornament, senseless noise, or technical construction’ (ibid.). In fact, our aesthetic experiences of musical praxis, as Wellmer argues, are already bound up with concepts as well as the intersubjective realm of communication. Wellmer, here, discusses aesthetic experience as based on an ‘interrelationship between semiotic and energetic moments’ (ibid., 67-68). Indeed, he claims that to understand artworks is to understand aesthetic experience as tied to the communicative practices of interpretation, analysis and critique. If musical works are nothing more than objective correlates of aesthetic experience, then it is necessary for us to bring about the mediation of music’s ‘object quality’ in order to bring the work into existence. Without this mediation, as we observed with Adorno’s discussion of how musical works are composed, there is no music as we understand it in the context of our everyday practices. Consequently, to see musical works as objective correlates of aesthetic experience is to see our conceptualisations and communication of these aesthetic experiences as vital to the existence and illumination of music in general.

Internal Negativity and the Limitations of Analytic Aesthetics

In stark contrast to the position just outlined, Roger Scruton argues that ‘the first step towards understanding music...is to understand sounds as objects of perception’ (Scruton 2009, 5). It follows that, for Scruton, in order to think about music as an object of perception, then we must engage with the ‘organisation that can be perceived in sound itself, without reference to context or to semantic conventions’ (ibid.). Scruton conceives of music as an ‘object’ with ‘properties’ (ibid.). Although

he does not discount the role the listener plays in his characterisation of music, he does attribute to musical works a content that ‘can be heard *in* them’ (ibid.). This conception of music as a substance with properties does not just hold for Scruton but presupposes the practice of analytic aesthetics in general. Aaron Ridley, for example, acknowledges that to ‘get at the truth about music’, it must be insulated from extraneous influence and, thus, fashioned into an ‘object of enquiry’. So, he argues, ‘I used to think, at clear variance with the banalities set out above [that music is embedded and historical], although not obviously at variance with prevailing philosophical practice, that the best way to get at the truth about music must, in effect, be to separate it off as much as possible from everything else and to investigate it in what might be called its “pure state”’ (Ridley 2004, 2). As Ridley goes on to explain, ‘the methodological attraction derives from a particular way of taking a particular model of intellectual enquiry, and hence from a particular conception of objectivity. The model itself is broadly scientific’ (ibid., 3-4). If we do not wish to go as far as to accuse analytic aesthetics of scientism, we can still, as we saw with Braver’s comments on Retrospective Rational Reconstructions, acknowledge that the act of theoretical contemplation of phenomena brings into existence and is, in turn, determined by the existence of what are perceived to be present-at-hand objects, entities that are unchanging and that are, by definition, removed from extraneous influence. Thus, for a form of musical engagement that prizes theoretical contemplation of music’s character above articulations of actual musical praxis, music is taken purely as an object of perception, isolated from the rich and meaningful world in which it is embedded. Objectification and the narrowing of reason to exclude the disclosive, culturally varied domain of the human meanings of things are, according to Charles Taylor, the *sine qua non* of the natural sciences. It is this objectifying impulse that Taylor sees as dominant in large areas of contemporary philosophy, whereby the ‘narrowed realm of reason can suffice to decide all the inescapable issues of human life’ (Taylor 2011, 46). We see the beginnings of this in modern philosophy when Gottlob Frege claimed that ‘the question of truth would cause us to abandon aesthetic delight for an attitude of scientific investigation’ (Frege 2003, 42) – an issue that will be considered in detail in chapter three.

Ridley also suggests that although a ‘pure-state’ conception of music as an ‘object of enquiry’ is, in part, determined by a methodological attraction to the natural sciences, it is also believed to be theoretically justified. So, Ridley argues, music is

construed as the ‘self-contained art *par excellence*’ – ‘it doesn’t trouble with the world outside itself: it doesn’t depict or say things or bother itself with psychology; its proper subject matter is, simply, itself – and its glories are the glories of form, design and structure, unsullied by any content not wholly its own’ (Ridley 2004, 7-8). Ridley’s criticism of analytic aesthetics, of which he considers himself to be a former practitioner, is that as well as being attracted to the methodological purity of the natural sciences, it misapprehends the entwined aesthetic projects of formalism and autonomy – both historically-specific ways of thinking about music – and, instead, proclaims them to be transcendent. We, therefore, see that the notion of musical purism is connected to a second idea – formalism. For Eduard Hanslick, ‘music consists of tonal sequences, tonal forms; these have no other content than themselves’ (Hanslick 1986, 78). The idea that music ‘speaks only tones’ coincides with the notion that what music expresses, if it is to be an idea of any sort, is a purely musical idea, a ‘self-sufficient beauty’ that ‘is an end in itself, and it is in no way primarily a medium or material for the representation of feelings or thoughts’ (ibid., 28).

Ridley observes how formalist and purist worldviews have become fundamental to the practice of much of the philosophy of music. He discusses how, in the eyes of certain commentators, song is seen as different to pure, instrumental music, in that, by including sung words, somehow the purity of the music has been diluted.⁴ Ridley criticises the approach that holds that ‘with purely instrumental music one appears to have hit a kind of bed-rock, a form of music that has been pared down to its bare essentials’ (ibid., 91-92). Indeed, he argues that ‘it is a smallish-seeming step from this thought that one has run up against the essence of music (“as such”)’ (ibid.). For Ridley, Hanslick’s idea that ‘whatever can be asserted of instrumental music holds good for all music as such’ is exemplary of a purist attitude of what the former calls ‘automania’. Having not realised, or worse, ignored the fact that the autonomy of music is a historically specific manifestation of musical engagement as opposed to some inherent aspect of its nature, many philosophers of music, Ridley argues, still treat music’s autonomy as ‘a more or less holy cow’ (ibid., 10). For philosophers of music, ‘music is *essentially* autonomous’ (ibid., 12). Ridley claims that such a view clearly creates difficulties for those who attempt to reconcile essential features with extra-musical relations.

⁴ See Ridley 2004, 76-92.

The methodological point to return to is the idea that philosophical understanding of music depends on particular experiences of actual musical practices, which cannot be ignored if philosophy is not to produce a distorted picture of music and musical works. Without the ability to move from a conception of music as an ‘object of enquiry’, that is, as an ‘object of perception’ or an ‘object with properties’, to the level of context, we would not be able to understand what music is or determine whether what we are engaged with is music. For example, Karlheinz Stockhausen, on the topic of *Elektronische Musik* being developed at the Westdeutscher Rundfunk studios in Cologne in the 1950s, recounted that ‘when visitors come to the Cologne studio to hear electronic music, they very quickly get over the shock caused by the unfamiliar sounds and ask why there is no rhythm (they of course mean regular meters with bars having three or four beats), why no melodies, no repetitions, etc. And so the discussion usually doesn’t deal at all with electronic music as such, but rather with the manner in which it is composed – the language’ (Stockhausen 2005, 372). Similarly, although he distanced himself from *Elektronische Musik*, Pierre Schaeffer stressed how *Musique Concrète* demanded new ways of making sense of novel forms of music making. Thus, in relation to his *Symphonie pour un homme seul* (1949-50), Schaeffer explained that, although it returned to the ‘rules of music’ from time to time, ‘the words *theme*, *development*, apart from suggesting a disarming facility of tempo, give this musical literature advantages that concrete music is very far from possessing’ (Schaeffer 2012, 56-57). As Schaeffer claimed in response to the question posed by a ‘specialist in Greek philosophy’ of whether *Musique Concrète* was music, ‘classical music, it appears, abstracts forms from all matter. Concrete music, on the contrary, turns its back on these pure forms and, while it revitalises matters, it also presents itself as a sort of deterioration’ (ibid., 65). Ultimately, according to Schaeffer, to impose the traditional vocabulary of Western art music on *Musique Concrète* was to distort the ‘laws of concrete music’ and the message that such music was aiming to articulate, a message that called into question or demanded the ‘deterioration’ of established and dominant norms of Western ‘classical’ music. Similarly, what Stockhausen observed was that the audience’s attempt to understand what they were listening to according to the stylistic rules of Western tonal composition led to a failure to comprehend *Elektronische Musik* as music. Only by understanding music within a context of concrete aesthetic practices can we provide an explanation for the audience’s initial

reaction to Stockhausen's work as well as Schaeffer's fears of having his music tarnished or controlled by dominant musical discourses. In the respective cases of both Schaeffer and Stockhausen, there is a need to engage with the sense made within a specific series of contexts in order for their creative outputs to be intelligible *qua* music, specifically, as music that, to a certain degree, calls into question ossified stylistic, formal and interpretive norms.

The issue is that holding in tension music's objective aspects and its worldliness, its materiality and inherently meaningful aesthetic experiences, not only makes the ontological status of the musical work unclear, but it also defies attempts to theorise about music from a standpoint of disengaged contemplation. As has already been pointed out, to provide theories of music's ontology, value and meaning requires music – to a greater or lesser extent – to be isolated from its place in everyday practices and fashioned into what Ridley calls 'objects of enquiry' or what Braver calls 'present-at-hand objects'; objects that are distilled to their 'pure state'. As we have seen, to deprive music of its non-conceptuality in the name of an extorted reconciliation between concept and object, general and particular, is to bring about the reification of music, that is, to ignore those meanings that emerge through our interactions with actual musical practices and which vanish under the light of philosophical theory construction. The fact that something is considered to be lost from view when a stance of disengaged contemplation is taken up means that those modes of philosophical doing that attempt to account for the nature of art and artworks are faced with certain unavoidable and irresolvable problems. These issues can be found in recent debates surrounding musical ontology, for example.

In response to the idea that the musical work can be identified with an original score, Julian Dodd (2000, 2007), Peter Kivy (1993) and Jerrold Levinson (1990) claim that all musical works are 'abstract objects' which, as Dodd suggests, 'have sound-sequence-occurrences as instances' (Dodd 2000, 424). Levinson holds to the type/token theory of music ontology that challenges the 'simple' and 'intuitive' conception held by Kivy and Dodd that musical works are 'pure sound structures', whereby a work is 'a structure, sequence or pattern of sounds, pure and simple' (Levinson 1990, 64). Levinson, in challenging the 'simple view' of musical works as 'pure sound structures', argues that the work is a complex type – 'a contextually qualified person-and-time-tethered abstract object' (Levinson 1990, 216). Despite denying Levinson's claim that an essential feature of a musical work is its being

created, Dodd, referring to himself as a ‘sensible Platonist’ (Dodd 2000, 428), advocates the type/token theory of musical ontology whereby ‘works of music are types whose tokens are sound sequence-events: datable, locatable patterns of sound’ (Dodd 2007, 23). Works, therefore, in terms of the type/token theory, are ‘eternal existents’ (Dodd 2000, 435). As Dodd claims, ‘the identity of a type...is fixed by the condition which a token must meet in order to be a token of that type’ (ibid.). It follows that according to the type/token theory of musical ontology the condition which a token must meet ‘is, of course, a *property*; so it follows that a type’s identity is determined by the property a token must have in order to be a token of that type’ (ibid.). Dodd then goes on to claim that works of music are, to be more specific, ‘norm-types’ – ‘types that admit of properly and improperly formed tokens’ (Dodd 2007, 24). According to Dodd, if a musical work (W) has a set (Σ) of ‘properties normative within W ’, which he takes to be purely ‘acoustic in character’, then a token will be a ‘properly formed token’ if and only if it contains every member or every property of the set (Σ) (ibid.). Works, according to such metaphysical accounts, are, ultimately, rule-governed, abstract entities that are what they are on account of their non-contingent and non-inferential, present properties.

On the surface, the discussion of musical performances (‘tokens’ in Dodd’s theory) in normative terms doesn’t seem to be that problematic. Interpretations of performances are, whether in liner notes or reviews, frequently perceived as being either bad or good. Indeed, when it comes to musical performance, there is a common-sense need to ‘get the notes right’. Despite the fact that rightness or wrongness of a particular performance is, in many cases, a transient matter, there must, as Bowie observes, ‘for the issue of interpretation to be controversial, be some underlying agreement on the aim of getting it right’ (Bowie 2007, 324). For Bowie, what is important when it comes to musical performance is the relationship between the norms that govern agreements and the norms invoked in contingent disagreements. Bowie claims that the idea of a right interpretation seems to be inescapable but yet also goes against the idea that norms are, at least we hope, continuously transformed by aesthetic practice. The issue, therefore, with theories of musical ontology is that, by appealing to the idea that musical works contain properties that performances must, in turn, contain in order to deliver ‘proper’ interpretations, they fail to account for those aspects of musical praxis that attempt to transform the norms. Some of the most inspiring and influential interpretations have

been those ‘improper’ performances that have eventually become normalised through historical changes in musical performance and reception that they helped initiate. A type/token theory of music’s ontology would need to be able to explain how ‘normative properties’ can be reconciled with the process of norm-transcendence that is an inherent part of aesthetic practice. For example, how does a set of properties normative within a work, which Dodd argues is fixed, square with the process of norm-transcendence and the subsequent normalisation of innovative and paradigm-changing interpretations? Norms rise and fall, come and go, within socio-cultural practices. So how is it that they can be intelligibly described as being properties of music?

The issue is that supposedly objective accounts of eternal, abstract musical works ignore the human element involved in determining whether a manifestation of musical praxis is good or bad, right or wrong. Whether a performance of a piece of music matches up to our expectations for that work is, arguably, not down to some unchanging, properties of an abstract object but whether we, as a community of music listeners, can accept a specific performance of, for example, Mahler’s Fourth Symphony as being a performance of that particular symphony composed by Mahler, ‘presented’ in one form as a musical score, premiered in Munich on 25 November 1901 and performed and commented upon in a variety of different ways since its conception. As Bowie claims, the problem is that those that attempt to create theories about music’s ontology, meaning and value obscure ‘the differences between primary meanings of the life-world in which the mode of existence of things involves their relationships to a subject and is often inherently connected to subjective feelings, and forms of description used in the sciences, which attempt to establish the existence of properties independently of subjective apprehensions of them’ (Bowie 2007, 21). For Bowie, the notion of aesthetic properties is empty, because there can be no reason to not believe that the norms of musical praxis depend on context and everyday practices as on the object (*ibid.*, 22). The wider issue on which this talk of musical ontology hinges is the idea, mentioned earlier, that to treat music as an object of enquiry or a present-at-hand object, isolated from the context in which it created, performed and received, is to ignore the fact that music is inherently meaningful as a result of its being part of one’s world. Theories of musical ontology, in order to take up a stance of disengaged contemplation towards music as an object, require music to be stripped of its worldly, context-laden aspects that make it a meaningful part of our

everyday practices because those non-conceptual particulars and heterogeneities of musical praxis, as Adorno observed, cannot be captured within a theory. If what Wellmer refers to as the ‘internal negativity’ of the artwork leads to a crisis of objectivity when it comes to art, then the crisis in art is similar to the crisis in philosophy after the end of metaphysics when it becomes apparent that how the world appears to us, and how we make sense of the world cannot be detached from the individual, particular and heterogeneous experiences we have with it. Indeed, as Wellmer claims, ‘philosophy and art—so it seems—can only survive together and perish together’ (Wellmer 2004, 123).

Adorno recognised the problems surrounding the internal negativity of artworks in his comments on the role of aesthetics. He argued that although artworks require philosophy in order give shape to their ‘spirit’, they do not need ‘an aesthetics that will prescribe norms where it finds itself in difficulty’ (Adorno 2004, 432-433). For Adorno, the ‘aura’ and the ‘spirit’ of works of art are, ultimately, one and the same thing, which, as Wellmer claims, share the same meaning as ‘content’ [*Inhalt*]. According to Wellmer, ‘the works’ “spirit” is that which exceeds their material or sonic configuration, their object quality’ (Wellmer 2004, 106). In other words, the ‘spirit’ of a piece of music is that aspect of music that is intimately entwined with our inherently meaningful aesthetic experiences, which, according to Wellmer, demand articulation through interpretation, analysis and criticism – even if, due to the internal negativity of the musical work, ‘the experience of meaningful music commonly renders us initially speechless’ (ibid., 107). For Wellmer, in order to bring the ‘nebulously experienced meaningfulness...into the light of consciousness’, we need a ‘productive lingualisation thereof’ (ibid.). In other words, words written or spoken in books and music reviews are vital contributions to our understanding of music. Indeed, as Wellmer claims, ‘an element of reflection thus forms an important part of music-making or listening, an attempt to grasp contexts and details *within* the context. And through this, language and concepts always come into play’ (ibid., 102).

Wellmer’s claims regarding the need to articulate the inherent meaningfulness of aesthetic experience was prefigured by Adorno, who argued that ‘art must embody reflection and take it to the point where it no longer remains external and foreign to it; this would be the role of aesthetics today’ (Adorno 2004, 434). Once we think that works are objective correlates of an aesthetic experience, we, therefore, cannot isolate them from interpretation, criticism and analysis. Conceptual and reflexive dimensions

can be considered to form a vital part of musical production and reception. Therefore, just as our standards of belief, action and appreciation are, in part, determined by how we make sense of the world in social and cultural practices, musical works can neither be exhausted by – what we saw Kivy arguing for in the introduction – an enumeration of the various ‘precepts and propositions’ that ‘richly illuminate’ the practice of music nor can they be characterised from a stance of disengaged contemplation that we see as germane to the practice of analytic aesthetics as exemplified by Dodd, Kivy and Levinson.

Music as a Challenge to Metaphysics as Reification

The entwinement of reification and the disengaged contemplation of music as an object of enquiry is germane to metaphysical approaches to music. Adorno, as we have seen, makes the link between reification and metaphysics explicit claiming that metaphysical thought aims to disclose truths stripped of all that is ‘ephemeral, transitory and historical’. With metaphysical accounts of musical ontology, identifications that strip music of what gives it its transitory and social nature in favour of an objective account of its supposed properties have a tendency to deaestheticize music, extracting from it that part of the internal negativity of artworks that makes works of art dependent upon interpretation, analysis and criticism. To theoretically comprehend reality by identifying with it, to inflate the particular to the general without taking into account the specificity of the non-conceptual, is to ignore those aspects of the object that cannot be subsumed under philosophical theories because such aspects are, as I have already mentioned, dependent upon a degree of human interaction that can be articulated only within concrete situations. It is this link between reification as identity-thinking and metaphysics that led Adorno to refer to ‘resurrected metaphysical systems’ as ‘metaphysics of death’, ‘which one would probably need to destroy to be free to reflect on these matters without ideology’ – the ideology that reassures people about ‘certain essentialities which, precisely, have become problematic’ (Adorno 2000, 133).

Although metaphysics *qua* identity-thinking is implied in the respective approaches to musical ontology put forward by Dodd, Kivy and Levinson, Zangwill is explicit in demanding a ‘metaphysical theory’ for ‘the consumption and production of art, and perhaps also the sustenance of works of art’ (Zangwill 2007, 6). For

Zangwill, 'to understand an artefact is to understand why someone might want to make it and use it' (ibid., 7). So, Zangwill argues, we need to come up with a 'theory of art' that 'should itself provide this explanation or else it provides the basis for such an explanation' (ibid.). Ultimately, 'views about the nature of art should be a by-product of a good rational explanatory story' (ibid.). Zangwill is concerned about accounting for the '*nature* of art', that is, an account which determines what is 'essential to its being the particular work of art that it is' (ibid., 99). Therefore, Zangwill's approach can be described as metaphysical because he is concerned with producing a 'rational explanatory story' or 'theory of art' that can account for art's 'identity or survival' – its true nature of being. However, in contrast to Kivy, who uses conceptual analysis as the means to philosophically reflect upon on art and artworks, Zangwill suggests that we 'reform' our ordinary concepts 'for an explanatory gain' (ibid., 8). In other words, 'we want an explanatory theory of our mental life as far as it involves works of art. *And we should fashion concepts that allow us to attain that*' [italics added] (ibid.). The problem is that in attempting to produce 'a theoretically reconstructed concept of art' (ibid., 13), Zangwill admits that although such a theory can apply to a 'great majority of art and art-activities throughout the world in the last few millennia', it cannot, by implication, apply in all particular instances (ibid., 11). Throughout his work, Zangwill cites avant-garde art as being particularly problematic when it comes to being subsumed under a 'theory of art' precisely because, as Stockhausen and Schaeffer respectively observed, it cannot be considered under the same rules that held for more traditional artworks. But rather than give up on the idea of theoretically reconstructing a concept of art due to the inadequacy of that new concept to account for all particular manifestations of what we understand to be art, Zangwill, instead, questions the position accorded avant-garde art in the 'evangelical ambitions' of those that aim to challenge aesthetic theories such as his: 'It is difficult to see why fitting the contemporary art-scene should have special weight in constructing a theory of art... Thus we should strive to avoid concentrating too much on recent art in our theorising about art' (ibid., 61-62).

Zangwill goes on to claim that he is aiming to produce a theoretically reconstructed concept of art on the basis of the subject's behaviours involving and beliefs about objective, 'aesthetic properties' – facts of art that can be read off the concept of art itself. As he explains, the idea is that 'a good theory about the nature of X things would be a set of claims about X things that yields a good explanation of

properties that we independently believe X things to possess’ [italics added] (Zangwill 2007, 19). For Zangwill, ‘aesthetic properties may be *verdictive* or *evaluative* properties, such as beauty and ugliness, or aesthetic merit and demerit, if indeed these are different from beauty and ugliness. Aesthetic properties also include *substantive* aesthetic properties, such as elegance, daintiness, balance or frenzy’ (ibid., 37). It follows, according to Zangwill, that ‘something is art only if a person intended to make a thing possess certain aesthetic properties by giving it certain nonaesthetic properties [including physical properties, such as shape and size, and secondary qualities, such as colours and sounds] and it does in fact have those aesthetic properties because it has nonaesthetic properties’ (ibid., 40). In stark contrast with Wellmer’s claim that works are nothing but objective correlates of aesthetic experience, art, according to Zangwill, therefore, ‘has nothing essential to do with the audience’ (ibid., 127).

The problem in accounting for art based on a causal relation between aesthetic properties and an artist’s intentions is that such a theory obscures the differences between the musical work whose meanings and existence are dependent upon an interpreting individual or group of individuals and a form of scientific objectivity which attempts to establish entities and properties outside of human engagement with them. In doing so, metaphysical engagement with music ignores the fact that the (tacit) understanding of what constitutes a musical work depends upon a series of contexts, without which encountering these objects as *musically* significant would be impossible. If we did not already have a practical, pre-linguistic engagement with what we could refer to as art as part of our everyday dealings in the world, we would struggle to ascribe aesthetic properties to something we understand to be a musical work. We do not start with musical works as objects out there in the world; we, after Wittgenstein, ‘act, without reasons’ (Wittgenstein PI, §211) to certain sonic configurations, recognising such configurations as music. It follows that what leads us to ‘blindly’ (ibid., §219) arrive at the understanding of something as being music can come from both object and subject, such that new creative and interpretive contexts can give rise to new things that we previously may not have been able to classify as music. If subjects are thought of as already in the world, then subjects can use objects to articulate their worlds, which, inevitably, can bring about a change in the status of objects as well as a change to what was previously thought to be the ‘essence’ of objects. To collapse the divide between the artwork and the audience,

between subject and object, which is what happens when we consider artworks to be objective correlates of aesthetic experience, is something Zangwill does not want to do because it precludes any ‘rational explanatory story’ or ‘theory of art’ that attempts to definitively characterise art as an object of enquiry. As Zangwill admits, ‘we need to maintain the gap between art and audience if we are to appeal to one in order to explain the other; and if we collapse the gap, no explanation is possible’ (Zangwill 2007, 135). That is, ‘until we say something about the properties of a work of art onto which an audience’s experience is directed, we fail to have anything that provides a basis for an explanation of why an audience might be interested in art’ (ibid., 136).

If we return to the idea of the artwork’s internal negativity – the notion that artworks are supposedly objective but at the same time more than what is presented to the senses – we can see how such an antinomy can only emerge when the divide between subject and object is dissolved. Take the relation between musical score and performance, for example. Nelson Goodman believed the musical score to be the ‘authoritative identification of a work from performance to performance’ such that, as a result of pitches and durations, ‘all and only performances that comply with the score be performances of the work’ (Goodman 1968, 128). The notion that the determinable location of any musical work is the score and that everything needed for a ‘complying’ performance is objectively specified in the score, not only ignores the importance of that which is not notated, yet nonetheless defined by performance traditions, it, at the same time, as Anthony Gritten (2006b) observes with regards to his study of performances as ‘events’, disregards the fundamental aspect of ‘performing’ in the sonic realisation of the written music. Indeed, as Adorno observed, ‘the musical document [score] is after all the expression of a musical *idea* that it standardises, reifies, and changes, so to speak, and which must be brought back to life and re-created through an “interlinear version”’ (Adorno 2006, 140). Adorno went on to say that musical interpretation ‘*reverses* the notation’ (ibid.).⁵ The important thing to realise is that although music in some cases does depend upon the existence of a score, interpretations do not merely manifest the objective features of a score in sound, but, more importantly, bring the life experiences of a creative and historically, socially and culturally mediated individual to bear on what is contained

⁵ For a discussion of how musical interpretation links to Adorno’s relationship between the mimetic and the analytical, see Bowie 2007, 332-339.

within the score, thus, as Gritten suggests, allowing for the ‘freedom and spontaneity of action and thought on the part of the performer’ to challenge the seemingly irrefutable ‘laws’ that enshrine the work concept. As we observed with Dodd’s account of musical works as ‘sound structures’ comprising of normative properties, to view the musical work as purely a site of normative properties is to fail to account for those aspects of the musical praxis that attempt to transform the norms. But if we were to hold to the idea of aesthetic properties, we would not be able to do anything but register as artworks those objects that contained the aesthetic properties we had been able to catalogue at that point in time. As we have seen with Zangwill and the problems he faces in accounting for the contemporary art-scene, it would be impossible for us to characterise anything that transcended the normative properties of artworks as an artwork. Why can there not be an indefinite number of things in the world or that will materialise in the future that we might regard as being art? As Bowie claims, ‘once one drops the idea of a subject confronted called music, and see the issue in such a way that subjects are affected by their relations to the object, and vice versa, this whole debate starts to look redundant’ (Bowie 2007, 24). In other words, the whole debate regarding theories of musical ontology, value and meaning start to look like Wittgensteinian pseudo-problems – but more on this in chapter three.

When it comes to understanding the relation between metaphysics and reification we need to make a distinction between what Bowie refers to as ‘metaphysics₁’ and ‘metaphysics₂’. According to Bowie, metaphysics₁ ‘is the attempt to map out the place of humankind in the universe by giving an account of the true nature of being’ (Bowie 2007, 33). It finds its basis in the idea that ‘we ourselves, qua thinking subjects, are the foundation of the true account, an idea occasioned not least by the growing success of scientific activity in arriving at more reliable descriptions of the world’ (ibid.). The end result of metaphysics₁, according to Bowie, is that it becomes a modern science, ‘which increasingly determines the fate of humankind by objectifying nature in the name of predictive laws that enable us to control it’ (ibid.). For Bowie, then, metaphysics₁ is a matter of objectifying descriptions and self-descriptions. However, his brief reference to the entwinement of metaphysics₁ and ‘thinking subjects’ points us in the direction of Adorno’s and Braver’s respective critiques of metaphysics as a form of disengaged contemplation or pure speculation that construes inherently meaningful and capacious phenomena as homogenous, inert

objects stripped of their non-conceptual, context-laden aspects. Metaphysics₁, therefore, becomes the term for what I have been referring to as those types of engagement with phenomena that discount the experienced significance of particular manifestations of phenomena in favour of reifying identity-thinking or Retrospective Rational Reconstructions that aim for objectifying characterisations and descriptions.

In contrast to metaphysics₁, and despite what Bowie refers to as ‘the contingency of our existence in the world’, rationality, as we have seen, still has a part to play in order to ‘articulate our responses to things that we cannot control which still demand our rational engagement with them’ (Bowie 2007, 34). It seems, therefore, that Bowie agrees with Adorno that concepts can still be used, as we saw, in order to ‘open up the non-conceptual...without making it their equal’. For Bowie, metaphysics₂ is a synonym for what Herbert Schnädelbach refers to as ‘negative metaphysics’ – ‘what resists being conceptualised in the manner that we conceptualise what can be objectively known’ (ibid., 40). Metaphysics₂, can, therefore, be considered as a benign account of metaphysics, emerging from the idea that we can still articulate involvements with and experiences of phenomena. In this sense, metaphysics₂ can be considered to be what A. W. Moore (2012) has recently referred to both as ‘*the most general attempt to make sense of things*’ and making sense of making sense. Such an account of metaphysics seems to take its cue from Wilfred Sellars, who argued that ‘the aim of philosophy, abstractly formulated, is to understand how things in the broadest possible sense of the term hang together in the broadest possible sense of the term’ (Sellars 2007, 369) and, indeed, Bernard Williams, who claimed that philosophy is ‘part of a more general attempt to make the best sense of our life’ (Williams 2006, 182). Of course, it almost goes without saying that the ‘most general attempt to make sense of things’ would not be confined to philosophy. For if metaphysics₂ is concerned with the fact that our engagement with the world is *firstly* meaningful, then other ways of revealing the world’s meaningfulness besides philosophy, including non-discursive means such as music, gestures and images, can be just as significant. That the result of such sense-making cannot be encapsulated in a definitive theory of the kind that is sought in analytic aesthetics is precisely the point that I argue should lead to the philosophical reevaluation of aesthetic responses to our understanding of musical practices.

One way of overcoming the deficiencies in approaches to music in analytic aesthetics is by using the idea that music can be understood in terms of what it can evoke or disclose. The idea that music is disclosive is nonsense without the idea of an interpreting subject engaging with the material we would commonly refer to as music. Under such circumstances, no clear distinction could be made between what comes from the subjective side of the interpretation and the objective side. Rather than being beautiful, ugly, dainty, dumpy, elegant, powerful, garish, delicate, balanced, warm, passionate, brooding, awkward or sad, that is, rather than being properties of the work in question, music could be said to evoke certain manifestations of these concepts and, therefore, become an important site of what Bowie refers to as metaphysics₂, a site that makes sense of how we make sense of the world.

Robin Holloway, for example, charts the growing stylistic decadence of certain traditions in nineteenth-century Teutonic music. With regards to the ‘demigods’ of Mahler, Strauss, Wolf, Reger and Schoenberg, Holloway claims that ‘these composers, heirs to a wealth of resources used with complete technical mastery, tend towards excess in all things – length, performing forces, volume (and later, exaggerated brevity, barely audible dynamics from a tiny group of players inside or without an enormous orchestra)...head and heart alike are liable to explode with approaching over-celebration and overkill’ (Holloway 2003, 329). But what is evoked in the music of these ‘demigods’? It is difficult not to interpret the stylistic excesses of the post-Wagner generation of composers (those of *Neue Sachlichkeit* and similar movements excluded) as, in part, evoking an increasingly decadent, *fin-de-siècle* Europe as it heads towards war. The bombastic musical forces, the manipulation of new and overbearing expressive means, the emancipation of the dissonance and the growing, degenerative chromatic excesses that result coincide with the decay of a more Apollonian musical unity as we find, for example, in the first movement of Beethoven’s Fifth Symphony. Although it is difficult not to reify the musical developments of the nineteenth century, the move from harmonious form and content towards stylistic norms that prized the dissonance over the consonance, the fragmentary over the holistic and subjective expression over form highlights, as Stephen Downes observes, the ‘decadent’ characteristics of late nineteenth-century

and early twentieth-century music. As Downes goes on to illustrate, these stylistic norms ‘invoke the perceived modern decline and disunity of expressive media, the polarities of organic growth and decay, unity and fragment, esotericism and exotericism, the delights of ambiguity and harmonic “vagrancy”’ (Downes 2010, 7). This interpretation of the degeneration of musical unity seemingly meshes with Benedetto Croce’s assessment of moral unity in 1911 Italy. For Croce, ‘the great words that expressed this unity: King, Fatherland, City, Nation, Church, and Humanity have become cold and rhetorical’ and with the ‘disuse of those words goes a general decadence of the feeling of social discipline’ (Affron and Antliff ed. 1997, 30). As he went on to say, ‘the individual no longer feels bound to a great whole, part of a great whole, subject to it, cooperating in it, drawing value from the work they accomplish in the whole’ (ibid.).

What is more is that we can chart the attempted or wished for regeneration of degenerative, post-war European societies in those works that aimed to stem the stylistic, instrumental and formative excesses that had infected pre-war musical modernism. For example, as Scott Messing observes, ‘the definitions for *nouveau classicisme* and *néoclassicisme* invariably contained a common vocabulary: abstract, absolute, architectural, pure, concise, direct, and objective’ (Messing 1996, 88). As Messing claims, these ‘apparently sane and health tendencies’ were contrasted with those characteristics deemed more common to the pre-war era: ‘illustrative, metaphysical, sentimental, symbolic, prolix, vague, and subjective’ (ibid.). According to Messing, ‘Stravinsky used this rhetoric as often as any of his contemporaries; its increasing frequency in his writings after *Le sacre du printemps* reflects his shifting personal allegiances as much as his gradually changing compositional style’ (ibid.). Stravinsky’s Apollonian rhetoric was, as Messing observes, ‘appropriated into the term neoclassicism in connection with [his] later pieces of the 1920s’ (ibid., 112).

But that is not to say that all music is good for is providing some sort of historical record for the way other people at different times have both lived their lives and thought about the world. As we have already seen, truth in music is not wholly a cognitive issue. When writing about music – even in disclosive terms – we obviously cannot capture the moment of musical performance. When music is performed, as we have seen, cognition *does* play a valuable role, but there are parts of music that cannot be grasped in terms of concepts. We must, therefore, as Adorno claimed, look also to

the mimetic aspect of music for the manifestation of sounds in music performance.⁶ The extra-linguistic relationship of the musician to her instrument, in the sense of what is more than purely conceptual as opposed to what is outside of language altogether, points towards relationships between people and things that cannot be articulated purely in discursive terms. Indeed, music invokes the dilemma of the need to lay conceptual claim to things for the purpose of comprehensibility whilst, at the same time, demanding that we incorporate the particular mimetic moment without which we cannot base our linguistic interpretations – this dilemma will be explored further in chapter four in relation to music analysis.

What gives strength to the notion that music can be considered to be a particular manifestation of metaphysics₂ is Heidegger's idea that, as Hubert Dreyfus illustrates, the question of being is about making sense of how we make sense of things (Dreyfus 1991, 10). In contrast to subject/object epistemology, Heidegger believed that there is, ultimately, a more fundamental way of how we make sense of things; 'a background of everyday practices into which we are socialised but that we do not represent in our minds' (ibid., 3). According to Heidegger, these everyday practices provide the conditions by which we pick out objects, by which we understand ourselves as subjects and by which we come to make sense of the world. For example, Mark Johnson shows that even though infants are not engaged in full-blown conceptual thinking, that is, in his terms, they 'aren't little proposition-processing machines', they are still learning to grasp the meaning of things, people and events. This is achieved, as Johnson observes, through bodily interactions and feelings. Indeed, in contrast to the idea that we are solitary, thinking subjects representing the world in our minds, pre-propositional sense-making takes place intersubjectively.⁷ The important point to be aware of – and it is a point that draws us close to Adorno's claims regarding our mimetic relationships to the world – is that these everyday practices that determine our meaning-making cannot be accessible to an explanatory theory, that is, they cannot be definitively accounted for through disengaged contemplation. In other words, in being-in-the-world, I understand in terms of practical contexts and practical involvements in an organised and meaningful way how things relate to each other and to me – that is to say, I understand in the

⁶ Adorno discussed music as the 'separation...into text and interpretation [which] is itself not fortuitous, but rather an expression of its dual character as mime and language. Being mimic, it cannot be purely read, and being lingual, it cannot be purely imitated' (Adorno 2006, 215).

⁷ See Johnson 2007, 33-51.

sense of ‘knowing how’ things in the world hang together – rather than displaying a cognitive mastery of roles and concepts. Indeed, as both Heidegger and Wittgenstein argued in their own respective ways, it is only when we take up an attitude of detached contemplation to the world that the matters of present-at-hand and philosophical pseudo-problems emerge, matters that did not occur to us or were not considered problematic whilst we went about our everyday practices.⁸ Therefore, if our understanding of being human is ‘the result of being socialised into practices that contain an interpretation not exhaustively contained in the mental states of individuals’ (Dreyfus 1991, 17), as well as Heideggerian ‘involvements’, sense-making can just as easily emerge from feelings, impulses, revelations, intuitions, relationships and moods. All of these can be articulated in discursive terms, but might just as effectively be evoked through musical praxis. Therefore, it is in the context of our practical, emotional, intuitive, impulsive, revelatory and relational making-sense-of-the-world that musical praxis plays a vital role, leading Heidegger to claim that once we socialise artworks into our everyday practices, then, ‘*art is the becoming and happening of truth*’ (Heidegger 2003, 59).⁹

It is in the context of our tacit understanding of the meaningfulness of the world that Dreyfus argues that the artwork ‘*manifests, articulates or reconfigures the*

⁸ See Braver 2012.

⁹ To understand what Heidegger means by the idea of art as the ‘becoming and happening of truth’, and, thus, the roles played by works of art in metaphysics₂, we need to understand that truth as correspondence or coherence can only be understood by acknowledging that disclosive aspects of language are ontologically and logically prior to its semantically determinable aspects. Propositional truth as correspondence is, according to Heidegger, founded on an ontic or material dimension of truth that implies the notion of a right attitude or right perspective from which to view things, and vice versa. It is this view of truth as correspondence or correctness that Heidegger locates within the metaphysical tradition. According to Heidegger, for the Greeks, truth was *ομοιωσις* as conforming oneself to an entity; for the Christian medievalists, truth was *adaequatio* as measuring up to or fitting the truth; for the moderns, true attitudes are those in which we achieve certainty. However, Heidegger does not have a problem with truth as certainty. As he explained, ‘what makes each of these propositions true? Just this: that *what* they say corresponds with the facts *about which* they say something. Therefore the being-true of the proposition means such correspondence. What then *is* truth? Truth is *correspondence*. Such correspondence obtains because the proposition is directed to the facts and state of affairs *about which* it says something. Truth is *correctness* [*Richtigkeit*]’ (Heidegger 1997, 2). Nevertheless, in all instances, from the Greek age through the modern, what underlies the respective accounts of truth as a sort of correspondence is, according to Heidegger, a network of background assumptions. It follows that, as Mark Wrathall illustrates, accounts of propositional truth as correspondence or coherence require, in order not to presuppose truth in trying to define it, pre-propositional, disclosive accounts of the conditions of truth in order to fill the gap between a primitive, causal account of human behaviour in the world and an intentional account of propositional states that leaves out the stage where intentional content – that that which is intended in an assertion – becomes fixed (Wrathall 2011, 49-52). It follows that Wrathall agrees with Heidegger in that propositional truth is presupposed by ‘unconcealment’ [*Unverborgenheit*] from the very beginning, a notion that relies on entities being discovered in pre-propositional but nevertheless intentional contexts. In other words, unconcealment is an essential condition of there being truth, in this narrower, philosophical sense.

style of a culture from within the world of that culture' (Dreyfus 2005, 407). 'World' is, as Dreyfus observes, 'the whole context of shared equipment, roles and practices on the basis of which one can encounter entities and other people as intelligible' (Dreyfus 2005, 407). In other words, as Julian Young observes, 'world' 'is the background, and usually unnoticed understanding which determines for the members of an historical culture what, for them, fundamentally, there *is*. It constitutes, as it were, the entry conditions, the ground plan, the "being of beings", which something must satisfy in order to show up as a being in the world in question' (Young 2001, 23). For Dreyfus, if our communal practices determine the way we talk about the world, then the way that beings are revealed as what they are through such practices is 'the *style* of that world' (ibid.). It is the particular communal style that encapsulates the way in which certain historical and transitory groups make sense of the world that the artwork articulates. Young, for example, quotes Heidegger, who, in discussing Rainer Maria Rilke, asks us to notice "'in how elemental a way the world – being-in-the-world – Rilke calls it life – leaps towards us from the things" that the poet describes' (Young 21, 33). As Young goes on to explain, 'the point here concerns, as *Being and Time*'s discussion of "world" puts it, "thematizing"...The cobbler knows world implicitly since he knows what shoes are. But he does not know that he knows. It takes the "original" eye of the artist to "thematize", to render "expressly visible", that of which we are, in our "average everydayness", unaware' (ibid.). It follows that the artwork is not a form of what Young calls 'Promethean creation' but a 'thematizing', a making visible of the normally implicit practices that constitute the particular style of a world. As sites of metaphysics₂, sites which, simultaneously, defy the reifying impulses of metaphysics₁, artworks, therefore, disclose ways in which various groups and individuals have tacitly made sense of their worlds and, as a result, assist us, as interpreters, with making sense of the world from which the artwork emerges as a result of what Gadamer called a 'fusion of horizons' between the work and our own world.

This last point is crucial. As we shall see in detail in the following chapter, if we consider the musical work to be an objective correlate of aesthetic experience, which only exists in a moment of mediation between some inherently meaningful sonic configuration and the interpreting individual, then, as Heidegger claimed, the artwork gives 'to men their outlook on themselves' (Heidegger 2003, 28). An artwork 'gathers around itself the unity of those paths and relations in which birth and death,

disaster and blessing, victory and disgrace, endurance and decline acquire for the human being the shape of its destiny' (ibid.) Artworks articulate a world, contribute to the style of that world, glamorise that world and produce a shared understanding of that world for those who happen to occupy it. For example, with reference to the subcultural movement of 'Oi!', which had its heyday during the late 1970s and early '80s, and which, musically at least, appropriated many of the innovations opened up by punk rock, Matthew Worley argues that 'an analysis of its bands, audience, and ephemera reveals much about class identity in the late 1970s and early 1980s, offering a snapshot of working-class youth in a period of significant socio-economic change' (Worley 2013, 4). For Worley, 'Oi! provided a contested site of critical engagement that allowed voices rarely heard in public debate to articulate a protest that cut across existing notions of "left", "right", and formal political organisation. More specifically, it revealed and articulated processes of political and socio-cultural realignment directly relevant to the advent of Thatcherism and collapse of the so-called consensus that informed British politics from 1945' (ibid., 3). Garry Bushell, the subculture's most vocal advocate and one its most controversial figures, provides a trivial summary of Oi!'s socio-political position: Oi! 'was about being young, working class and not taking shit from anybody. It was anti-police, anti-authority but pro-Britain too...The Oi poloi didn't need Punk's proletarian wrapping paper – invented backgrounds and adopted attitudes, accents and aggression – because they really were the cul-de-sac, council estate kids the first punk bands had largely only pretended to be' (Bushell 2001).¹⁰ Oi!, like the music hall numbers that came before and to which its songs are lyrically often compared, manifested and articulated a predominantly white working-class culture – pubs, soccer, boxing and the dole were common themes along with incessant references to being anti-police and anti-politicians – one that was primarily male, patriotic and localised.¹¹ Indeed, Oi! can be

¹⁰ Bushell presents an idealised and oversimplified account of the (anti)politics of Oi!. Indeed, Bushell's links to the English Democrats call into question the innocent picture he paints for Oi!.

¹¹ In glamorising a primarily backstreet class-culture, Oi! also became a focal point for the projection of left and right ideologies, ideologies that, some of its practitioners claimed, did not coincide with their own concrete worldviews. The 'Southall riot' of July 1981 represented for the British mass media what Stephen Duncombe and Maxwell Tremblay refer to as 'the symbolic dovetailing of music genre and subculture, violence and racism' (Duncombe and Tremblay 2011, 128). As well as being disavowed by the left, who saw Oi!'s territorialism, patriotism and masculinity as a hindrance to radical socio-cultural change, Oi! now attracted a notable far-right contingent in the form of the National Front and British Movement, who sought to prey on those predominantly white, unemployed, male youths whose lives had been affected by monetarist economic policy, mass unemployment, widening social divisions and notable levels of immigration. According to Worley, 'Oi!'s class-

perceived as exemplifying the special function of art, which, according to Dreyfus, lets a ‘group of historical people see the [complex] style of their own [sub]culture by showing it in a glamorised exemplar’ (Dreyfus 2005, 413).¹²

In ‘thematising’ particular styles of sense-making, that is to say, in rendering ‘expressly visible’ the socio-cultural practices that constitute a particular style of a world, musical praxis also discloses those ideologies that are vital to such sense-making. Ideology is, as Terry Eagleton (1991) observes, a highly controversial term because it generates diverse – and often conflicting – accounts of how it functions. Nevertheless, Eagleton articulates what he calls the ‘common answer’ to the question of ideology, which links the term to what John B. Thompson refers to as ‘relations of domination’ (Eagleton 1991, 5). Finance capital, technology, party politics, the media and mass culture, for example, all have the potential to determine, to a certain degree, the process of socio-historical change and can, as a result, be regarded as principal means of explaining particular socio-historical transformations. To say music can ‘thematised’ or make visible a particular style of a world is to say nothing more than musical praxis also discloses those structures of power and domination that shape a world by sustaining or initiating the transformation of that world’s social, political

cultural identity was equated with racism; its patriotism with nationalism; its masculinity with misogyny; its audience with the far right’ (Worley 2013, 17). What Worley sees as a distorting narrative that identifies Oi! with far-right ideology has been posited within recent musicological discourse. Recognising that ‘skin bands strenuously avoided explicit political affiliation’, David Schwarz (1997), however, appeals to Oi! as ‘right-wing skin music’ with ‘fascist ideologies’. The tension between Schwarz and Worley is that whereas Worley acknowledges the male-oriented, patriotic and localised aspects of the Oi! subculture, Schwarz, through his discussions of what such a worldview presents in terms of Oi!’s relationship to the Other, couches such aspects in fascist terms. Although it is undeniable that Oi!, like the skinhead movement in general, contained far-right elements and attitudes, to label the subculture as racist and fascist is to perhaps misread its content. There are potential phobic elements to Oi!, which we can see through its championing of masculinity, patriotism and working-class culture. However, as Worley observes, Oi! encompassed a range of perspectives that could not be neatly contained within the labels of ‘left’ and ‘right’. Nevertheless, what gave the movement the semblance of coherence was its reflection of and response to the socio-economic conditions of the time along with its focus on working-class culture, masculinity and patriotism, themes that Schwarz suggests are representative of a specifically fascist worldview. Indeed, Schwarz goes on to identify and discuss German Oi! bands that have made explicit racist and fascist references in their music.

¹² Although I am not going as far as to suggest that everything that counts for what Dreyfus calls a ‘cultural paradigm’ counts as an artwork, for, as we have seen, there must be an element of aesthetic experience involved, the issue of whether punk and its subgenres such as Oi! should be classed as a form of art is, to me, not as problematic as cultural conservatives might wish to claim. Indeed, as Young claims in relation to Heidegger, the latter points out ‘that the Greeks had no concept corresponding to our notion of “fine art”. Both art and craft, along with all other modes of “truth”-disclosure were, for them, just *techne*. If we return, then, to thinking in a Greek way, “we [will] understand the word “art” quite generally to mean every sort of capacity to “bring forth” truth, understand it, that is, so that it corresponds to the Greek concept of *techne*” (Young 2001,18). It follows that Young takes Heidegger’s conception of art to be ‘quite prescient, an anticipation of aspects of the current *avant-garde*’ (ibid., 19).

and cultural order. The more problematic issue, however, is to account for the idea that what we might construe as ideology actually, to a certain extent, determines our ways of doing and thinking, which, in turn, helps to reproduce that same ideology. Indeed, the notion that various relations of domination can assert themselves over our lives and over the manifestations of aesthetic praxis we come up with puts the transparency of liberal and neo-liberal conceptions of freedom *qua* self-determination into doubt. As Bowie observes, ‘self-determination can be an illusion born of the failure to understand how one is determined, which can be “natural” in the sense of what is given to us through biology...but can also be what determines us through the pressures of social existence in irrational and unjust circumstances’ (Bowie 2013, 102). Similarly, Eagleton suggests that ‘those who oppose the idea of ideology as false consciousness are right that ideology is no baseless illusion but a solid reality, an active material force which must have at least enough cognitive content to help organize the practical lives of human beings’ (Eagleton 1991, 26).

Under current political and economic circumstances, especially in the West, it is becoming increasingly clear that communal practices and the freedom of specific communities are often both shaped by different structures of power and sustained by those subsumed beneath such structures. A particularly pertinent example is the ‘sovereign debt crisis’ that continues to grip various world economies. The current pursuit of austerity has resulted in unequal, unhealthy and unjust living conditions for a large section of the world’s population. As Mark Blyth (2013) argues, the road to these present economic and social conditions began when a ‘too big to fail’ banking crisis in the United States became a ‘too big to bail’ banking crisis in the Eurozone in 2008. However, although it appears more and more likely that, as Blyth suggests, the current debt crisis and the negative social conditions that have resulted ‘started with the banks and will end with the banks’, the narrative that sustains austerity places the blame for the crisis at the feet of those fiscally ‘irresponsible’ governments and citizens that ‘spent too much’. From an ideology point of view, therefore, what is interesting is the relationship between those structures of power that promote the current austerity climate – despite the fact that austerity seems to be exacerbating social problems rather than solving them and despite the fact that it doesn’t seem to be reducing debt and promoting growth – and those affected in the negative sense by austerity. In many cases, the ideologically motivated concerns of pro-austerity

governments end up being reproduced by their citizens despite the fact that austerity limits the latter's freedom. As Blyth suggests:

John Quiggin usefully terms economic ideas that will not die despite huge logical inconsistencies and massive empirical failures as 'zombie economics'. Austerity is a zombie economic idea because it has been disproven time and again, but it just keeps coming. Partly because the common-sense notion that 'more debt doesn't cure debt' remains seductive in its simplicity, and partly because it enables conservatives to try (once again) to run the detested welfare state out of town, it never seems to die. In sum, austerity is a dangerous idea for three reasons: it doesn't work in practice, it relies on the poor paying for the mistakes of the rich, and it rests upon the absence of a rather large fallacy of composition that is all too present in the modern world (Blyth 2013, 10).

The reproduction of austerity ideology, therefore, seems to involve the internalisation of a dominant, ideologically motivated narrative that takes the form of what Blyth calls a 'morality play' between 'good austerity' and 'bad spending', which is used to justify a period of self-defeating budget cuts and welfare reforms. However, the story that we all took part in 'bad spending', which means that we all must contribute to reducing sovereign debt, just doesn't seem to be true. Austerity is a particularly dangerous form of ideology precisely because it not only fails to do for the economy what those who advocate it say it will but it also deliberately masks 'the impact of one person's choices on another person's choices' and, instead, seems to make the current situation a problem that we all contributed to (ibid., 14). As Blyth suggests, 'there is politics of making it [the sovereign debt crisis] appear to be the states' fault such that those who made the bust don't have to pay for it. Austerity is not just the price of saving the banks. It's the price that the banks want someone else to pay' (ibid., 7). The fact is, however, and it is something, as John Lanchester (2010) observes, which those negatively affected are coming to realise, that one person's choices do, indeed, impact on another person's choices, but that doesn't take away from the fact that those further down the income ladder are still being, simultaneously, hurt by the crisis and blamed for it despite the fault resting on those who we now understand to hold real economic and political power. In chapter five we will look at how musical practices have been used to call into question those structures of power that help perpetuate certain current social antagonisms. For now, however, once we accept that there are limitations and constraints placed upon our ability to determine our own ways of doing and thinking, then, due to music's embeddedness in those socio-cultural practices that are affected by 'another person's

choices', one could justifiably claim that musical production, circulation and reception can also be historically conditioned by the same socio-economic pressures and relations of domination.

In the case of Oi!, in which musical praxis played a major role alongside the participants' lifestyles, language, ideas and cultural symbols, the music emerged from and responded to the accumulated systemic socio-economic conditions that consisted of Thatcherism, a strongly defined ruling class and the decline of the British 'consensus'. As Worley observes, Oi! 'stood opposed to Thatcher's assault on the industrial and cultural cornerstones of British working-class life whilst simultaneously baulking at the stultifying bureaucracy of Labour social democracy and rarefied identity politics of the left' (Worley 2013, 23). Similarly, the initial interpretations of Oi! and its music also articulate the realignments ongoing within British politics at that time, in terms of the disengagement of the youth from the sphere of 'party politics' and the growing post-war fascination with previously ignored social interest groups within the sphere of identity politics. Interpretations of Oi! in the media betrayed their roots in the socio-political structures of domination. As Worley argues, 'for the mainstream media, Oi! became another in a series of "moral panics" linked to the emergence of youth culture as a recognisable component of contemporary society. In other words, it was seen to represent a threat to prevailing societal values and interests as defined by the media and the wider establishment.' (ibid., 13-14). What the case of Oi! illustrates is that by manifesting particular communal styles of sense-making, musical praxis can be the means by which we, as interpreters, become critically aware of our own world by, for example, listening and being open to the ideological stains on the text. Yet, even though subcultural movements such as Oi! and the music that emerged from them can make visible the structures of power that shape the way we live our lives and think about the world, they can also be perceived to be *vehicles for* ideology, in that, as 'meaningful symbolic phenomena', they, as John B. Thompson claims, 'serve, in particular social-historical circumstances, to establish and sustain relations of domination' (J. Thompson 1990, 56).

Although critical of certain structures of power, including the political establishment, Oi! did not plead the case for social mobility or seek to bring to an end the injustices that maintain class divisions. As a subculture, it also acted as an obstacle both to the equal treatment of women and to democratic cross-cultural

understanding. Oi! was concerned with fashioning a specifically working-class rhetoric and with it a particular class-cultural identity based around the themes of political antagonism, nationalism and masculinity. Thus, even if the movement wished to portray itself as being anti-establishment, it is precisely because the participants of Oi! championed and glamorised a potentially phobic rhetoric based around the issues of class, gender and culture whilst attempting to isolate themselves within a subcultural zone of autonomy that the existing socio-economic, cultural and gender power-relations of a class-based society remained undisturbed. As David Schwarz suggests in relation to German Oi! in particular, ‘the essence of Oi[!] subjectivity *is* misrecognition; one both hates and needs the Other’ (Schwarz 1997, 128).¹³ That is not to say, however, that we can read the ideological aspects of musical praxis off the music itself. Instead, as Thompson illustrates, ‘we can grasp symbolic phenomena as ideological, hence we can analyse ideology, only by situating symbolic phenomena in the socio-historical contexts within which these phenomena may, or may not, serve to establish and sustain relations of domination’ (J. Thompson 1990, 56).

If the work of art can be seen to be a form of metaphysics₂ that ‘thematizes’ or makes visible the ideologies that shape our being-in-the-world, then can it also be critical of ideology? Although ideology critique is something Heidegger did not explicitly deal with, he did attribute to art a revolutionary potential: ‘whenever art happens, whenever, that is, there is a beginning, a thrust enters history and history either begins or resumes’ (Heidegger 2003, 65). Dreyfus proposes that ‘*founding works*’ can bring about a reconfiguration of a culture’s style whereby dominant practices become marginalised whilst marginalised practices become central – ‘the ‘setting-into-work of truth thrusts up the extra-ordinary [*Ungeheure*] while thrusting down the ordinary, and what one takes to be such’ (ibid., 63). It is the ability of some artworks to reconfigure cultural style that makes subcultural artistic movements so important as sites of potential resistance to the demands of the existing social, political or cultural order. That is not to say, however, that artistic materials must necessarily precede a change in overall cultural style – that *artworks create worlds*. As we have seen, artworks, along with human beings, already inhabit a world, a world that is what it is according to the socio-cultural ‘background’ practices that

¹³ Despite his tendency to reify Oi! music as a specifically fascist phenomenon, Schwarz (1997) provides a detailed discussion of Oi!’s phobic stance towards the Other in general.

make it up. Works, therefore, are not necessarily ‘founding’ in the sense that they create new cultural styles from scratch. Indeed, as Jon Savage observes, for example, the DNA of both punk music and punk subculture existed in fragmentary form prior to 1976: Malcolm McClaren, Vivienne Westwood, John Lydon and Joe Strummer were all alive; and the lyrics, poems, vanguard manifestoes and pulp fictions had been or were being written. All that these punk pioneers, poetry and prose were waiting on, according to Jon Savage, was ‘the location, the vacant space where, like the buddleia on the still plentiful bombsites, these flowers can bloom’ (Savage 2005, 3).¹⁴ However, along with the subculture of which artworks are a part, works of art can, as punk music demonstrates, propel history into a new phase, one in which a subcultural practice can be appropriated by and thus transform the dominant culture.

As Savage observes in the midst of the story of late ‘70s punk; ‘as with any cluster of minorities, if you put them together, you make a majority: pop – a marginal industry in itself – is a place where many of them meet, as dreamers and misfits from all classes, to transform, if not *the* world, then their world’ (Savage 2005, 12). Punk was not merely a marginal practice but *the* marginal practice of recent times, which,

¹⁴ As Dreyfus observes in Heidegger’s writings, prior to any sort of stabilisation of the new style, a culture must bestow the material for the new style. For Heidegger, ‘language, by naming beings for the first time, first brings beings to word and to appearance. This naming nominates beings *to* their being and *from out of* that being’ (Heidegger 2003, 61). However, for Heidegger, language cannot be understood in the usual sense of the word as a ‘stock of individual terms [*einen Bestand von Wörtern*] and rules for linguistic construction’ (Wrathall 2011, 122). As Dreyfus observes, in ‘The Origin of the Work of Art’ Heidegger ‘generalises language to any form of “poetic projection”’ (Dreyfus 2005, 416). The point to be aware of is that by declaring projective announcement to be poetic and by arguing that such an announcement is a projection ‘as to what beings *will* come into the open as’ [*italics added*] (Heidegger 2003, 61), Heidegger was deliberately making the link between language and *poiesis*, which we can broadly take to be ‘creation’. Therefore, when Heidegger declared ‘projective saying to be poetry’ or, similarly, when he claimed that ‘language itself is poetry in the essential sense’ (ibid., 62), he was seeking to make the connection between language and *poiesis* in order to emphasise the fact that ‘what ultimately bestows the material for the new style is the style of people’s language’ (Dreyfus 2005, 416). Language, for Heidegger, in that ‘it brings beings as beings, for the first time, into the open’, is more than concepts and propositional contents; it fulfils an originary function by preparing a way for the artistic material that will ground and articulate the new cultural style. Such an account of language, however, is in danger of attributing to language world-constituting powers, when precisely what language and music have in common is their world-disclosive potential. This problem can be overcome by accepting Young’s rejection of the Promethean conception of artworks as also applying to that which we commonly think of as being a language. If, as Dreyfus observes, Heidegger generalises language to be whatever is poetically projected, then we do not necessarily have to assume that by ‘language’, Heidegger is referring to that which we use to communicate, assert, establish facts and give and ask for reasons in linguistic terms. As Young illustrates, ‘in *Being and Time*, “world” is the same as the “thrownness” which every human being (*Dasein*), as it grows to adulthood, finds itself “already” in. Being human means “already being-in (a world)”... “Poetry, creative literature, is nothing but the elementary emergence into words, the becoming-uncovered, of existence as being-in-the-world”’ (Young 2001, 32). Therefore, according to Young, ‘language’, in the Heideggerian sense, ‘is, in a word, social practice, a complex integration of words, things, moods, feelings, actions and commentaries on actions which constitutes, in Wittgenstein’s phrase, a “form of life”’ (ibid., 35-36).

in similar ways to the anarchy that was 1950s rock'n'roll, encouraged post-punk misfits and malcontents, from goths to gays, to come out of the shadows and openly express their subcultural practices, thus increasingly transforming into the ordinary what had previously been considered to be extraordinary. As Simon Reynolds claims, punk opened up '*a space of possibility*' (Reynolds 2009, 408) for what Savage calls 'the hidden positive to Punk's much-flaunted negative, a practical decentralisation with infinite possibilities' (Savage 2005, xv). Such an idea is reprised in Worley's description of Oi! as 'a forum for protest and a means by which those typically denied a public voice could engage with the world of which they were part' (Worley 2013, 22). Reynolds goes on to propose that through punk's 'breach in the wall of business-as-usual, all sorts of obscure freaks broke through and grabbed an opportunity for a wider audience' (Reynolds 2005, xxi). He argues that 'punk created an audience with an appetite for more challenging music, extremes of all kinds. Punk shook up the major labels, making them more likely to risk signing edgy bands for fear of getting left behind. Finally, punk triggered the independent-label boom, which provided a distribution network for all kinds of weirdo music that would otherwise have to subsist on a mail-order level...' (Reynolds 2009, 408). As the mythic site of unity, punk opened up a space of possibility by which other subcultural practices and genres could gain recognition and prominence in the public sphere, contributing to the reconfiguration of cultural style whilst, at the same time, bringing about the increased fragmentation of any holistic style.

Once we acknowledge the vision of artworks as thematising or making visible the ways in which groups and individuals make sense of the world, then, as a result of interpretation and critique – in other words, as a result of what Wellmer calls the 'playful bewilderment of sense and the senses' – artworks can disclose those practices and forms of identity that are excluded from dominant discourses, that are oppressed by the current order or are not open to being articulated within it. As Wellmer suggests, 'this [critical potential of individual artworks] is not tantamount to broadcasting critical messages about an evil world, for a work of art is not a message' (Wellmer 2004, 126). Instead, by allowing society to experience subcultural practices, by setting society's perceptions, concepts, relationship to the subcultural world and, ultimately, society's relation to its own world in motion, and thus lending a voice to those individuals who see themselves as part of a specific subculture, artworks can be world-opening whilst assisting in the transformation of minority

practices into the dominant ways of being-in-the-world. As Wellmer claims, ‘art does not practise critique by telling us how things really are, but rather by setting our thoughts in motion at the same time as opening our eyes and ears, and by occasionally heightening both reflection and complexity in allowing us to perceive and experience the ideological ossifications of the dominant discourses’ (ibid., 127).

By appealing to the idea of musical works of art as manifestations of metaphysics₂, which, through hermeneutical engagement, both allow us to make sense of how groups make sense of the world and provide us with the opportunity to scrutinise our ways of knowing how things hang together, we are able to come up with an alternative vision of musical engagement, a vision that allows us to resist subsuming manifestations of musical works under reifying descriptions. By drawing upon Adorno’s notion of reification *qua* identity-thinking as well as Braver’s ideas surrounding Rational Retrospective Reconstructions and relating them to metaphysical accounts of the world that reduce phenomena to decontextualised, unchanging entities, we have shed light upon the limitations of reifying accounts of music in analytic aesthetics that attempt to subsume musical works under theories of ontology, meaning and value. It has been suggested that if music has a world-opening function, that is, if the disclosive aspects of music are ontologically and logically prior to philosophy’s reflection on the nature of musical works, then the content of all that is notated in a musical text does not have any ‘being in itself’, as it were. Instead, adopting Wellmer’s idea that music has an internal negativity that makes the ontological status of the musical work unclear, one can say that the process of being interpreted is fundamental to music’s being. As Wellmer goes on to argue, ‘only through this connection of both music-making and musical listening to a space of lingual articulation, interpretation and critique can music become an object of genuine *aesthetic* experience in the first place, and only thus can such normative concepts as aesthetic success or failure gain a hold in the context of communication, and of arguments over musical works and our experience of them’ (Wellmer 2004, 100). The musical text comes into being through a process of having to be constantly interpreted anew from within a particular historical horizon. At the same time, this means that the ‘being’ of musical works is a substantially historical one, and, as a result, open to the vagaries of cultural, social and political contingencies. We have seen in this chapter how such contingencies call into question purely descriptive accounts of music and musical works as put forward in philosophical theories of

musical ontology and value. In the chapter that follows we shall see how meaning can also be problematised by the historical nature of musical praxis.

INTERPRETING WAGNER

This is the true basis of the allegorical element in Wagner: the conjuring up of essences beyond recall. The technological intoxication is generated from the fear of a sobriety that is all too close at hand. 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. (Adorno GS 13 *VUW*, 102)

The Second Vienna School, that of Arnold Schoenberg, which exercises a decisive influence on the most recent contemporary music, took Wagner as its immediate point of departure. (Adorno GS 16 *WA*, 546)

These two statements do little to summarise Adorno's thoughts on the artistic output of Richard Wagner. However, they are useful in drawing our attention to two distinct analyses of the latter's art, analyses which, seemingly, contradict each other. The first statement is taken from Adorno's *Versuch über Wagner* written between 1937 and 1938, but not published until 1952. The second originates from Adorno's speech, '*Wagners Aktualität*', presented at the Berlin Festival of 1963. The earlier and more substantial essay put forward the idea that the seeds of a future culture industry, an industry of Hollywood, radio, cinema, advertising, phantasmagoria and commodification, were to be located in Wagner's art. Conversely, the 1963 speech stressed that Wagner's works had fuelled the artistic advances of modern autonomous art, influenced the most 'advanced' Western art music of Adorno's day and even contained techniques that pointed towards the latter's conception of a *musique informelle*.¹ It follows that Adorno interpreted Wagner as a site of convergence for

¹ Max Paddison provides a summary of Adorno's account of *musique informelle*, which Paddison describes as 'a kind of music that did not yet exist, but which would be in "no form", in that it would refuse to accept pre-given solutions, including those emerging from Darmstadt (*informelle Kunst* does not, of course, mean "formless art", given that, in order to exist at all, everything has a "form", even if it goes directly against all previously known and familiar forms)'. See Paddison and Deliège ed. 2010, 6.

what Andreas Huyssen (1988) has termed the ‘great divide’ between the culture industry and modernism.

Bearing in mind Adorno’s inability to do justice to jazz and composers like Richard Strauss, Sibelius and Stravinsky, whose style and ways of composing cannot be understood in terms of those aspects of modernism that Adorno used to criticise them, one could be justified in claiming that his volte-face was merely a question of subjective judgement. Having said that, the subjectivisation of aesthetics was something Adorno sought to counteract. Indeed, the most salient point of Adorno’s argument against subjective judgments of value can be found in the following lines:

But what has changed about Wagner...is not merely his impact on others, but his work itself, in itself. This is what forms the basis of his relevance; not some posthumous second triumph or the well-justified defeat of the neo-baroque. As spiritual entities, works of art are not complete in themselves. They create a magnetic field of all possible intentions and forces, of inner tendencies and countervailing ones, of successful and necessarily unsuccessful elements. Objectively, new layers are constantly detaching themselves, emerging from within; others grow irrelevant and die off. One relates to a work of art not merely, as is often said, by adapting it to fit a new situation, but rather by deciphering within it things to which one has a historically different reaction (Adorno GS 16 *WA*, 546).

Adorno’s volte-face occurred because Wagner’s works had revealed themselves in an altogether different way. New significances had emerged from within the work whilst old ones had become irrelevant. With these claims, Adorno attempted to deflect the charge of subjectivism – he had deciphered within the works of Wagner ‘things to which one has a historically different reaction’.

What Adorno’s later interpretation of Wagner’s works illustrates is a central idea of the early German Romantics that ‘we are neither simply imposing our own “form” on the world, nor simply taking in the raw data that the world offers us’ (Pinkard 2002, 135). For Adorno, the meanings of Wagner’s works are neither subjective constructions nor posited, abstract entities. The meanings of these works are derived in part from what Heidegger referred to as the ‘earthly’ aspects of what we would commonly call the work of art – those aspects of an artwork that we treat as tangible such as its material, colour, language and sound – and in part from our (sometimes) spontaneous ‘historically different reaction’ to these material aspects. However, the question of engagement with Wagner has never been as simple as merely confronting and interpreting the music dramas as they were presented on the Bayreuth stage. Indeed, what Bowie calls ‘The Wagner Problem’ began with

Wagner's own theoretical writings as in the case of *Oper und Drama* (1851), whereby the composer appropriated the philosophy of Ludwig Feuerbach to support his conception of a 'total artwork' – an artistic corollary to his involvement with revolutionary politics. The problem involves the question of how to interpret Wagner's explicit intentions for the *Gesamtkunstwerk* along with his other socio-political reflections in the context of his music dramas. Just because Wagner appropriates Feuerbach's philosophical ideas in order to lend theoretical support to his 'revolutionary' conception of the *Gesamtkunstwerk*, does that mean that the music represents these philosophical ideas? Similarly, even if Wagner was careful to avoid explicit anti-Semitism in his musical works, can we align the hate-filled reflections in both 'Judaism in Music' (orig. 1850) ('*Das Judenthum in der Musik*') and his subsequent correspondence with Franz Liszt, for example, with the interpretations of Beckmesser, Alberich and Mime as Jewish caricatures or with the interpretation of musical dissonance as denoting immorality and evil in general? In other words, is it possible to prove that certain music dramas harbour anti-Semitic messages or characterisations?² Furthermore, if we are to accord Wagner's ideas some level of authority in accounting for the meaning of his works, how are we to make sense of the fact that there are obvious contradictions in Wagner's writings as his thoughts on the *Ring* and its musico-dramatic aspirations develop considerably between 1848 and 1874? The latter part of this chapter will look at the relationship between Wagner's theoretical writings on the *Gesamtkunstwerk* and actual responses to his music dramas. What follows this is an exploration of how the relationship between Wagner's theoretical works and his artistic works have impacted on subsequent debates within Wagner scholarship, specifically, on the debate between Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe and Alain Badiou.

In what follows it will not be my intention to resolve 'The Wagner Problem', an issue that involves long-standing and complex debates concerning Wagner's intentions. As we saw in the previous chapter and as will become clear in what follows, the genesis of 'The Wagner Problem' can be located in the tensions surrounding the relationship between the 'subject of knowledge' and the 'object of knowledge' – a philosophical and musicological difficulty. To think that the work

² For the various debates on the anti-Semitic 'content' of the music dramas (or lack thereof), see, for example, Borchmeyer 1992, Katz 1986, Köhler 1997, Lacoue-Labarthe 1994, Rose 1992, Weiner 1995 and Zelinsky 1990.

exists purely in some sort of causal relationship with a composer's intentions is, as we saw in chapter one, to suggest that the work is an object with properties whose correct interpretation depends on us being able to marry up these properties with what the composer supposedly intended. As Bowie observes, 'strictly applied, this would mean that all interpretations of Wagner that did not somehow instantiate a correspondence between the subjective and objective sides would be illegitimate' (Bowie 2007, 213). Therefore, to attempt to definitively resolve the debates surrounding the meaning of Wagner's works in terms of what Bowie calls the 'inner ethical status of the individual's practice' would be nothing short of an attempt to resolve the question surrounding the location and character of musical meaning. The issue, as illustrated in chapter one with reference to a work as an objective correlate of aesthetic experience, is that to separate the object, 'music', from the interpreting subject in order to *resolve* 'The Wagner Problem' once and for all by, presumably, locating some historical piece of evidence that suggests that Wagner had intended to make all his villains Jewish stereotypes, is to bring about the reification of music by shouldering out the far more important question of why Wagner's works matter to us as more than just historical relics. Contrastingly, to consider the idea of aesthetic experience as a determining factor of the work is to already blur the line between subject and object. Interpretations do not just rely on what the composer said about their works but on bringing historically- and socially-mediated interpretive traditions to bear on images, texts, sounds and scores, which may or may not be a composer's 'definitive' manifestation of their artistic intentions. Indeed, as we shall go on to see, not only does interpretation presuppose the existence of an inherently meaningful and mediated phenomenon, but it also involves complicated temporal relationships whereby neither the present nor the past is given definitive primacy over the other. As such, I will not be attempting to *resolve* 'The Wagner Problem' by definitively accounting for the location and characteristics of some 'given' meaning in Wagner's music dramas. If anything, I will be looking to start the process of working through the problem by seeking to understand the reception of Wagner's works through the exploration of the contingencies of musical interpretation. By becoming aware of how interpretation works, we are better suited to figure out a way of writing about and analysing music as well as locating the problems that have plagued certain philosophical approaches to music, which will be the main areas of focus for the chapters that follow.

The main themes throughout the *Versuch* find their genesis in the contrast between leitmotif and developing variation in the chapter entitled 'Gesture'. Adorno argued that the leitmotif – a 'commentary on the stage' that follows the curve of the linguistic flow – is in stark contrast to 'genuinely constructed motifs' (Adorno GS 13 *VUW*, 29), which are linked to the notion of 'developing variation' whereby 'everything of a gestural nature' is transformed into 'intellectual development' (ibid., 34). As Bowie observes, 'intellectual development' can be explained by Hegel's view of philosophy and dialectic (Bowie 2007, 231). Furthermore, this notion of 'intellectual development' is seemingly present, in musical terms, in the opening movement of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony.

Through the dialectical interaction of the initial four-note motif of the Fifth Symphony with the changing formal and structural contexts in which it finds itself – both within the first movement and in the context of all the other movements as well – Beethoven's music is constantly varied. As Roger Kamien observes, 'Beethoven's thematic statements often grow out of their initial musical idea, which appears repeatedly in diverse melodic and rhythmic transformations and in changing harmonic contexts' (Kamien 2000, 74). For Adorno, this developmental variation is a process of 'becoming' with the totality emerging from the dialectical interaction between subject and object (Adorno GS 13 *VUW*, 49). It is an 'idealised image of creation out of nothing' (Adorno 1998, 121). E. T. A. Hoffman prefigured Adorno's comments on the Fifth Symphony when, with reference to Beethoven's 'simple' themes, he claimed that 'we might think that from such elements only something fragmented or incomprehensible could arise, but instead we receive from them a sense of the whole' (Hoffman 1908, 1:55-64). As Adorno affirmed, 'unless the nothing of the first bars is realised at once as the everything of the whole movement, the music has bypassed the movement's idea before it has properly started' (Adorno 1998, 121). Indeed, we might argue that the process of what William Kinderman refers to as 'symbolic transformation' is not just confined to the first movement. With the supposed reoccurrence of the Fifth Symphony's opening motif throughout the other movements – perhaps most emphatically at the start of the third movement and when the third movement's opening theme returns prior to the recapitulation in the finale – there seems to be a remarkable coherence projected over the work as a whole.

This is most apparent if we also view the ‘symbolic transformation’ that occurs within the Fifth Symphony as, in part, derived from a sense of ‘directional tension’ progressing towards, culminating in and expelled by the triumphant C–major fanfare of the finale.³

The dialectical interaction between subject and object, between particular and general, is linked to Lukács’ Hegelian notion of ‘the logic of totality’, whereby a dualistic relationship between subject and object is overcome in favour of a dialectical process that is enacted between them such that the individual particular moves within a self-created world, which, in turn, imposes itself on the particular. When the principle of the dialectic is applied to music, for example, in the case of the Fifth Symphony, we see how that musical element – the initial four-note motif – interacts with its surroundings – the musical forms, structures, styles, genres, tonality and harmonic progressions. It follows that the musical element is not merely repeated but changed by its surroundings, which, at the same time, are transformed through the same dialectical interaction. In contrast to Beethoven, however, Wagner’s sequential combination of leitmotifs, which, according to Adorno, function like an advertisement for recognisable semantic and visual aspects of the music drama, does not lend itself to the ‘logic of totality’ founded upon a dialectical process that sees the totality emerge from the smallest indeterminate elements of music in a process of ‘becoming’. Such claims are in stark contrast to Carl Dahlhaus’ suggestion, with reference to Hegel, that, due to the dramaturgical function of the leitmotif, ‘each moment on stage appears to be a point within the system, a point that sheds a particular colour and perspective on the whole’ (Dahlhaus 1989, 198). What results for Adorno, however, is not the ‘epic totality, a rounded and complete whole of inner and outer’, but a ‘simulated’ ‘unity of the internal and external, of subject and object’ (Adorno GS 13 *VUW*, 35). What Wagner should have articulated, Adorno suggested, is the rupture that exists within these distinctions.

For Adorno, as we saw in the previous chapter, a simulated unity between subject and object contributes to the pathology of reification by which individuals, particulars and heterogeneities are suppressed in the name of social, political and philosophical conformity – what Adorno referred to in response to Lukács’ socialist realism as an ‘extorted reconciliation’ between general and particular. Adorno

³ See Kinderman 1995, 130.

proposed that a simulated unity was the outcome of the subject's uncritical response to the object, a problem that he had worked out theoretically through his critique of Hegel's 'positive' dialectics and had observed in material form in social pathologies such as fascism and the culture industry. Adorno was convinced that the composer was the archetype of the critical subject of negative dialectics that could demonstrate what the 'opening up' of the non-conceptual might look like for the rest of the world. Instead of accepting the various genres, formal types and tonal schema as objects to which the composer must conform, Adorno saw it as vital that the composer question these handed-down materials, thus putting the creator-subject in direct confrontation with the stylistic norms and conventions of history. Contrastingly, the problem with products of the culture industry, according to Adorno, is that they do not contain within them a critical subject and, as a result, their handed-down materials 'remain unquestioned, unanalysed and undialectically presupposed' (Adorno GS 10.1, 343). Adorno located the seeds of a future culture industry in Wagner's works. Indeed, because he believed that Wagner was unable to present dialectical material, this simulated unity actually covered up an 'underlying fragmentation' (Adorno GS 13 *VUW*, 99), a fragmentation which allowed for star numbers like the Fire Music and Wotan's farewell, the Ride of the Valkyries, the *Liebestod* and the Good Friday music to be ripped from their original context in order to prepare the way for 'Best of Wagner' compilations. It follows that the charge levelled by Adorno against Wagner for this simulated unity is one of 'formlessness' brought about by 'false identity' – an absence of dialectical material (*ibid.*, 39). Similarly, because Wagner had abandoned the 'cosmos of bourgeois forms' of music, his works could not be a 'logically consistent totality, an immanent ordering of parts and whole' (*ibid.*, 46) Ultimately, for Adorno, the blame for the failure of the totality must fall on the 'fundamental principle of composition' – the leitmotif.⁴

⁴ Elsewhere, Adorno highlighted the relationship between Wagner's works and the culture industry by referring to these works as phantasmagorias. Adorno's use of the term stemmed from Karl Marx's account of commodity fetishism whereby, as a result of the effect of the commodity form on capitalist society, social relations between individuals assume 'the phantasmagoric form of a relation between things' (Marx 1976, 165). As phantasmagorias, Adorno argued that Wagner's works tended towards 'magic delusion' just like the aesthetic appearance of a commodity (Adorno GS 13 *VUW*, 82). Adorno claimed that the flaw of the whole conception of the music drama is most evident in the 'concealment of the process of production, in Wagner's hostility towards the division of labour on which it is agreed that the culture industry is based' (*ibid.*, 103). Wagner's hostility towards the division of labour can be perceived in the idea of the *Gesamtkunstwerk*, which, rather than seeking to maintain the separation of the arts or subordinating one art-form to another, aims for a unity of gesture, poetry and music – to create a 'single expression' (Wagner 1893, 2, 335). In *Oper und Drama* (1851), Wagner argued that by

If the basis of Adorno's account of Wagner's works revolves around the former's assessment of the leitmotif and its formal consequences, then Adorno's volte-face emerges from the 'historically different reaction' he has towards this specific stylistic feature of Wagner's compositional technique. As shall be observed, Adorno's revised treatment of the leitmotif stemmed not from a change of heart but from a changed response to Wagner's works, a response entwined with his wider meta-philosophical ideas. In 1963 Adorno perceived the leitmotif to be disclosive of the works' chromaticism. It is this focus on chromatic writing at the expense of, for example, developing variation that, according to Adorno, allowed Wagner to reject handed-down formal norms of musical composition in order to articulate the particulars of the works. The idea that particulars and heterogeneities are given expression at the expense of musical generalisations is, as we saw in chapter one, a vital aspect of Adorno's account of how to overcome the reifying impulses of identity-thinking. As was illustrated, if reification is to be understood as the subsumption of phenomenal individuals, particulars and heterogeneities – what Adorno referred to as the 'nonconceptual' – under theoretical generalisations, then a counter to that is to allow our concepts to, as Adorno claimed, 'open up' [*aufzutun*] the nonconceptual without reducing it to those concepts we use to characterise the phenomenon through disengaged contemplation. As Honneth observes, 'the demonstration of the

gathering together all the connecting ties such as the leitmotif, the verse-melody and that 'total breadth of utterance' commonly known as endless melody this allowed for a 'single form' which coincided with a 'single substance' (ibid.). This 'single form' was the result of the unity of the arts and was important for Wagner because 'only through the possibility of this oneness of form, can the substance also shape itself as *one*' (ibid.). What Wagner aimed for was a dialectical relationship between form and content with the ultimate goal of bringing about a 'single expression' through the artwork. For Adorno, however, the *Gesamtkunstwerk* was a 'mythical unity', which ended up 'achieving a division of labour unprecedented in the history of music' (Adorno GS 13 *VUW*, 103-104). Wagner's insertion of the orchestral sketch in the compositional process between the stages of the composition sketch and the full score was, according to Adorno, an example of technical rationalisation just as, for Lukács, the increased fragmentation of the process of production into more and more special systems determined by mathematical calculation is the 'rationalisation of the work-process' (Lukács 1971, 88-89). For Adorno, the orchestral sketch demands that another person is needed to complete the full score, highlighting a pseudo-class division, while the existence of a distinct process of production for both the composition sketch and the orchestral sketch tends towards a 'rationalisation of the work-process'. Adorno went on to state that the unity of arts was a 'magical effect' that achieves the status of phantasmagoria as a result of its occlusion of 'the same rational process of production that it attempts to exorcise' (Adorno GS 13 *VUW*, 105). For Adorno, 'when Wagner attacked it [the division of labour] in the name of "real", that is to say, a whole and free humanity, he was putting forward one of the demands of a true humanism. However, this demand turned into its opposite, into intoxication and delusion, instead of enlisting the rational control of the labour process in the cause of freedom' (ibid.).

insufficiency of conceptual determination must be assessed not as a deficit that can be overcome but as a real result. In a certain way, thought should not seek to expel the finding of this disproportion; rather, it must try to fathom its consequences for its own position in the world' (Honneth 2009, 78). As I shall go on to illustrate, 'the idea of taking the individual object as infinitely more complex and heterogeneous than any of its potential concepts' (ibid., 79) is, according to Adorno, a task undertaken by Wagner in relation to the 'cosmos of bourgeois forms' of music. Wagner, rather than subsuming the music of his music dramas beneath a pre-established musical form, attempted to 'open up' the particulars of musical composition – melodic and harmonic chromaticism. In this way, Adorno sees Wagner as demonstrating the 'transformed relation to the "object"' (ibid.) that the former was calling for in his account of negative dialectics.

In the *Versuch*, Adorno charged Wagner with formlessness and sought to demonstrate how the leitmotif contributed to the downfall of developing variation. Conversely, in the Berlin speech, Adorno declared that the sequences of leitmotifs 'are already varied, frequently and with immense subtlety, in themselves' (Adorno GS 16 *WA*, 552). Turning to the opening of the *Vorspiel* of Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde* (Ex. 1), we see how the two motifs of the opening three bars, which move through the Tristan chord in bar two to E⁷ on the downbeat of bar three, are repeated up a minor third in bars five to seven. However, although we might expect another repetition of the cello-woodwind motifs up a minor third when the cellos commence a reprise on an upbeat D₄ in bar 8, instead, we are treated to a B^b₄ in bar 9 that is held for three times longer than the corresponding note in the two previous motifs before it descends chromatically to a seemingly time-wasting crotchet A₄. If the arrival on the re-assembled Tristan chord in bar 10 seems long overdue as a result of the selfish cellos, then the addition of another semitone step in the top line of bar 10 is a further example of how Wagner varies the initial leitmotif to ensure that the B⁷ of bar 11 is reached as subtly as possible.

Langsam und schmachkend.
Lento e languido.

pp

p

5

cresc.

10

pp

15

pf più f ff p

Example 1

Richard Wagner, *Tristan und Isolde*, Vorspiel, mm. 1-17

For Adorno, these subtle variations ensure that the leitmotif is no longer a ‘crutch’ (Adorno GS 16 *WA*, 552). Indeed, Adorno asserted that the leitmotif emerges – as we see in the opening of *Tristan* – from the work’s chromaticism, and is therefore, in his words, ‘much more connected to the problems and challenges of the internal organisation of Wagner’s music than I was able to appreciate thirty years ago’ (ibid.). Adorno argued that Wagner’s music contained a paradoxical technique of the differential and integral whereby ‘only infinitesimally small elements can be combined flawlessly into such [homogenous] wholes’ (ibid., 555). Adorno compared this technique with impressionism, which, in Wagner, operates at the level of tonality whereby the ‘unbroken tonal surface [is] based on the breaking down of tones’ (ibid.). Adorno went on to state that the ‘creation of totality’ emerges ‘by means of [the totality’s] reduction to minute models of the particular, which then, because they approach liminal value, can be combined continuously into one another; indeed, properly speaking, they actually generate the great dense tonal surface’ (ibid.). Despite his Hegelian interpretation of the leitmotif and the links he makes between

Beethoven and Wagner with regards to thematic manipulation, Dahlhaus, to a certain degree, agrees with Adorno's 'revised' interpretation of the leitmotif and its formal consequences. Indeed, at times it seems as if Dahlhaus' appraisal of Wagner's compositional techniques contradicts itself by evoking important and seemingly irreconcilable aspects of Adorno's two interpretations. Thus, although Dahlhaus observes that 'the claim that a congeries of – seemingly – heterogeneous elements can establish internal cohesion must have sounded paradoxical at first', he also suggests that 'by being derivable from each other, the leitmotifs fall into a configuration instead of merely accumulating, and are thus linked into a contextual system' (Dahlhaus 1989, 200). He goes on to claim that 'we can sense musical logic in these motivic groupings, a logic that knits together the otherwise disjointed, proselike texture of the music', and it is because of this that Wagner is able, according to Dahlhaus, to construct a musico-dramatic 'system' (ibid., 201).

We get the sense that Adorno's accusation concerning Wagner's tendency towards technical rationalisation actually assists in bringing about this integral tonal surface, which Adorno believed, had attained its full realisation in the Western art music of his day through what Schoenberg termed the 'emancipation of the dissonance' in free atonality and, subsequently, twelve-tone technique (Schoenberg 1984, 84). With all twelve notes of the chromatic scale considered equally important, so that the music renounced any tonal centre, the integral nature of serial music emerged through the equal contribution of all twelve individual tones to the total musical structure in order to replace what Schoenberg saw as 'those structural differentiations provided formerly by tonal harmonies' (ibid., 218).

Adorno went against his previous charge and stated that 'the accusation of formlessness misses its mark, since it confuses everything that is not orientated toward traditional forms with a lack of organisation' (Adorno GS 16 *WA*, 553-554). As we have seen, he claimed in his *Versuch* that the problems of form and of false identity arise partly from Wagner's abandonment of 'the cosmos of bourgeois forms' of music. In 1963 Adorno now claimed that Wagner *had*, in fact, engaged with general, handed-down musical forms, but had also chosen to move beyond them, that is, according to Max Paddison, Wagner refused 'to accept pre-given solutions' (Paddison and Deliège ed. 2010, 6). Consequently, Wagner was able to shed light on the particulars of the artwork. Adorno proposed that Wagner 'realised without reservation that the binding, truly general character of musical works of art is to be

found, if at all, only through the medium of their particularity and concretion, and not by recourse to any kind of general types' (Adorno GS 16 *WA*, 548). In other words, the truth of the artwork comes from Wagner's engagement with the musical particulars and yet is still dependent on the dialectical relationship that exists between general and particular. Unlike the products of the culture industry, in which, according to Adorno, the particular is made to conform to the general, Wagner does not allow the general musical forms to occlude the particularities of the music. It is precisely Wagner's focus on the handed-down musical materials of history through his overcoming of the 'cosmos of bourgeois forms' that allows him to give primacy to melodic and harmonic chromaticism – the 'infinitesimally small elements' of the music. But why did Adorno reverse his charge of formlessness and simulated unity? Indeed, if Wagner's work can be seen as a site of convergence for the divide between culture industry and aesthetic modernism, why did the assessment of Wagner as modernist not come out in Adorno's account of 1938? Similarly, why, in 1963, had Adorno distanced himself from his previous assessment of Wagner's art?

Understanding Adorno's Interpretations I: Situating the Versuch

In the '*Selbstanzeige des Essaybuches Versuch über Wagner*', written to coincide with the publication of the *Versuch* in 1952, Adorno claimed that 'the *Versuch über Wagner* belongs to those works put out by the Institute for Social Research that set themselves the task of maintaining opposition to National Socialism, not by fruitless indignation, but by standing up to it by comprehending it' (Adorno GS 13, 504). However, as Helmut Dubiel (1978) asserts, having investigated the continuity of certain key 'points of enquiry' within the early works of the Frankfurt School, it was not until the 1940s that the Institute for Social Research began to study fascism in Germany in a comprehensive and systematic way. Dubiel argues that up until the work entitled '*Die Juden und Europa*' (1939), the Frankfurt School tended to view the last years of the Weimar Republic and the first ones of National Socialism as a continuum. As a result, Adorno's 1952 comment on the relationship between fascism and his 1937/38 Wagner essay should not be taken at face value. Through Dubiel's research into the work of the Frankfurt School between 1930 and 1945, one could be justified in claiming that we can only understand the *Versuch* as implicitly providing a polemic against Nazism in the light of the works of the 1940s, especially *Dialektik*

der Aufklärung. This idea is supported by the lack of any mention of National Socialism, only a single use of the word ‘Nazi’ (with reference to Neville Chamberlain) and less than a handful of variations on ‘fascism’ in the entire essay on Wagner. Instead, what is key to understanding Adorno’s essay on Wagner is that, as we have seen, it is, ultimately, a polemic against the culture industry.

Huysen perhaps oversimplifies things when he asserts that ‘whenever Adorno says fascism, he is also saying culture industry’ (Huysen 1988, 35). Adorno never directly identified fascism with the culture industry, as Jay Bernstein has observed (Bernstein 1991, 4). However, in *Dialektik der Aufklärung*, Adorno and Horkheimer did perceive similarities between both social pathologies. In describing the consumers of products of the culture industry as recipients of the ‘gift system’, whereby the products of the industry are ‘represented as a bonus with undoubted private and social advantages’, Adorno and Horkheimer put forward the idea that fascism ‘hopes to use the training the culture industry has given these recipients of gifts, in order to organise them into its own forced battalions’ (Adorno GS 3, 185). For Adorno and Horkheimer, a process of societal organisation forced upon the public by a power above the public does not allow for individual deviation but demands that the individual conform to the instructions issued from above. If ‘successfully’ carried out, it follows that the reifying process fulfils the repressive aim of the integration of society through the conformity of those individuals that make up society. In *Dialektik der Aufklärung*, both fascism and the culture industry are charged with initiating separate processes of reification from above which, nevertheless, result in similarly repressive ends. As Adorno and Horkheimer observed, ‘the wonder of integration, the permanent act of grace by the authority who receives the defenceless person – once he has swallowed his rebelliousness – means Fascism’ (ibid., 177).

If we bear in mind Dubiel’s observation that the Frankfurt Circle did not start to focus on fascism as a social pathology until the 1940s, then when Nicholas Baragwanath claims that ‘Adorno sought to explain how Wagner, once the emblem of German culture, came to be espoused by Hitler and associated with acts of barbarism’ (Baragwanath 2006, 55), it would seem to be the case that the specific investigations being conducted by the Frankfurt School in the late 1930s have not been fully accounted for. Instead, one could be justified in claiming that Baragwanath, like Adorno in 1952, has projected the later writings on fascism onto the *Versuch*. The

fundamental problem with Baragwanath's critique of the *Versuch* is that he sees it as imperative that we become aware of the 'ideological foundations and premises' of Adorno's accounts of musical works in order to assess their insights and findings with a degree of accuracy (Baragwanath 2006, 53). He goes on to argue that the ideological foundations of Adorno's interpretations are to be found in 'general terms in the programme of the Frankfurt Institute for Social Research during the 1930s, and also, more specifically, in an essay [Horkheimer's 'Egoism and the Movement for Emancipation: Towards an Anthropology of the Bourgeois Era' (1936)] that Adorno himself cited in the preface to the first edition' (ibid.). However, in contrast to Baragwanath's claims that Adorno had a specific pre-formed ideological *foundation* for interpreting Wagner's works, that is, in contrast to the idea that the Institute's theoretical ideas solely determined Adorno's interpretations of musical works – leading to possible charges of idealism and relativism – it would be better to conceive of a dynamic relationship being enacted between Wagner's works and the wider Frankfurt School agenda of the late 1930s, which influenced Adorno's fore-structures of understanding.

As we have seen in chapter one in trying to account for the relationship between music and an interpreter as based on a subject-object model, such a model is inherently problematic. As Gadamer questioned, 'is it not true that when a work of art has seized us it no longer leaves us the freedom to push it away from us once again and to accept or reject it on our own terms?' (Gadamer 1977, 4). Bowie affirms Gadamer's hermeneutic position that questions whether we can truly separate ourselves as subjects from artworks. For Bowie, 'in the case of music one is inevitably forced to extend the scope of "intention" to include the kind of shared, but often unthematized, background knowledge that informs a musician's practice at a particular time' (Bowie 2007, 213). The issue here is that just as we cannot interpret the artwork without taking into account the material particulars of specific artworks or forms of musical praxis, we cannot also relinquish the power we have as interpreters to shape the manifestation of musical praxis. The crucial point that Gadamer and Bowie make in accounting for how we, as interpreters, determine the character of specific performances or interpretations is that we, as historically- and socially-mediated individuals, bring our shared practices, what Gadamer called our 'historical situatedness' or, after Hegel, 'substantiality' (Gadamer 2004, 301), with us when we undergo aesthetic experiences; we interpret musical praxis against 'shared,

but often unthematized, background knowledge' – what Heidegger called a 'pre-understanding' – and it is such a 'background' that, in part, 'fore-structures' what is disclosed during aesthetic experiences. As Gadamer claims, 'all self-knowledge arises from what is historically pregiven, what with Hegel we call "substance", because it underlies all subjective intentions and actions, and hence both prescribes and limits every possibility for understanding any tradition whatsoever in its historical alterity' (Gadamer 2004, 301). But, as we shall see, that is not to suggest that it is just our 'shared, but often unthematized, background knowledge' that determines, in the strict sense, how we interpret musical works. For, as Gadamer is aware, the task of 'appropriately' interpreting works of art involves our ability to 'disregard ourselves' 'insofar as we must imagine the other situation' (ibid., 304), that is, we must also be open to listening to what the artwork has to say with the possibility that what is said can potentially call into question our particular *style* of being-in-the-world. This is a point that, as Anthony Gritten (2006b) demonstrates, is key to understanding how musical performance works in concrete situations. Nevertheless, as Gritten is also aware with reference to the 'double bind' of the musical performer, we cannot fully discount the role our 'fore-structures' [*Vor-Struktur*] play in determining our aesthetic experiences and interpretations of such experiences. As Gadamer claimed, 'into this other situation we must bring, precisely, ourselves' (ibid., 304). In other words, 'transposing ourselves consists neither in the empathy of one individual for another nor in subordinating another person to our own standards; rather, it always involves rising to a higher universality that overcomes not only our own particularity but also that of the other...*understanding is always the fusion of these horizons supposedly existing by themselves*' (ibid., 304-305).

It follows that by tending to hermeneutic anticipations of meaning, we will be in a better position to understand Adorno's discussion of his *volte-face* in the Berlin speech of 1963. The reason for concentrating on the Heideggerian tradition of hermeneutics in what follows is because, unlike some of their predecessors, both Heidegger and Gadamer were explicitly concerned with the subjectivisation of aesthetics, which we see Adorno attempting to counter in the Berlin speech. As Bowie observes, 'the emergence of aesthetics as a distinct part of philosophy is also itself part of the process of subjectification: beauty becomes solely a matter of subjective feeling, of "taste". Artworks are consequently reduced to the subjective contingencies of their reception, and an aesthetics based on subjectivity therefore has

no way of articulating the truth in works of art' (Bowie 2003a, 9). Instead, for both Heidegger and Gadamer, 'art...is seen in terms of a "happening" of tradition which transcends the contingent responses of individual subjects. Art's truth emerges by its being transmitted in differing contexts and giving rise to ever new kinds of understanding that involve a "fusion of horizons" between the recipient and the work of art' (Bowie 2003b, 253).

Gadamer and the Artwork as Event

Before we get to Gadamer, we should note that his hermeneutic approach to art and artworks involves appropriating many of Hegel's ideas on the relation between art and meaning. Specifically, for Hegel, even though the artwork gives a sensuous expression to the freedom of *Geist* and, therefore, a sensuous expression of its meaning, this meaning is not independent of whatever interpretations may have taken place since the moment of the artwork's conception. For Hegel, past meanings and interpretations were embraced when arriving at current meanings. Gadamer, to an extent, agreed with Hegel regarding the 'objective' nature of aesthetic meaning. However, a problem with Hegel's aesthetics is that even though it embraces the idea that past meanings and interpretations are vital to understanding new meanings, he claimed that art brings into harmony 'what is contaminated in other existents by chance and externality' (Hegel 1975, 1:155). In other words, the artwork, according to Hegel, does not just give a sensuous expression to the freedom of *Geist* but it gives a sensuous expression of the *ideal* of freedom, which, as Gadamer recognised, once grasped, would mean that the whole of the artwork's meaning would have been understood. Conversely, Gadamer argued that '*all encounter with the language of art is an encounter with an unfinished event [Ereignis] and is itself part of this event*' (Gadamer 2004, 85). For Gadamer, 'we must admit that the world of artistic tradition – the splendid contemporaneousness that we gain through art with so many human worlds – is more than a mere object of our free acceptance or rejection' (Gadamer 1977, 4).

Understanding, for Gadamer, can be considered to be 'an event of the disclosure of truth, an event which in true conversation is reached by the partners together' (Gadamer 2001, 11). The concept of conversation, as well as highlighting the dialectical or dialogical nature of his philosophical hermeneutics, is also key to

understanding Gadamer's main ideas, including the concepts of 'play' [*Spiel*], 'understanding' [*Verstehen*], 'tradition' [*Überlieferung*] and the truth of art. For Gadamer, the work of art was its presentation [*Darstellung*], which required a dialectical interaction, a 'fusion of horizons', between the artwork and the individual as spectator. Ultimately, the artwork could not be ontologically distinguished from its presentation. Gadamer expresses this implication of the spectator in the presentation of a work with the help of the notion of mediation [*Vermittlung*]. For Gadamer, the experience of the work is the 'non-differentiation of the mediation [*Vermittlung*] from the work itself'; the work is actualised as a work only through its presentation and in its presentation (Gadamer 2004, 118). As Jean Grondin observes, the ambiguity of *Vermittlung* lies in the term's dialogical foundation in that understanding conveys both the transmission of the work, as well as the appropriation of the work by the spectator (Grondin 2003, 45). As a result, the artwork's meanings can only come to the fore through its presentation. Indeed, the 'meaning of the work is not to be sought anywhere but in its *Vermittlung*' (ibid., 46). It follows that the understanding that comes via an artwork and the truth that belongs to that understanding is an event [*Ereignis*] that demands the appropriation of the interpreter to the so-called object of interpretation. As Gadamer claimed, 'it [the artwork] jolts us, it knocks us over, and sets up a world of its own, into which we are drawn, as it were' (Gadamer 2001, 71).⁵

If the concept of the work is only realised in its presentation, and if the truth of the artwork is to be expressed in a dialogical event then, according to Gadamer, what is expressed, indeed, the meaning of the work is not independent of the event. Gadamer's idea of truth stems from Heidegger, who, as we saw in the previous chapter, related truth to unconcealment [*Unverborgenheit*] based on the Greek word *ἀληθεια*, 'the unconcealment of beings' (Heidegger 2003, 38).⁶ Truth is a process of

⁵ Gritten, with a study of Mikhail Bakhtin's account of the event, has already demonstrated what a conception of the musical event could do for contemporary musicological work on performance and performance practice. See Gritten 2006b.

⁶ According to Wrathall, whilst truth in the usual sense (*im gewöhnlichen Sinne; im üblichen Sinne*) or in the contemporary sense (*im heutigen Sinne*) has been understood by philosophers to be propositional truth as correspondence (*Übereinstimmung*) or correctness (*Richtigkeit*), as when a proposition is true when it corresponds with a state of affairs, it is a mistake to define propositional truth as unconcealment or to transfer features of propositional truth to the notion of unconcealment (Wrathall 2011, 15). Instead, the three platforms for building up to Heidegger's account of propositional truth as a sort of correspondence—the truth of entities, the truth of being, and truth as the clearing (*Lichtung*)—are different modes or ways of unconcealment (ibid., 11-15). Ultimately, as Wrathall explains, 'all truths—propositional, the truth of being, the truth of entities—preserve and shelter a particular existential relationship between things in the world' (ibid., 39). This relationship is one of unconcealment whereby we encounter entities as being what they are only through their prior

what Heidegger calls ‘becoming’ and ‘happening’ through which the world – ‘the always-nonobjectual to which we are subject’ as opposed to an ‘object that stands before us and can be looked at’ (ibid., 31) – ‘opens itself’. Although the term ‘*Ereignis*’ is not mentioned by Heidegger in his series of lectures delivered in the early 1930s, he, nevertheless, hinted at the term, which would come to occupy his thought from the late 1930s onwards, when observing that ‘a work only actually is a work when we transport ourselves out of the habitual and into what is opened up by the work’ (ibid., 63). As Richard Bernstein has observed, the concept of truth as unconcealment is essential to Gadamer’s entire project of philosophical hermeneutics but it also turns out to be one of the most elusive concepts (Bernstein 1983, 151-52). Moreover, according to Bernstein, Gadamer employs ‘a concept of truth that he never makes fully explicit’ (ibid.). Nevertheless, it is clear that Gadamer appropriated Heidegger’s account of truth as *Unverborgenheit*, simply stating, at one point, that ‘truth is unconcealedness’ (Gadamer 1986b, 36).⁷ Moreover, Gadamer fundamentally agreed with Heidegger’s idea that any revealing of truth is the same time a concealing. As he declared, Heidegger taught us ‘to think that truth is both revealing and concealing...What is expressed is not everything...This seems to me compellingly correct’ (Dostal 1994, 50).

disclosure in a particular world. Thus, as Wrathall explains, ‘being itself must be understood not as something determinate and stable, but in terms of conditions for the emergence of entities and worlds out of concealment into unconcealment’ (ibid., 1). It follows that propositional truth, which, as Wrathall observes, ‘stabilises and secures particular ways of encountering entities’ (ibid., 39), is presupposed by unconcealment from the very beginning, ‘that unconcealment was an essential condition of there being truth’, in this narrower, philosophical sense (ibid., 6).

The motivation for Wrathall’s defence of Heidegger’s account of unconcealment as the essence of truth seems to be Ernst Tugendhat’s 1967 book, *The Concept of Truth in Husserl and Heidegger* (*Der Wahrheitsbegriff bei Husserl und Heidegger*). Tugendhat, a Jewish exile who returned to Germany after the war in order to study with Heidegger, severely criticized his master’s conception of truth. Indeed, Tugendhat’s book is one of earliest examples of a work that, according to Wrathall, misconstrues Heidegger’s understanding of truth. Tugendhat responded to the ontological questions that Heidegger had rehabilitated; however, his criticisms of the latter’s conception of truth moved him toward contemporary philosophy of language. Tugendhat’s argument consisted of the following three claims: 1) Heidegger had redefined propositional truth; 2) Heidegger had extended the revised concept of propositional truth to uncovering entities and the disclosure of being; 3) the uncovering of entities and the disclosure of being lack the right to be called truth. As Wrathall demonstrates, Heidegger did not believe that only propositional truth has an inherent right to be called truth. Indeed, accounts that equate propositional truth with truth and leave no room for anything else fly in the face of ordinary linguistic practices. Wrathall argues that we can think of the ‘natural’ conception of truth in terms of unconcealment, without losing its specificity, by treating propositional truth as an example of unconcealment. In doing so, he seeks to defend Heidegger from all three of Tugendhat’s charges.

⁷ As Robert Dostal (1994) has observed, Gadamer’s understanding of truth was fundamentally Heideggerian but differed from Heidegger’s account in terms of the experience of truth. Dostal argues that for Heidegger the experience of truth was concerned with immediacy whilst for Gadamer, as we have seen, the experience of the work was based on mediation.

If truth involves unconcealment then, for Gadamer, the truth of a work includes both a revealing and a concealing, which takes place in the context of the event whereby the artwork is actualised as an artwork through its mediated presentation. The fact that Gadamer described all encounter with art as an encounter with an unfinished event is, therefore, based on this idea that the truth of the work is the simultaneous disclosure and concealing of aspects of the work's meaning. Gadamer, thereby, rejected Hegel's claim to absoluteness and systematic completion, insisting that the 'experience of art acknowledges that it cannot present the full truth of what it experiences in terms of definitive knowledge. There is no absolute progress and no final exhaustion of what lies in a work of art' (Gadamer 2004, 86). In other words, the meaning that is transmitted is never a pure meaning, one that is fully complete, but just one meaning of many resulting from the artwork as unfinished event. This explains why Adorno was able to re-visit Wagner's works and find that the initial meaning described in the *Versuch* had been concealed only to allow another meaning to be disclosed. In addition, the fact that a work is only actualised as a work through its presentation means that, for Gadamer, the meaning of the work is to be found in the present, albeit a present that cannot be formed without the past; 'what unfolds before us is so much lifted out of the ongoing course of the ordinary world so much enclosed in its own autonomous circle of meaning that no one is prompted to seek some other future or reality behind it' (ibid., 124). On the topic of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, Gadamer observed that it 'arose in a certain context in musical history and intellectual history and is only to be understood *historically* in this context. And yet what the Ninth Symphony signifies for our understanding is far more than a system of tasks in historical reconstruction...the work itself addresses us just as if we were its first hearers' (Gadamer 2001, 65). For Gadamer, the experience of art is not concerned with a reconstruction of artistic intention but with being aware that the artwork has something to say to us, and what it has to say is a complex temporal mixture of both past and present as a result of the dialectical nature of mediation. The question we need to ask then is if the meaning of the work is, to a certain degree, of the present, why did Adorno interpret Wagner's works the way he did? For example, why did he provide a particular account of Wagner as associated with the culture industry in 1938 and an account of Wagner as modernist in 1963, and not the other way around?

We have already seen how Adorno's earlier account is 'intimately bound up' with the broader Frankfurt School agenda of uncovering the social causes of a pathology of human rationality. Indeed, the 1963 speech still seems bound up with that agenda. With regards to the question of why Adorno responded to Wagner's works differently on two separate occasions, once again we see the influence of Heidegger on Gadamer's hermeneutics, specifically, the idea that all understanding of a particular event is based on a wider understanding that precedes the event. In other words, the understanding of an event occurs against the background of our prior experiences in the world. It follows that Gadamer connected the idea of understanding with history under the umbrella concept of *wirkungsgeschichtliches Bewusstsein*, which is translated by Joel Weinsheimer and Donald Marshall as 'historically effected consciousness' (Gadamer 2004, xv). Like most of Gadamer's terms, *wirkungsgeschichtliches Bewusstsein* assumes a dialogical character, at once a consciousness affected by history and also a consciousness brought into being – 'effected' – by history, and conscious that it is so. In other words, understanding is open to the effects of history whilst remaining conscious that it is being effected by history. With regards to the artwork, Gadamer states that historically effected consciousness is 'consciousness of the work itself, and hence itself has an effect' (ibid., 336). The fact that an interpreter of the work is aware of their historically effected consciousness can be understood by the idea that understanding and interpretation occur within a particular 'horizon' [*Horizont*] that is determined by our historically determined situatedness.

Simply put, our interpretation or understanding of a work is, in a certain sense, determined by the situation in which we find ourselves as historical beings. Within a particular horizon determined by our situatedness, historically effected consciousness 'is already effectual in *finding the right questions to ask*' of the work of art when we are caught up in the event (ibid., 301). Consequently, rather than being able to interpret the work in whatever way we choose, we are limited by our situation to interpret the work within 'the range of vision that includes everything that can be seen from a particular vantage point' (ibid.). The important point, however, is that, for Gadamer, our horizons are not fixed: 'we speak of narrowness of horizon, of the possible expansion of horizon, of the opening up of new horizons, and so forth'

(ibid.). Elaborating, Gadamer suggested that to have a horizon ‘means not being limited to what is nearby but being able to see beyond it’ (ibid.). Gadamer, therefore, as we shall explore in detail in chapter five, refutes the idea that he supports a relativistic conception of truth. As he claimed, ‘just as the individual is never simply an individual because he is always in understanding with others, so too the closed horizon that is supposed to enclose a culture is an abstraction’ (ibid., 303). Indeed, Gadamer suggested that ‘the horizon is, rather, something into which we move and that moves us. Horizons change for a person that is moving’ (ibid.). Such a point is vital to understanding both the change in Adorno’s reading of Wagner’s works between the *Versuch* and the Berlin speech of 1963 as well as the value of norm-transcending interpretations that seek to move beyond what can be seen from a particular vantage point.

To put the speech in context, Adorno had already started work on his magnum opus on aesthetics by 1963 whilst *Negative Dialectics*, his other magnum opus on epistemology and metaphysics, was soon to be published in 1966. While *Aesthetic Theory* is considered to be a culmination of a lifetime’s reflection on aesthetics, especially the social character of modern art, *Negative Dialectics*, as Badiou observes (Badiou 2010, 28), is nothing short of a proposal, having consolidated theoretical, social and historical arguments developed and espoused at different stages throughout the course of Adorno’s life, for a new direction for philosophy – a proposal that stemmed from the idea that, after the failures of rationalised Idealism and the non-occurrence of a distinctly Marxian social revolution, philosophy could no longer claim to contribute to the rationalisation of the world. Bearing in mind Honneth’s discussions of the legacy of Critical Theory, as a culmination of study in the area of philosophically inspired social and cultural criticism over the course of Adorno’s lifetime, these works consolidate and highlight Adorno’s vast contribution to the Frankfurt School’s investigations into the social pathologies of the modern era, and, thus, are intimately connected with his earlier investigations into the culture industry and fascism. Honneth, for example, highlights three isolable theses contained within the introduction to *Negative Dialectics*:

First, Adorno claims that today it necessary to move from the Hegelian dialectic to a new form of dialectics he calls the “negative”. Second, he supposes that this new, historically necessary form of dialectics will better do justice to the “object of knowledge”, as well as the “subject of knowledge”. Third, he believes that only such a method of philosophical thinking can assume the function of critically transcending the social conditions of the present (Honneth 2009, 72).

It follows that several other works by Adorno composed during this period share affinities with a number of ideas and proposals raised in these two mammoth texts, specifically, the three theses Honneth derives from the introduction to *Negative Dialectics*. For example, the suggestions Adorno put forward concerning the new direction for western art music in '*Vers une musique informelle*' could be conceived as a cultural variation on the philosophical necessity – and, thus, as Honneth observes, also a social necessity (Honneth 2009, 73) – for a transition to negative dialectics. In both cases, Adorno paid particular attention to the relationship between the 'subject of knowledge' and the 'object of knowledge', a relationship of such fundamental importance to Adorno that, as we have seen, he criticised both the culture industry and fascism for instigating separate but related processes of organisation whereby the individual subject became subsumed beneath the dictates of a higher institution – subject was subsumed beneath object, particular beneath the general. Consequently, Adorno's later work involved his attempts to ascertain what particular form the relationship between subject and its object should take in order to allow for the possibility of both *musique informelle* and philosophy.⁸

Adorno managed to posit some of his most important ideas regarding the relationship between the 'subject of knowledge' and the 'object of knowledge' in a short piece, first published in 1969 entitled '*Zu Subjekt und Objekt*'. He combined a socio-historical with a philosophical-historical narrative when he spoke of the transformed relation of subject and object in the present as way of understanding a revised conception of philosophy's role in contemporary society. Adorno criticised those philosophical endeavours that aimed to force the separation of subject and object. For him, an epistemological attempt to separate the 'subject of knowledge' from the 'object of knowledge' can result in the positing of a 'transcendental subject', a subject that 'will either construct the objective world with raw material along Kantian lines or, since Fichte, engender that world itself' (Adorno GS 10.2, 744). For Adorno, such a conception of the subject has socio-political implications; mainly, 'the more individuals are really degraded to functions of the social totality as it becomes more systematised, the more will man pure and simple, man as a principle with the attributes of creativity and absolute domination, be consoled by exaltation of his mind' (ibid., 745). Consequently, the answer to his alternative subject-object model

⁸ For comprehensive discussions of both Adorno's meta-philosophy and his 'positive' contribution to philosophy in the form of negative dialectics, see Bowie 2013 and Freyenhagen 2013.

did not lie in idealism for he claimed that it creates a theory that ‘glorifies the subject in ideology, and slanders it in epistemological practice’ through the abstraction of subjectivity from a world in which it should be immersed (ibid., 747). Through its hypostatisation in idealist thought, the subject ‘founders on its confusion with something objective as inherently existent – the very thing it is not’ (ibid., 756). He went on to suggest that ‘this alleged origin of all objects is objectified in rigid timelessness, quite in keeping with Kant’s doctrine of the firm and immutable forms of transcendental consciousness’ (ibid., 745). It follows that having been hypostatised, the transcendental subject of idealism will constantly be called into question by material particulars, by what Adorno called the ‘datum, the irremovable *skandalon* of idealism’ (ibid., 746). As Honneth argues, ‘as soon as the dialectical method – namely, the proof of the “insufficiency” of a conceptual determination with regard to the object to be grasped – is practiced with the goal of demonstrating that the whole of reality is rationally constituted, it is compelled to exclude “everything qualitatively divergent” and becomes a closed system’ (Honneth 2009, 76-77). For Adorno, therefore, ‘Hegel’s system represents at once the zenith and turning point of the history of philosophical system building, since on the one hand it represents its immanent claim to conceptually penetrate the whole of reality in its clearest and most audacious form, while on the other it fails so dramatically that all subsequent approaches have to be understood as ways out of the “crisis of Idealism”’ (Honneth 2009, 74).

Furthermore, according to Adorno, the future of philosophy does not lie in ‘naïve realism’, which upholds the separation of mind and world (Adorno GS 10.2, 746). Although realism is, according to Adorno, ‘historically necessary’, so as to bring about the formation of the subject-object dichotomy, it, nevertheless, perpetuates a ‘piece of reification’ and thus limits the subject’s engagement with the object (ibid.). In other words, the ‘materialist’ turn in philosophy is, according to Adorno, still tainted with the charge of trying to rationally penetrate the world. It follows that, for Adorno, such a ‘piece of reification’ goes ‘frictionlessly with subjectivism’, which cannot ‘touch the substance of naïve realism’ (ibid., 748). Indeed, Adorno claimed that naïve realism, like idealism, because it aims ‘to look on the subject as nothing...and on the object as absolute’, is another ‘transcendental illusion’ (ibid., 756). Hence, it becomes clear why Adorno, whilst noting Marx’s

criticisms of Hegel, wanted to draw similar conclusions concerning the fate of Hegel and Marx's respective enterprises. As Honneth notes, 'Adorno does not see an alternative to the idealistic figure of dialectics in its "materialist" turn, since in both cases the attempt is made to rationally penetrate the world' (Honneth 2009, 77). Ultimately, Honneth observes, 'it seems to be the case that any use of the dialectical method that is not based on the insufficiency of conceptual determinations but, instead, takes it as the occasion for the alignment of concept and reality that presses ever further can be called positive' (ibid.). Nevertheless, the problem with Adorno's criticisms of traditional subject/object epistemology is that anyone who is not convinced that philosophy's sole project is to attempt to align concept and reality will, arguably, not agree with Adorno's conclusion that future philosophical endeavours should focus on a self-criticism of its previous presuppositions.⁹

Adorno went on to offer a range of arguments for what he called the 'primacy of the object' (Adorno GS 10.2, 748).¹⁰ Indeed, Adorno proposed that the only way to give primacy to the object 'is to reflect, at each historic and each cognitive step, on what is then presented as subject and object, as well as on the mediations' (ibid., 751-752). As Honneth observes, 'the subject that no longer believes it is able to conceptually appropriate the world conversely knows itself to be codetermined by it and must therefore forfeit a part of its previously assumed sovereignty' (Honneth 2009, 80-81). Consequently, Honneth suggests, 'we are to devote our cognitive attention, instead of to purposefully attaining results, as completely as possible to precisely apprehending all the qualitative properties that may otherwise still inhere in

⁹ Honneth argues that the equation of a single philosophical project (left-Hegelianism) with the missed moment of Marxian social revolution in which society could be transformed into an domination-free ideal does not necessarily warrant Adorno's imperative that philosophy as a whole restrict itself to continuous self-criticism (Honneth 2009, 74). Firstly, according to Honneth, not only does Adorno not let even a systematic gap appear between Hegel and Marx, and thus between Hegel's attempt to conceptually grasp reality in thought and Marx's critique of Hegel through the former's renewed focus on material conditions, but one could also argue that Adorno places too much weight on the idea of a distinctly Marxian revolution as the fateful moment of all philosophical endeavours, which, following its non-occurrence, draws the final line under philosophical efforts to mould reality according to the dictates of reason. Secondly, Adorno seems to challenge or openly reject more practically- and hermeneutically-oriented traditions of modern philosophy according to which, as we have already seen, the separation of subject and object, of mind and world, was fundamentally questionable and needed to be dissolved without completely discounting the possibilities of reason. Honneth observes, 'he [Adorno] holds neither the postmetaphysical naturalisation of Hegel or Kant nor the reconstruction of a parsimonious concept of rationality but only the uncovering of the principled limits to all conceptual endeavours to still be philosophically possible after the failure of rational Idealism' (Honneth 2009, 75-76).

¹⁰ Bowie challenges this idea that Adorno reduced his dialectical conception to the primacy of the object (Bowie 2013, 122-129).

the object' (ibid., 79). Such an account of the purpose of philosophy, as discussed in detail in chapter one, meshes with Adorno's ideas on the future of musical composition in the case of *musique informelle*. For Adorno, 'unrevised, unrestricted freedom' (Adorno GS 16, 498) on the part of the composer is relinquished in order to focus on the primacy of the object, specifically, to reflect on and 'open up' the qualitative particulars of the handed-down musical materials of history. The aim of *musique informelle* was to shine a creative spotlight on, as we saw with Adorno's comments on Wagner in the Berlin Speech, the musical particulars through a critique of the established, stylistic norms of composition. Such music would discard 'all external, abstract, rigidly opposed forms' but, nevertheless, through criticism of the handed-down musical materials of history, constitute itself in 'an objectively compelling way' (ibid., 496), that is, a music which still maintains internal comprehensibility and coherence. In calling for a *musique informelle*, Adorno, to a certain extent, was arguing both to save and yet revise a dialectical method of composition that he had seen in operation within the German tradition of Western art music since (late-) Beethoven in a similar way as his theory of negative dialectics articulated a revision of German idealism. On a fundamental level, the search for a formally new, *informelle* method of musical composition coincided with a demand for a new philosophy as a challenge to and, to some extent, a rejection of Kant and Hegel.

In his 1961 speech to the Darmstadt School, Adorno illustrated how a dialectical method of composition during the twentieth century had led towards the development of a *musique informelle*. Although the proponents of the Second Viennese School were given the most credit for this development, Wagner was also considered as having paved the way for the most 'advanced' music of Adorno's day. For example, in raising the issue of Schenker's reproach to Wagner for having destroyed the *Urfinie*, Adorno claimed that Wagner's act of defiling the 'musical language of the age' was the first time when the 'form-creating function of musical idiom was being eroded by the process of evolution of the musical material' (Adorno GS 16, 281). Adorno went on to develop this single observation on Wagner's technique when, in the Berlin speech, he claimed that it was that Wagner – not Schoenberg – who had opened up the possibilities of *musique informelle*. As we can see, the 1963 speech at the Berlin Festival was again 'intimately bound up' with Adorno's wider meta-philosophical framework. It should not be supposed, however,

that Adorno's theoretical projects, such as his account of the culture industry or his focus on epistemology and metaphysics, determined his thoughts on music in any strict sense. As I have attempted to illustrate, fundamentally, the same fore-structures of understanding formed the backdrop for Adorno's responses to Wagner's works in both 1937/38 and 1963. Adorno was, in both sets of circumstances, concerned with the relationship between the 'subject of knowledge' and the 'object of knowledge', its manifestation in concrete situations, the distortion of this relationship at the hands of the culture industry, fascism and philosophy and the 'new' form that relationship should take in order to avoid social and philosophical reification. The important point to realise, therefore, is that the change in Adorno's interpretation of Wagner, when it comes to hermeneutic questions of meaning, can be explained by the 'historically different reaction' to what Wagner's works had to say at different points. What resulted in 1963 was not a new subjective reading of Wagner's works, not, that is, what Adorno called an 'adaptation to fit a new situation', but a new 'fusion of horizons' between Adorno and the music dramas, one which called into question and transcended his previous appraisal of the composer. However, having stressed the affinities between Adorno's philosophical project and his claims for the future of musical composition, we need to handle with care the tension between Wagner's works disclosing different aspects of their truth to Adorno at different times and the idea that Adorno was incorrect in his interpretation of Wagner.

Was Adorno wrong about Wagner's works?

This question may seem particularly pertinent in the context of critical musicology, which, historically, has had more than its fair share of debates over a work's meaning or an artist's intentions. However, we must be careful at this point because, as we shall explore in greater detail in the following chapter, to approach artworks on the basis of a definitive meaning that fully determines whether an interpretation is true or false is to miss the point. Hermeneutically speaking, because we are attempting to account for the work as an objective correlate of aesthetic experience, the focus should be on what shapes our experiences of artworks and how we respond to what they have to say. The fact that for Heidegger and Gadamer truth is *a priori* concerned with unconcealment thus ensures that the meaning of the artwork is never fully complete and never independent of the moment when truth is disclosed because, in

that moment, what was concealed may be unconcealed and what was previously disclosed may subsequently become hidden. Indeed, it might be better when discussing the term ‘meaning’ in the context of the event, to talk about the articulation of *meaningfulness* rather than the articulation of *meaning*. Not only does the phrase ‘articulation of meaning’ hint at an event-independent conception of meaning, bringing with it all the problems of meanings as context-independent, unchanging ‘givens’, but, when we encounter music, we do so on the basis that music is *firstly* meaningful, rather than being purely an object of perception to which we subsequently add an interpretation.¹¹ By discussing interpretation as the ‘articulation of meaningfulness’ of a specific musical experience, we acknowledge that our experiences of music are, fundamentally, already *meaningful* experiences – experiences that happen immediately or tacitly, but, vitally, are mediated by the fore-structures of our understanding. In other words, once we understand what Wrathall refers to as ‘the notion of the inherent meaningfulness of perception’, that is to say that there is nothing experienced in perception that is absolutely and fully given in the present, we start to realise that both perception and interpretation are ‘not in the game of being true or false’ (Wrathall 2011, 70). The point of interpreting Adorno’s interpretations of Wagner is to probe the meaningfulness of Adorno’s experience of these works. In this sense, Adorno’s two contrasting readings could be two of the many meanings of Wagner’s works.

By undermining the classical conception of ‘knowing the meaning’ of a musical work through the consideration of specific musical experiences along with what shapes those experiences, the issue we now confront is that Adorno’s accounts of Wagner’s works seem to be founded on meaning-nihilism. ‘But’, as Wittgenstein stressed, ‘that is not to say we are in doubt’ (Wittgenstein 2009, 39^e). As an ever-increasing body of predominantly Anglo-American philosophers are coming to realise, Wittgenstein’s critique, *après* Kant,¹² of the idea of rule-bound application of rules need not necessarily result in scepticism or meaning-nihilism.¹³ The main issue, as Paul Horwich surmises, is that ‘in order to follow a rule we must first interpret it –

¹¹ For comprehensive critiques of the two-step empiricist theory of perception whereby passive receptions of something like sense data are synthesized or interpreted as representations of external objects, see Braver 2012, 139-146 and Wrathall 2011, 57-71.

¹² See Kant *CPR*, A133/B172.

¹³ See, for example, Braver 2012, Gascoigne and Thornton 2013, Glendinning 1998, Horwich 2012 and McDowell 1998, 221-262.

that is, translate it into more basic, more immediately intelligible terms – but on the other hand, that assumption would lead to an infinite regress of reformulations – which would imply that no rule could ever determine our behaviour’ (Horwich 2012, 136). Although the problem of infinite regress is cited as a way of challenging the notion of norm-governed behaviour, interpretations of a musical work’s meaningfulness need not entail an *infinite* regress if we conceive of our explicit interpretations as understandable within the context of our prior, implicit, that is to say, tacit making sense of the world. As we have seen throughout this chapter, the regress terminates in the response of the interpreter, whose horizons of enquiry are fore-structured but not entirely fixed by their situatedness in a certain ‘world’, to what the artwork presents. Indeed, the fore-structures of our understanding that form the basis for making sense of our responses to what artworks have to say and which are formed by our practice-based engagements inherent in ‘being-in-the-world’ are vital to understanding Wittgenstein’s claim that rather than know the meaning of a word through explicit rules, we are concerned, instead, with ‘what we call “obeying the rule” and “going against it” in actual cases’ (Wittgenstein 2009, 81^e).

What determines whether our articulation of the meaningfulness of the musical event ‘obeys the rule’ or not is, arguably, not down to some definitive entity with which all understanding terminates. With his idea of ‘obeying the rule’ and ‘going against it’, what Wittgenstein seems to be emphasising is the normative basis of rules as well as the normative basis of truth in general. Such an idea is elucidated by Simon Glendinning, who observes that ‘there is nothing, no body of rules, no covenant in reason, which *forces* me to apply a word in the way I do, even though going on in this way “is something that I do without a smidgen of hesitation”’ (Glendinning 1998, 102). It is here that, for Glendinning, the supposed objectivity of rule-following can only be made sense of if we think outside of the idea of ‘what is natural for me’. According to Glendinning, ‘a way of behaving of *my own* can be conceived as ‘rule-governed’ only in so far as I can regard it as authoritative for actions *other than my own*’ (ibid., 103). As Bowie observes, ‘the key here is the need for social acknowledgement if ethical life is to have any substance at all: whatever happens “inside” me when I make a moral decision is only intelligible via norms which exist “outside” me’ (Bowie 2013, 100-101). The normativity of truth emerges in the context of communal practices – what Braver calls a ‘public ability’ (Braver 2012, 136) or what Brandom calls ‘norms in practice’ (Brandom 1994, 30). In other

words, as Brandom claims, what it is to understand a rule is to have mastery of the ‘background of practices permitting the distinguishing of correct from incorrect applications of those rules’ (ibid., 22).¹⁴ Indeed, Braver puts it simply that ‘instead of hermetically sealed selves bumping into others, we are first one of the crowd, *doing* what “one” (*das Man*) *does* or *following* what “They” say ought to be *done*’ [italics added] (Braver 2012, 164). What, at the root, inspires these thinkers to challenge the kind of disengaged, contemplative theorising that attempts to establish predictive laws for the workings of the world and those that dwell in it is the idea that we implicitly pick up society’s ways of doing things, its tacit norms, through what Wittgenstein refers to as ‘training’ (Wittgenstein 2009, 4^e) – indeed, as Mark Johnson (2007) illustrates, we do this from a very young age before we become ‘little proposition-processing machines’. It is this kind of communal *style* of making sense of the world, which determines what should be done and what ought to be, that can change when new norms displace previous norms as a result of norm-transcending creative practices.

Understanding the musical event is, therefore, a question of making sense of how and to what extent our particular forms of know-how, our socially- and culturally-cultivated tacit norms and practices that make up the *style* of our world, and by which we come to make sense of the world, shape our responses to what the artwork has to say to us. A similar point is made, albeit problematically, by Brandom, who claims that ‘norms that are explicitly expressed...[are] intelligible only against a background that includes norms that are *implicit* in what is *done*, rather than *explicit* in what is *said*’ (Brandom 1994, 30).¹⁵ These norms, as Bowie observes, ‘bring into existence the ethical realm in which my action is an action at all, rather than something caused or something unintelligible’ (Bowie 2013, 101). This idea appeals to its Hegelian origins whereby the individual only gains any kind of meaningfulness through the development of mutual recognition that is enshrined in the social whole and the institutions that emerge out of it.

¹⁴ The danger, as Gascoigne and Thornton observe (Gascoigne and Thornton 2013, 107-132), is that appealing to a hidden background of tacit knowing-how as, in some ways, distinct to the foreground knowing-that is to problematise those moments when what we think is a somehow explicit knowing-that is, ultimately, derived from tacit norms. Such a problem renders an absolute separation between foreground and background impossible leading Gascoigne and Thornton to claim that ‘*it is Foreground all the way*’ (ibid., 119).

¹⁵ For the problems surrounding Brandom’s wish to make our implicit structures explicit, see Gascoigne and Thornton 2013, 123-132.

That said, as well as ‘obeying the rule’, Wittgenstein also allows for the possibility for us to ‘go against it’. Indeed, as we have seen with Adorno’s distinct interpretations of Wagner and as we shall see in greater detail in chapter five, what the artwork has to say in the context of a dialogical event can also call into question and potentially transcend those cultural and historical norms that, to a degree, determine our horizons of enquiry for understanding art and artworks. The point is that, for Gadamer, the task of understanding is to acquire ‘the right horizon of enquiry’, which may be different to the norms and conventions that make up the *style* of our world. As he claimed with regards to the idea that our understanding is always ‘fore-structured’, ‘all fore-structuring also makes visible that from which something is fore-structured’, thus ‘prejudices are brought into play’ (Gadamer 2004, 304). Of course, Gadamer recognises that ‘a hermeneutical situation is determined by the prejudices that we bring with us’: ‘they constitute, then, the horizon of a particular present’ (ibid. 304-305). However, ‘it is important to avoid the error of thinking that the horizon of the present consists of a fixed set of opinions and valuations, and that the otherness of the past can be fore-structured from it as from a fixed ground’ (ibid., 305). Gadamer’s notion, which we will explore in greater detail in chapter five, of being ‘open to the other’ requires us, to a certain extent, to put aside our own prejudices and ways of knowing and doing in order to be open to the possibility that what the Other, in this instance, a musical work, has to say needs to be respected in order to develop the appropriate (fused) horizon. As Gadamer claimed, ‘by factoring the other person’s standpoint into what he is claiming to say, we are making our own standpoint safely unattainable’ (ibid., 302).¹⁶ Elaborating, ‘to acquire a horizon means that one learns to look beyond what is close at hand – not in order to look away from it but to see it better, within a larger whole and in truer proportion’ (ibid., 304). Indeed, when we ‘guard against assimilating the past to our own expectations of meaning’ (ibid.), when we allow for the musical work to talk back to us, when we are open to fusing our horizons with that of the work, there lies the possibility for our

¹⁶ This does not, as Gadamer was aware, demand a ‘positivistic’ approach to understanding historical works of art. We must not ‘transpose ourselves into the historical situation and try to reconstruct the historical horizon’ (Gadamer 2004, 302). Such an idea undermines the notion of the artwork as a dialogical event of mediation. By acknowledging the artwork has something that collapses the divide between subject and object, ‘we have given up the claim to find in the past any truth that is valid and intelligible for ourselves’. Gadamer went on to suggest that ‘acknowledging the otherness of the other in this way, making him the object of objective knowledge, involves the fundamental suspension of his claim to truth’ (ibid., 303).

own 'substance', those historical norms that make up our *style* of being-in-the-world, to be delimited, called into question and potentially transcended.

It may appear that norms of aesthetic understanding can be called into question just by us being 'open' to what the Other has to say, that is, through what Wellmer calls an 'internal' or 'immanent' understanding whereby we surrender ourselves to the text allowing 'the language of the text' to 'become our language' (Wellmer 1995, 145). Having said that, 'in any case where understanding is problematic' (ibid., 148), which, I would claim, due to the structures of power that govern most of our interesting interpretive situations, is most of the time, there exists a tension, a 'conflict of understanding' (ibid., 149), between 'internal' understanding and 'external' or 'productive' understanding. According to Wellmer, 'external' understanding 'is violent, defamiliarising, critical. Here too there is a "fusion of horizons"; but now the horizon of the text tends to vanish into the horizon of the interpreter' (ibid., 145). As Wellmer suggests, with 'external' or 'productive' understanding, there is the possibility for calling into question or, indeed, transcending the norms of aesthetic understanding: 'Here too we may speak of understanding, namely when the interpreter succeeds in transcending the text in terms of the text's own truth-claim, that is, when the truth and untruth of the text appear in a new and sharper light within the horizon and within the language of the interpreter' (ibid.). Such an idea, as we saw in chapter one, is vitally important for coming to terms with Adorno's notion of the critical potential of aesthetic modernism. It is precisely because composers and interpreters can 'open up' the non-conceptual substance of aesthetic practice in new and innovative ways that makes art a paradigmatic model of what negative dialectics looks like in concrete situations. However, to think that criticism begins and ends with the 'externally' understanding subject is to forget that the subject's interpretive norms can also be called into question when they, in part, relinquish 'external' control over the text or Other in question. Indeed, Wellmer is aware of this. He claims that 'what our two moments of immanent and merely external understanding connote is simply the desiderata of hermeneutic openness (which means the readiness to question one's own prejudices, one's own language) on the one hand, and those of translation into one's own language (which means the interpreter's appropriation of an unfamiliar truth, or indeed untruth) on the other' (ibid., 148). For Wellmer, 'internal' and 'external' understanding are interdependent; 'not only is the former the necessary first step to

the latter, it is often only the view from outside that makes the interior of the text accessible' (ibid., 152). He accepts that 'resolution' 'implies a fusion of horizons, as Gadamer rightly stressed. Some of this is inescapable if we are to be able to speak of "understanding" at all' (ibid.). Ultimately, the interesting point that Wellmer seems to be making is that in real, concrete situations, the 'standard case of understanding' is not 'a correct mean between merely "internal" understanding and "external" understanding' (ibid., 146). Indeed, although this is at times overshadowed by Wellmer's focus on the norm-transcending potential of 'critical' or 'external' understanding, real interpretive situations involve a complicated mixture of the two. Furthermore, when aesthetic norms are critiqued in real life situations, one would find it difficult to say whether the critique comes from one's 'external' understanding or from one's 'openness to the other'. In the hermeneutic realm, the possibility for critique need not just lie with the 'externally' interpreting subject. Indeed, as Wellmer observes, 'for even the "immanent" interpreter cannot help but apply his preconceptions in the act of interpretation; and even the "external" interpreter must take account of the "alien" text in terms of its own logic' (ibid., 148-149). To acknowledge that norm transcendence takes place as a result of a complex mixture of both 'internal' and 'external' understanding, as will be demonstrated in greater detail in chapter five, is important when we realise that, in concrete situations, structures of power pull the 'direction' of the interpretive conversation in different directions, distorting the 'correct mean' and, therefore, bringing about new forms of understanding, new meanings and new ways of making sense on their own terms.

Applying the notion of the interplay of 'external' and 'internal' understanding to musical performance, Gritten, like Wellmer, suggests that our engagement with music *should* perhaps 'drift' somewhere between the two in the context of the event:

At all cognitive levels and over all durational spans, the movement of acquiring, assimilating, embodying and presenting musical judgements is essentially spiral: a turnaround movement from the incoming givens of, for instance, temporal constraints as determined by the score and by physiology or one's historical knowledge and aural skills to the outgoing preparation of movement sequences for sound production or emotional-physiological changes in the body or sentences with propositional content. Drift is encouraged by this spiralling physiological interference between incoming and outgoing processes, between and within each and every musical gesture (Gritten 2006a, 111).

Gritten arrives at this conclusion by looking at the ‘two extremes in the way we usually relate to musical gestures’, noting how they attribute meaning to either the subjective or the objective side of the interpretive situation (ibid., 104). Firstly, Gritten observes how ‘quality assurance regulations describing how we relate to music allow us to feel that we possess it, that musical gestures are ours for the keeping and ours to manipulate and interpret as we see fit’ (ibid.). ‘Indeed’, he goes on, ‘the notion of the performer (and, further down the chain of command, the listener) “as” composer is a cipher for the notion of musical possession’ (ibid., 105). Such a way of viewing the interpretive situation involves accepting the performer as someone who has ‘something to deliver and communicate’ that will not be hindered by anyone or anything, let alone anything arising from the ‘musical’ side of the interpretive binary. On the ‘flipside of the same, swiftly spinning coin’, ‘we might argue that we need an alienating understanding of music’ that rests on the notion of ‘insider knowledge’ and the idea that there is something there in the music which we should be listening and responding to, which means ‘training the mind to empty itself’ (ibid., 105-106). Ultimately, as Gritten observes, in musical performance the subject is not just ‘performed’ but also does and experiences the ‘performing’ (albeit with a level of ‘resistance’ by the music) such that ‘it is not always obvious which side of the dualism – if either – should be given priority’ (ibid., 106). Gritten, therefore, seeks to call into the question the centrality of a dualistic approach to thinking about musical performance in contemporary musicological thought, redrawing the ‘relations between the nominal poles of the dualism’ through the lens of the event (ibid., 107).

What Gadamer, Wellmer and Gritten all fundamentally agree on is that explaining our ways of doing in terms of a reconciliation of individual impulses and motivations with ‘what the text says’ can, especially in the context of musical praxis, fail to account for how aesthetic practice functions in concrete situations. The practice of music making is full of paradigm-changing interpretations that open up spaces of possibility for the establishment of new norms – in virtually any canon of music one need not look too hard to find a Beethoven or a Debussy, a Gillespie or a Davis, a Bill Haley or a Chuck Berry, a Kidd Creole or a Grandmaster Flash, a Sex Pistols or a Kraftwerk, whose innovative compositional techniques and critical interpretations of the handed-down musical materials of history come to be seen as valuable and legitimate. Whether we think our interpretations of certain works are ‘true’ or ‘false’

in the context of some ‘given’ meaning is, therefore, irrelevant. When we articulate the meaningfulness of musical experiences in the context of those fore-structures – those practice-based norms – that, to a degree, prepare us for what artworks have to say, interpretations, when we are open, can either affirm those norms or go against them. The point being that the kind of being-in-the-world that occurs in musical interpretation relies precisely on the way that acquired norms which are necessary to make sense of certain interpretations are sometimes transcended in concrete situations, leading to the creation of new sense.

Returning to Adorno, it is the idea that norms can be transcended through criticism that, as we have seen, forms the basis for thinking about the principles and consequences of negative dialectics, its manifestation in musical terms in the works of Wagner as well its links to a non-reified engagement with musical practice.¹⁷ For Adorno, just as a composer should refuse to accept uncritically the handed-down musical conventions of history, it is imperative in the face of modern history that we refuse to completely accept what Bowie refers to as ‘the harmonisation of individual and the social’ (Bowie 2013, 128) that entails ‘obeying the rule’. Why? Because in the wake of Auschwitz such a reconciled vision of society is, according to Adorno, no longer possible except in the form of a false reconciliation whereby the individual is made to conform to the will of general. It follows, as Bowie observes, that ‘by adhering to the norms of a community, we may well help produce something which leads to gross inhumanity’ (ibid., 99). But, as Bowie goes on to argue, ‘it is not that this situation should lead us to abandon the role of normativity in any account of freedom, but it does remind us that an account of freedom without that which goes beyond the normative gives us too few resources to comprehend how modern norms have been used for appalling ends. It is hardly as if the Nazis lacked norms that were collectively assented to, and the likes of Eichmann invoked, however disreputably, a Kantian notion of duty in their self-justifications’ (ibid., 118-119).

To reiterate, if we see our musical interpretations as not about being true to some ‘given’ meaning, then radical interpretations can be thought of as an important aspect of aesthetic practice in general. The point to be aware of, however, is that the critical appraisal of existing norms does not have a philosophical foundation from

¹⁷ Bowie (2013) illustrates how norm-transcendence is at the heart of Adorno’s contributions to discussions in meta-philosophy, epistemology, ethics and aesthetics as well as the latter’s continued relevance to contemporary philosophical debates.

which to appraise them. Due to the regress that arises when we seek explicit rules for the application of rules for norm-appraisal, what can only legitimate my interpretations and my critical appraisal of certain musical norms is the validation that comes from debating aesthetic claims within a trans-cultural and trans-historical sphere of intersubjectivity.

It is clear that although judgments emerge from out of specific socio-cultural practices, these judgments are not arbitrary. As Bowie observes, if someone was to accept the arbitrariness of judgments, ‘they would have no grounds ever to defend their evaluations at all, when much of social communication is precisely based around such evaluation’ (Bowie 2013, 35). Indeed, even if truth were to turn out to be what Huw Price calls a ‘convenient fiction’, it would be unlikely that this realisation would practically threaten normal linguistic practices because it seems impossible to stop caring about truth or to no longer feel bound by relevant norms (Price 2003, 187). Because judgments are not arbitrary then, as Price observes, ‘at each stage, the actual community needs to recognise that it may be wrong by the standards of some broader community’ (ibid., 175). As soon as judgments become claims to legitimacy, that is, as soon as interpretations, which may be considered ‘false’ by the wider community, become part of the sphere of Price’s ‘dialogue of mankind’, then we should no longer think in terms of the ‘Platonic distinction’ between absolutism and relativism. Indeed, we have become part of the political sphere of interacting worldviews where truth is no longer meaningless but something that people are willing to live and die for – that, as Price states, ‘speakers take there to be a norm of truth, not that there actually be such a norm, in some speaker-independent sense’ and that it is the admission that we are constrained by such a norm that is what matters. Bowie talks about, for example, belonging to a ‘culture of judgment’ that is ‘socially valuable’ (Bowie 2013, 171). The point being that ‘if culture were supposedly about what gives subjective pleasure to individual human organisms, and what gave pleasure to each organism was radically particular to that organism, there would be no such thing as culture anyway. Culture is constituted by shared, albeit often contested and conflicting, norms, which are evident in forms of expression and institutionally embodied evaluations’ (ibid., 140). In this sense, truth, as Price observes, is ‘the expression of a norm’ (Price 2003, 171), but not something definitive and objective that might necessitate scientific investigation in order to be uncovered. As Price argues, we need ‘to resist the pressure to *identify* truth with anything – in other words, simply to reject the

assumption that an adequate philosophical account of truth needs to answer the question “What is Truth?” (ibid., 175). Rather, this norm, as Bowie observes, is a ‘contested’ norm that can be explained through its role in practice, that conflicts with other norms but which can also operate as the same ‘truth’ across different social and historical groups as a result of similar processes of normalisation.

The normativity of musical meaning, which has been briefly highlighted here, will be taken up in greater detail in chapter five of the study. There I will discuss the ethical basis of any musicology that attempts to make claims to legitimacy within a shared space of competing worldviews. For the final section of this chapter, I want to look at how the notion of intersubjective legitimacy helps us make sense of Adorno’s two seemingly contrasting interpretations of Wagner’s works whilst demonstrating how the norm-transcending power of musical practice can call into question the dominant interpretive norms of Wagner scholarship.

Wagner as Presentation

At the beginning of this chapter I introduced the question of how to interpret Wagner’s intentions in the context of his music dramas. The crux of the problem is that although some of Wagner’s intentions for a *Gesamtkunstwerk* were painstakingly documented in theoretical writings about music, poetry and drama, and, if we care to believe, in essays such as ‘Judaism in Music’, it is a mistake to think that, in the hermeneutic realm, these theoretical writings actually result in a ‘true’ description of Wagner’s works. Indeed, even if evidence could be found which proved that Wagner’s intentions had, indeed, become manifest in his music dramas, who is to say, in the context of hermeneutic conceptions of the meaningfulness of aesthetic experiences, that such findings would actually matter to everyday engagements with these works? As Bowie observes, the musical work’s ‘performative status cannot be understood in terms of [its] descriptive claims’ (Bowie 2007, 218). Bowie’s suggestion follows Dahlhaus’ point that the *Gesamtkunstwerk* as a representation of the culmination and sublation of different artistic practices whereby each art is equipped with ‘equal rights and privileges’ is both a ‘questionable thesis’ and, indeed, a ‘historical myth’ (Dahlhaus 1989, 195). Badiou similarly raises the question of whether artistic endeavours can be reduced to the artist’s intentions before claiming that, with regards to Wagner’s ‘totalising ambition’, it is necessary to demonstrate in

what sense the works themselves *are* a totalisation because, for Badiou, ‘total artwork’ is just a slogan (Badiou 2010, 15). Ultimately, as Dahlhaus observes, the importance of the *Gesamtkunstwerk* as a concept resides in the fact that it is deployed in the context of what he calls an ‘aesthetic revolution’ (Dahlhaus 1989, 196). Not only, he argues, does Wagner, through theoretical contemplation of the nature, function and style of past, present and future art, impose the ‘revolution of aesthetic values’ on his age but, as a result of such theory, assists ‘in raising for opera the same lofty claims that Beethoven had achieved for the symphony’ (ibid., 195). Indeed, as Dahlhaus implies, it is with Wagner himself that the tension between theory and practice with regards to the music drama emerges (a tension he attempted to conceal in *Mitteilung an meine Freunde* (1852) by suggesting that his theoretical reflections on art were guided by his creative experiments as a composer), thus setting up ‘The Wagner Problem’ for future generations of interpreters to deal with.

The tension between theory and practice, between disengaged contemplation of the *Gesamtkunstwerk* and actual, concrete experiences of the *Gesamtkunstwerk*, what one could reasonably perceive to be, at times, a contradiction between theoretical text and musical work, is compounded when we take into account Wagner’s reassessment of the ideas that underpinned his thinking about the music drama. Despite his claims that *Oper und Drama* was a correlate to his musico-dramatic conception of *Der Ring*, Wagner’s appropriation of Feuerbach’s Schiller-influenced perception of integration as affirmation for his multimedia conception of art gave way to the influence of Schopenhauer’s metaphysical conception of music, thus paralleling his supposedly increasing dissatisfaction with ‘revolutionary’ politics.¹⁸ Not only can the tension between theory and praxis in Wagner’s output not be resolved due to the incompatibility of hermeneutic conceptions of meaning and meanings as artistic intentions, but even if the problem could be resolved, the literary side of Wagner’s output would still be founded on a dynamic and, therefore, inconsistent theory of the *Gesamtkunstwerk*. For example, although *Oper und Drama*, as a ‘manual’ for what Wagner aimed to achieve in his music dramas, was influenced

¹⁸ Mark Berry (2006) calls into question this seemingly reductive narrative concerning Wagner’s musical ‘enlightenment’. Indeed, he discerns in Wagner’s output ‘attempts to reconcile political commitment and “pessimism”’ (Berry 2006, 11). As Berry explains, ‘Schopenhauer never entirely replaces Young Hegelianism or socialism in Wagner’s thought; nor does renunciation entirely supplant revolution’ (ibid., 241). A similar idea is put forward, albeit in a more polemical form, by Karnes (2013).

by the philosophy of Feuerbach, much of the music for *Der Ring* was written after Wagner's engagement with Schopenhauer in 1854. Indeed, *Das Rheingold* problematizes the straightforward either-or approach to making sense of *Der Ring* by containing music that – like the libretti – pertains to Feuerbach's Schiller-based thought.¹⁹ The situation is further complicated by the fact that the texts for the various parts of the cycle were written in the reverse order in which they appear whilst the music for the tetralogy was composed in accordance with the musico-dramatic events that we see on stage. It follows that Wagner's theoretical influences are not consistent across all the art forms that are manifest within the music drama. Not only does this lead us to question interpretations of Wagner's works that are derived from his theoretical texts but, characterising the dramas and romantic operas too exclusively in terms of their librettos or explanatory texts can fail to take account of the ways in which the music can alter how we understand the visual and literary aspects of the works. As Dahlhaus claims, 'the practice of rigidly assigning identifying labels to Wagner's leitmotifs is as questionable as it is unavoidable: questionable in that they change meaning, and sometimes even musical form, in their various appearances within a work, almost undergoing stories of their own; and unavoidable because it is an illusion to imagine that we can understand the emotions without recourse to language' (Dahlhaus 1989, 202).²⁰ Indeed, as demonstrated by the use of the *Vorspiel* to *Lohengrin* in Charlie Chaplin's *The Great Dictator* (1940), whose musico-dramatic critique of Adolf Hitler's final speech in Leni Riefenstahl's *Triumph of the Will* (1935) should not be overlooked, Wagner's music can even be heard as the means of liberation from that same ideology its composer had perhaps 'intended' to evoke through such music.²¹

¹⁹ This idea is contested by Bryan Magee (1997), who claims that there exists a 'Schopenhauerism' to Wagner's output even prior to the latter's contact with the works of Schopenhauer.

²⁰ It should be noted that although Dahlhaus suggests that the practice of assigning meanings to leitmotifs is inevitable, there is a tendency for him to undermine his own generally plausible hermeneutic contentions when he suggests, for example, that, contra *Der Ring*, 'the motives in *Tristan*, rather than "having their own story", tend to circle around an obscure midpoint whose meaning, made perceivable by ever-changing combinations of longing for love and death, seems to be beyond the power of words to convey' (Dahlhaus 1989, 203). The hidden ground of formalism that forms the basis for Dahlhaus' claims regarding the particularly problematic musical moments in Wagner's works is all too clear – 'instead of undergoing an evolution in which their [the motives'] identity remains intact, no matter how modified they become in the process, they seem caught up in a maelstrom of meanings, which ultimately makes any verbally expressible distinctions between them futile and pointless' (ibid.).

²¹ Due to the aesthetic experiences of engaging with Wagner's music dramas, which includes the music and not just the text, Bowie claims that Wagner 'succeeds in addressing fundamental questions

The ability of music to evade the reification that would accord Wagner's works a simple, straightforward interpretation is also acknowledged by Mark Berry, who illustrates that despite the relatively few changes to the poetic texts of each music drama once they had been written – the exception being the last scene in *Götterdämmerung* – the nature of the character of Wotan, for example, underwent significant changes (Berry 2006, 10). It is not implausible when considering how music plays an important world-disclosive role to suggest that what Berry calls Wagner's 'self-criticism' and the resulting complexity of the compositional process of *Der Ring* was due to the numerous ways in which the music can be experienced or appropriated for certain ends. Wagner was renowned for re-interpreting his operas, perhaps even out of necessity bearing in mind the time lapse between the various creative acts that led to *Der Ring*, for example. Indeed, Berry articulates the idea that Wagner's acts of re-interpreting his own works prior to, during and after the compositional process problematize, call into question and potentially transcend the either-or patterns of interpretation that have occupied Wagner scholarship for so long. Lawrence Kramer suggests something similar, namely that hermeneutic approaches to the question of musical meaning 'enormously complicate both the vexed question of anti-Semitism in Wagner's music and the wider, if less ethically pressing, question of the role that "original" contexts play in the determination of musical meaning' (L. Kramer 2007, 43). As he goes on to suggest, 'no particular meaning emerges as authoritative from this process; what does so emerge is a proliferating series of dialectical or dialogical relationships between the sonorous and semantic dimensions of the music' (ibid.). In other words, there is not 'some prepotent form or embodied intention in the work that causes or encourages later reception and provides the standard by which to evaluate it' (ibid., 70).²² Indeed, by looking at Liszt's and Wagner's respective interpretations of *Lohengrin*, Kramer demonstrates how the

in modernity, such as the relationship between desire and power, the fragility of the self in the face of collective historical forces, and the dangers and possibilities of secularized freedom. Much of his impact lies in the astonishing transitions of mood and atmosphere in his works' (Bowie 2007, 241). Through discussions of Dahlhaus' interpretations of Wagner's music dramas, Bowie shows how music is able to evoke 'possibilities of emotional fulfillment which the preceding dramatic action had progressively undermined' (ibid., 244). The important point being that what the music is able to evoke in certain contexts might be precisely that which Wagner's theoretical texts or librettos seek to deny. This leads Bowie to the conclusion that 'Wagner's "art of ambiguity" makes it clear that there is no single answer to the question of the relationship between musical and verbal meaning' (ibid., 246).

²² For discussions of Wagner's influence on other artistic creative projects, see Huebner 1999, Karnes 2013 and Kramer 2007, 107-127.

interpretive norms and, indeed, abnorms of Wagner scholarship can even precede the existence of the work 'itself'.

These claims point towards the tension within Wagner scholarship between meanings that are derived from an artist's intentions and the meaningfulness of aesthetic experiences. In short, the tension between meaning as an artist's intentions and the meaningfulness of aesthetic experience is nothing more than what Berry calls the 'intertwining' of 'theory and practice' (Berry 2006, 2). In Gadamer's sense, 'Wagner as presentation', whereby the theoretical writings are explored with a view to understanding the musical works, is both in tension and entwined with the hermeneutic concept of the 'artwork as presentation'. Lacoue-Labarthe, for example, focuses exclusively on Wagner's theoretical reflections, and, as a result, bases his study on the supposed meaning-determining nature of artistic intentions. The overall result is that Lacoue-Labarthe posits an argument for why he believes that the music dramas act as vehicles for the 'aestheticisation of politics'. What is put forward is no less than a vision of Wagner as a proto-fascist, no doubt as a result of Wagner's conceptual contradictions and his explicit anti-Semitism. However, from a hermeneutic point of view, the problem is that by not articulating the meaningfulness of his actual experiences with these works, Lacoue-Labarthe comes to conclusions based on Wagner's own slogans and 'intentions' as posited in letters, diary entries and theoretical texts, thus exacerbating the fundamental tension between the theoretical text and musical praxis. None of this suggests, however, that Wagner's slogans and theoretical texts play no part in helping us understand the historical reception of his works. I am not concerned with adopting Dieter Borchmeyer's idea of sealing off the music dramas from the blatant anti-Semitism of Wagner's so-called unrelated essays or with such overly sensationalist claims, despite evidence to the contrary, that 'in all of Wagner's innumerable commentaries on his works, there is no single statement which would entitle us to interpret any of the characters in the music dramas or any of the details of their plots in anti-Semitic terms, or even to interpret them as allusions to the Jews' (Borchmeyer 1992, 183). In that sense, I am not demanding the separation of theory and practice when it comes to Wagner scholarship, thus affirming the patterns of binary logic, of either-or thinking, that seem to be the norms for making sense of his works. Wagner's own interpretations of his works, as we know, have become an important part of the interpretive history of these music dramas, and their 'background' influence on how we experience

performances of these works cannot be ignored if we are to adopt a hermeneutic approach to musical meaning. As Kramer explains, ‘once a sufficient number of interpretations have made a certain connection, say to anti-Semitism, once those interpretations have been made and heeded, repeated and disputed, once the process of understanding has multiplied links between the operas, their composer’s ideology, and the anti-Semitic discourse of his era, the operas become inextricable from the question of anti-Semitism’ (L. Kramer 2007, 72). The point being that ‘anti-Semitism must eventually be remembered even if it is not perceived’ in the music dramas themselves (ibid., 73). As Berry suggests, the same could be said about *Der Ring*’s relationship to the contradictions of bourgeois capitalism bearing in mind the composer’s reflections on revolutionary politics.²³

Badiou seeks to rescue Wagner from the tentacles of Lacoue-Labarthe’s hermeneutically-flawed methodology and, in doing so, recognises the problems that arise when the artwork is seen as existing in a causal relationship with artistic intentions and nothing else. Badiou is so vehemently anti-Lacoue-Labarthe that he interprets Wagner’s art as being aligned to the principles of negative dialectics, and, as a result, comes to similar conclusions as those reached by Adorno in 1963. However, the difference between Badiou and Adorno is that, whereas Adorno’s comments in 1963 shed light on his ‘historically different reaction’ to Wagner’s artistic works, Badiou commences his rescue of Wagner by interpreting Adorno’s ideas in *Negative Dialectics*, and, subsequently, applying this interpretation to the works themselves. As a result, it is unclear whether Badiou agrees with the need for hermeneutic anticipations of the meaningfulness of aesthetic experiences or whether, as Bowie observes, he believes that ‘all interpretations – particularly of music – are indeed just projections of the interpreter onto the Romantic mirror’ (Bowie 2007, 242). What is clear, however, is that Adorno, as illustrated by his remarks in 1963, *was* concerned with articulating his experiences of Wagner’s music dramas as opposed to constructing meaning from the latter’s theoretical writings, which is why the music dramas reveal themselves to Adorno differently at different times. The issue here is that although Adorno, in his two contrasting interpretations of Wagner’s works, articulates central tropes of what Bowie calls ‘The Wagner Problem’, including those of anti-Semitism, the culture industry, aesthetic modernism and their

²³ See Berry 2006, 79-110.

political aspects, he does not seek to resolve the problem by uncovering artistic intentions that definitively account for their meaning. In other words, Adorno does not look for those artistic intentions that would bring about a correspondence between the interpretation and the work. As we explored in chapter one, a search for such correspondence would presuppose an interpretive model of a subject encountering but ultimately separated from the object that is the artwork, whereby the correct interpretation depends on the interpreter producing a correspondence between the properties of the work and what the artist supposedly intended. As we have seen, such a model is dissolved when we realise that musical works are inherently meaningful as opposed to things onto which we project an interpretation. Once we acknowledge that there can be no way of understanding musical praxis if we, as interpreters, were not already partly disposed to respond to Wagner's works in certain ways as a result of our tacit understanding of the world through shared practices, then the paradigm of the subject-object conception of musical meaning starts to look less stable. Instead, what should interest us – what answers the vital question of why art matters to us – are our experiences with this meaningful phenomenon and the way such experiences speak, simultaneously, about the 'object' we might refer to as music and the world in which such experiences take place.

A fundamental 'unconcealed' truth about both Wagner's theoretical writings and his artistic works is that historically different reactions to them continue to bring about conflicting interpretations, thus driving the debates into the twenty-first century. The significance of his works in terms of what they say to us today is exemplified by the vast array of binary categories that continue to surround them; categories such as archaic/modern, end of opera/unfulfilled potential of opera, myth/anti-myth, form/formless, diatonic/chromatic, temporal/timeless, immanent/immediate, Semite/anti-Semite, culture industry/aesthetic modernism. For example, the main thesis of Lacoue-Labarthe's study is concerned with the idea that Wagner brought about a 'aestheticisation of politics' through what Lacoue-Labarthe refers to as art's ambition to be political (Lacoue-Labarthe 1994, xxii). However, there are also a number of subsidiary observations which aim to show that, in Wagner, 'the first mass art had just been born, through music (through technology)' (ibid., xx). From the outset, Lacoue-Labarthe resurrects Adorno's original interpretation of Wagner as the grandfather of the culture industry. It follows that Lacoue-Labarthe, without directly referencing Adorno's culture industry theory,

reprises several familiar themes encountered within the *Versuch*. For example, Lacoue-Labarthe repeats the idea that integration is a kind of artistic equivalent to the repressive effect of the unification of society which takes place under the power of the culture industry (ibid., 7). However, this time, the role of the culture industry is given over to music, described as being ‘the signifying art par excellence’ and as having ‘the greatest power’ (ibid.). It follows that, according to Lacoue-Labarthe, music’s power brings about the ‘*musical* sublation of all the arts’ in Wagner (ibid.). ‘The dialectical confrontation of the individual arts in the “total work of art”’, he goes on to claim, ‘is consequently a means of containing excess’ (ibid., 12). This sublation of the arts emphasises the importance of conformity within Lacoue-Labarthe’s assessment of Wagner, thus, once more, highlighting the similarities between Adorno’s and Lacoue-Labarthe’s respective appraisals. Indeed, Lacoue-Labarthe, as Adorno did with the *Versuch*, attributes the failure of the music drama to music. Lacoue-Labarthe asserts that because there is too much music in Wagner’s works, to the point of saturation, this leads to their ‘false character’ through their ‘false totalisation’ (ibid., 118). In other words, just as Adorno provided a polemic against the culture industry, Lacoue-Labarthe provides a critique against music as the artistic equivalent of mass production for what he sees as music’s ability to destroy the particularity and individuality of the other forms of art in the name of a false identity.

In seeking to save Wagner from Lacoue-Labarthe, Badiou proceeds from a summary and interpretation of Adorno’s *Negative Dialectics* together with a discussion of how the principles of Adorno’s meta-philosophy could be applied to music. Badiou then takes Lacoue-Labarthe’s accusations against Wagner, along with the most repeated criticisms by other major figures including Nietzsche, Heidegger and Adorno, and seeks to answer these criticisms by subsuming Wagner’s artworks under the principle ideas of negative dialectics. It follows, bearing in mind Adorno’s comments regarding Wagner’s music as dispensing with external or abstract forms, that Badiou claims that ‘Wagner’s connecting of leitmotif and totality, of leitmotif and “endless melody”...is nevertheless a step in the direction of totality-free greatness’ (ibid., 133). Indeed, on a handful of occasions, Badiou suggests that Wagner anticipates *musique informelle*. The conclusion reached by Badiou is similar to the one put forward by Adorno in 1963; mainly that ‘in Wagner’s case there was something like the invention of a new style that was abandoned’ (Badiou 2010, 132). It is obvious that the claims made by Badiou and Adorno with regards to Wagner’s

works are analogous if we recall the affinities between *Negative Dialectics*, ‘*Vers une musique informelle*’ and the 1963 Berlin Speech.

The point of briefly laying out the debate between Lacoue-Labarthe and Badiou is to illustrate that when it comes to the reception of Wagner’s works, the same themes continue to emerge. Ultimately, Adorno’s two contrasting interpretations from 1938 and 1963 are repeated today by opposing scholars. The fact that scholars pick up on the tropes of culture industry and modernism having encountered Wagner’s art suggests that these themes are more than just chance encounters in our current stage of history. These themes continue to resonate with interpreters as what Gadamer referred to as *Sache selbst*, which we can broadly translate as ‘thing itself’. This is a difficult concept to understand especially as Gadamer insisted that art is presentation [*Darstellung*], whereas the idea of the ‘thing itself’ hints at a conception of meaning as some ‘given’ that resists the vagaries of interpretation. However, in contrast to the pictures that ‘thing itself’ might conjure up in the context of subject/object epistemology, for Gadamer, *Sache selbst* suggests a moment of recognition, as opposed to cognition, of repetition and return. For, Gadamer, ‘when something is recognised it has liberated itself from the uniqueness and contingency of the circumstances in which it was encountered’ (Gadamer 1986a, 120). Therefore, as that something is evermore recognised, it becomes increasingly ‘detached from anything like a chance encounter’ (ibid.). Nevertheless, the ‘thing itself’ is, for Gadamer, never just repeated and seen exactly as it was before. Such an idea would contradict his whole hermeneutical project. The principle of something rising above the contingency and uniqueness of aesthetic experience to become more permanent and, indeed, more developed and transformed through further encounters is a principle that affirms the return or recognition of familiar themes and theoretical tropes in Wagner scholarship. The supposed binary categories of Wagner reception are, at this moment in time, more than chance encounters; they are the *Sache selbst*; the norms of Wagner scholarship, norms which, *après* Wittgenstein, we can either obey or go against.

Indeed, it is with the idea of challenging dominant norms in mind that recent scholars have begun to call into question the, what Lawrence Kramer calls, ‘pattern of debunking and defence, either/or and both/and’ that surrounds Wagner scholarship (L. Kramer 2007, 72). When Dahlhaus is at his best he addresses *Tristan und Isolde* as an ‘ambiguous’ work and indicates how *Die Meistersinger* might call into question

the notion of what it is to be musically ‘modern’ by casting doubt on the divide between diatonicism and chromaticism (unfortunately, it is likely that Dahlhaus’ reference to ‘modern chromaticism’ as a ‘tacit prerequisite’ for the musical style of *Meistersinger* is more a theoretical device to protect the ‘modernist’ status of this ‘abnormal’ work rather than the means to take up a critical position to musical modernism). Berry, however, explicitly champions a critical approach to the binary logic that surrounds Wagner scholarship. For example, he explains that ‘classical interpretations have tended to opt either for an “optimistic” view of the *Ring*, centred upon the influence of Feuerbach’s philosophy and Wagner’s concomitant revolutionary politics, or for the aforementioned “pessimistic” option, which removes the disillusioned Wagner-in-Swiss-exile from the political sphere and stresses the undoubtedly important role of Schopenhauer’ (Berry 2006, 10). For Berry, ‘such an “either-or” approach seriously misrepresents not only Wagner’s compositional method but also his intellectual method. It also sidelines inconvenient aspects of the dramas that fail to “fit” whichever interpretation is selected’ (ibid.). In Berry’s view, ‘the *Ring* affords an extraordinary opportunity to grasp the richness and complexity of nineteenth-century thought and its underlying historical forces’ (ibid., 11); ‘characteristic is the mix of politics and metaphysics, of Young Hegelianism and (proto-)Schopenhauer’ (ibid., 257). Kramer also suggests that to attempt to read Wagner’s output in terms of the oppositions between normal and abnormal, high and low, supremacy and debasement is to ignore the fact that these works are based on a ‘relentless push-pull force’ (ibid., 9) – a ‘perennially transitional space’ (ibid., 111) – that calls into question the rigidity of the divides between some of previously mentioned dominant terms of Wagner scholarship. Thus, he argues, ‘so powerful is this incarnation of the inner logic of norm and abnormal alike that Wagner becomes both central and radically extrinsic to the institution of Opera, both its primary model and its primary antagonist, its authentic self, beyond emulation, and its monstrous Other’ (L. Kramer 2007, 9).

In this chapter we have attempted to investigate what the consequences of a non-reified engagement with music might be for conceptions of musical meaning. By exploring Adorno’s claim in 1963 that he had a ‘historically different reaction’ to Wagner’s works since composing his *Versuch über Wagner*, and by coming to understand the fore-structures that provided the horizon of Adorno’s enquiries into the meaningfulness of Wagner’s music dramas at different points, we have seen that

interpretations of aesthetic experiences, as a ‘fusion of horizons’, can affirm or call into question what Bowie calls the ‘shared, but often unthematized, background knowledge’ that makes up a style of being-in-the-world. With reference to Wittgenstein’s claim that we either ‘obey the rule’ or ‘go against it’, we note that such a claim, in the absence of metaphysical anchors with which rule-following can terminate, can only make sense in terms of the normative basis of truth, norms developed through shared practices, which we can obey or look to transcend, but which are constantly debated and called into question within a sphere of intersubjective legitimacy. Ultimately, aesthetic practice, when it really matters, seeks to transcend the norms, and this is what we see, to a degree, in Adorno’s interpretations of Wagner’s works. Indeed, the fact that Adorno’s contrasting interpretations of Wagner’s music dramas have since become recurring themes in the context of the debates on Wagner illustrates how norm-transcending practices can themselves become normalised through the historical changes to ways of being that they helped initiate.

BEYOND THE PHILOSOPHY OF MUSIC

The very spirit of philosophical inquiry itself robs the imagination of one promise after another, and the frontiers of art are narrowed, in proportion as the limits of science are enlarged.
(Schiller 2000, 10)

As we have seen in chapters one and two, and as will be made clearer in the following two chapters, the subject-object model as the basis for thinking about the nature of our relationship to works of art is both a philosophical and musicological problem. If we force the separation of interpreters and the object ‘music’, we are in danger of bringing about the reification of musical praxis, that is, we allow for theory construction and the characterisation of music in terms of detached, speculative contemplation. For example, there is a tendency, as we observed with regards to practices of Dodd, Kivy, Levinson, Scruton and Zangwill in chapter one, that by turning music into what Ridley calls an ‘object of enquiry’, its entwinement with concrete human experiences is ignored in favour of disengaged contemplation that reduces musical works to what Bowie refers to as ‘objects with properties’ or what Braver, *après* Heidegger, calls ‘present-at-hand objects’ – unchanging entities that are, by definition, removed from extraneous influence. As a result of a form of musical engagement that prizes theoretical contemplation of music’s characteristics above articulations of the meaningfulness of actual musical praxis, music is isolated from the rich and meaningful world from which it emerges. Detached contemplation of the object ‘music’ ignores the fact that our tacit understanding of what constitutes a musical work results from its and our entwinement in socio-cultural practices,

without which encountering these objects as *musically* significant would be highly problematic if not impossible.

What is ignored when music is reified by looking at it through a theoretical lens are precisely what Adorno called those ‘ephemeral, transitory and historical’ aspects of specific manifestations of musical praxis that allow us to explain why music matters to us in everyday practices. Furthermore, as we saw in chapter one, if music is conceived as an object of metaphysical enquiry, we are in danger of producing a theory of ontology, meaning or value that excludes much of what has been produced within the twentieth- and twenty-first-century avant-garde scenes where the relationships between ‘work’, ‘composer’, ‘performer’ and ‘audience’ have changed in comparison to the ‘standard’ nineteenth-century paradigm. Related to this problem is the issue that theories of musical ontology, meaning and value limit the power music has to transcend various stylistic, interpretive and performative norms because they appeal to the idea that musical works contain properties that interpretations must, in turn, contain or articulate in order to deliver ‘proper’ performances or analyses. Such a problem, as we saw in the previous chapter, is also apparent if we reduce musical meaning to what an artist intended to be meant. Some of the most inspiring and influential interpretations, including Adorno’s interpretations of Wagner’s music dramas, which we explored in chapter two, have been those ‘improper’ readings that have eventually become normalised through historical changes in musical performance and reception that they introduced.

Once we take the norm-transcending power of music seriously, there is no reason to think of it as an object with properties or as something that must be isolated from the world in order to be investigated in what Ridley calls its ‘pure state’. As we have observed in both chapters one and two, what leads us to believe that something is music can come from both object and subject, such that new creative and interpretive contexts can give rise to new things that we previously may not have been able to classify as music and new meanings which may not have come to mind when we were interpreting from out of a different series of contexts. Because the stance we take towards the subject-object model determines how we approach the issue of meaning, if, like Adorno and the early German Romantics, we do not treat the subject/object divide as a dualism but as a relationship whereby individuals cannot be truly separated from everyday socio-cultural practices, we allow for the possibility of changes to a work’s meaning as well as variations of meaning. Having

explored the consequences of analytical approaches to music ontology in chapter one, and having articulated a hermeneutic approach to music's 'meaningfulness' in chapter two, I will now attempt to illustrate what happens with musical meaning if we force the separation of subjective judgement from objective meaning. Our attention will be turned towards perhaps one of the most important and long-standing issues in all of Anglo-American philosophy – the issue of a theory of meaning, specifically a theory that attempts to account for meaning as some sort of unchanging property that determines the supposed 'identity' of the work. In contrast, the final part of this chapter will attempt a critique of some of the underlying principles of the so-called philosophy of music, which, as we shall see, takes its cue from methods and problems developed within analytic aesthetics in general.

Stephen Davies' Conception of the Artwork

In his book on the philosophy of art, Stephen Davies, a proponent of the analytic philosophy of music in its current guise, argues that an artwork has an identity fixed at creation with a meaning that is inseparable from it.¹ He claims that 'the work takes its identity from, among other things, the meanings words had at the time it was written, the genres and conventions it presupposes, the body of works to which it makes explicit or implicit reference, and so on' (Davies 2007, 14). The important point to mention is that, for Davies, 'the work as authored has a special status as the object of interpretation', and it is on the basis of the work's identity as bound up with the notion of an author's creation that the fixed nature of the work plays a pivotal role for Davies' contemplation of the questions of art and artworks (ibid., 13). Thus, Davies declares, 'I am an intentionalist on the ontology of literary works [and musical works]. In others words, I think the author's intentions play a crucial role in determining what kind of work she has created and in fixing its *identifying content or meaning*' [italics added] (ibid., 15). In other words, 'attention to works as of their authors must lie at the core of the practice of literary interpretation' (and we might also add musical interpretation to that list) (ibid., 14). He goes on to say that when it comes to questioning whether the identity of the work evolves through time or is something with a single, fixed meaning, 'I favour the view that the identity of the

¹ See Stephen Davies 2006, 96-98.

work derives in part from relations holding between its direct content and the art-historical context in which it is produced' (ibid., 14). Thus, his characterisation 'of the work *as of its author* automatically binds the work's identity, if not to that of its author, at least to that of the art-historical and social setting that made it possible for its author to create it' (ibid., 14).

Davies argues that to see the work as 'of the author' is to provide a 'foundational' yardstick by which we can judge whether an interpretation is, as he claims, 'true or false'. That is not to say that Davies does not acknowledge that an artwork cannot be open to multiple interpretations. Indeed, the 'significance [of artworks] can alter markedly, *but this does not change the meanings and other features that are responsible for their identity*' [italics added] (Davies 2006, 128). Davies claims that the act of interpretation does not affect the object interpreted. So, he argues, 'the *properties* uncovered or stressed by the interpretation are not affected in their existence or character by the interpretive process. Either they were there all along or they were absent, and the claims of the interpretation, in so far as these are about the existence and nature of these *properties*, are true or false' [italics added] (ibid., 129). He goes on to say that 'where there is an ambiguity among versions or uncertainty between various possible completion dates, there would be a corresponding lack of clarity about the work's identity' (ibid., 98). Aligning the work's 'content or meaning' with its being 'of the author' allows Davies to explain what arises from the plurality of interpretive and evaluative styles of description and explanation as follows:

Different strategies of reply are appropriate to different examples. In some cases, we can say the work is misidentified and thereby misinterpreted. In others, we can point out that the interpreter is not in fact making claims about the work's content but, instead, is playing with the text; for example by considering what it *might* mean. And Freudian and Marxist interpretations may not be anachronistic if all that is implied is that earlier artists, who could be astute observers of human nature and social relations, recognised the outward signs of the syndromes and power structures that Sigmund Freud and Karl Marx later analysed (ibid., 98).

In order for Davies to claim that art has some fixed meaning or content, art's essential and unchanging character must be internal to the concept 'artwork'. As Robert Stecker observes, essentialist conceptions of art are based upon the idea 'that the sort of properties that make something an artwork and give it value as art are unchanging ones that can be read off the concept of art itself' (Stecker 2005, 9). For Davies,

therefore, a work's meaning, bound up as it is with the author and the art-historical context of its creation, is independent of the varying contexts in which that work is received.

By sheltering the work's meaning from the contexts in which it is performed and received, Davies is concerned, in part, with engaging with music in what Ridley calls its 'pure state'. In doing so, Davies neglects the importance of the interpretive acts that take place after the work's conception, something that is vital to understanding why musical praxis matters to our everyday lives and not just as a historical relic. It follows that for Davies and others like him, Frege's notion of sense [*Sinn*] is vitally important. For Frege, sense is both objective and mind-independent. A sense is *expressed* by a name or sentence rather than *referring* to some name-bearer, object or truth-value. He compared the relationship of sense, reference and idea to the practice of looking at the moon through a telescope, proposing that 'the optical image in the telescope is indeed one-sided and dependant on the standpoint of observation; but it is still objective, as much as it can be used by several observers' (Frege 1892, 40). Frege went to claim that when a 'sentence contains a thought' it is the 'objective content' of 'thinking', 'capable of being common property of several thinkers' (ibid., 41). Samuel C. Wheeler III argues that Frege's theory of sense is a 'presence model'. As Wheeler observes, a 'presence' conception of meaning is entwined with the notion of meaning realism whereby the meaning that is present to us 'forces us to take it in exactly one way, and which means itself' – 'a direct and unmediated presence of sense' (Wheeler 2000, 16). Similarly, Wellmer (1995) suggests that a 'presence model' of meaning is based on what is 'objectively present' [*objektiv 'Vorhandenes'*] – meaning that is 'already there' [*'fertig da'*]. According to Wellmer, acts of interpretation, comprehension or translation that are based on a 'presence' conception of meaning do nothing to the 'being' of meaning that is already present. Thus, he argues, such 'objectivistic' accounts of meaning tend to conceive the 'being' of meaning in the same way as the 'being-in-itself' of the objects of the natural sciences, that is, that an analogy is made between the 'being' of meaning and the objective 'being' or, what he calls, 'givenness' of natural objects 'in themselves'. Ultimately, Wheeler and Wellmer's respective accounts of the 'presence' model of meaning encompass such ideas as meaning determinacy and completed meaning, realist conceptions of necessity, objecthood, essentialism and the idea of intrinsic,

isolable and semantic characteristics behind linguistic signs.² Many of these features of the ‘presence’ model play a vital role in understanding the meaning of ‘meaning’ in relation to the philosophy of music. It is to this relationship that we now turn.

Meaning and the Philosophy of Music

As we observed in the introduction, Kivy proposes that music is made up of ‘precepts and propositions’ which need to be ‘made explicit’ in order to cast light on the practice for which they are unspoken foundations. The problem is that when it comes to understanding music, to be concerned with theories of meaning developed within Anglo-American philosophy of language is unhelpful, especially when the results are, as Kivy claims, that although the precepts and propositions that ground music are meaningful, music is not. He argues that music, due to its classification as ‘pure sound structure’ (Kivy 2002, 67), is meaningless because linguistic meaning is the only type of meaning that can be meaningful. Kivy, as a result of his formalist conception of music, claims that music cannot possess semantic or representational content – it is language-like but not a language. Similarly, although Davies claims that music does refer beyond itself, he states that music is not a semantic system nor does it constitute a non-linguistic symbol system (Davies 2003, 129). How is it that the unspoken foundations of music can be meaningful yet, at the same time, music can be meaningless? How is it that Kivy can say that music is ‘concept-laden’ yet still claim that it is ‘content-less’ (Kivy 2007, 225)? Ridley has observed that when philosophers of music discard the idea of music as being representational, it is usually because they either see music in terms of what is purely internal to the concept or they fixate on their idea that music is removed from language and thus cannot refer.³ Such positions, despite stressing music’s separation from language, actually rely on the philosophy of language for a theory of meaning on which to base discussions of the meaningfulness (or, indeed, meaninglessness) of music.

Davies later went back on his original claim regarding musical representation when, with Constantijn Koopman, he argued that ‘many compositions do not refer beyond themselves. Music’s capacities for representation are limited’ (Koopman and Davies 2001, 261). However, both Koopman and Davies also deny that the notion of

² See Wheeler 2000, 15-35.

³ See Ridley 2004, 47-51.

meaning should be restricted to the linguistic model. ‘Most people agree’, they argue, ‘that (good) music makes sense and can be said to have meaning’ (ibid.). By discussing ideas such as ‘formal meaning’, ‘experiential formal meaning’, ‘meaning-for-the-subject’ and ‘meaning-for-us’, Koopman and Davies illustrate how music can be said to be meaningful without relying on an explicit theory of meaning developed in the philosophy of language. Kivy, responding to Koopman and Davies, wants nothing to do with meaning-for-the-subject, and concentrates his discussions on the notion of formal meaning, a meaning that ‘comes from the specific properties of musical form’ (ibid.). Kivy, we find, becomes tangled up in the meaning of meaning to such a degree that formal meaning is decried as meaningless (Kivy 2007, 143). He thinks that the word ‘meaning’ can be replaced just as easily by the words ‘function’ or ‘doing’ in questions such as ‘what is the meaning of this chord?’ Similarly, when Koopman and Davies state that ‘one understands a piece’s formal musical meaning when one appreciates the internal connectedness of its parts’ (Koopman and Davies 2001, 264), Kivy argues that meaning is the wrong word in this context.

Why is it that David Cooper can propose that when the word ‘function’ replaces the word ‘meaning’ we are still very much engaging with an account of meaning in terms of meaning *qua* purpose (Cooper 2003, 10-15), yet Kivy contends that the two words should be kept separate? Kivy answers by suggesting that ‘non-semantic meanings of the kind Koopman and Davies talk about (or any other kinds I am familiar with) will assuredly not provide the pleasures and consolations of semantic meaning, which are just the pleasures and consolations that the musical analysts and musicologists are seeking when they seek musical “meaning” in the first place’ (Kivy 2007, 148). It is not that Kivy thinks that there are no non-semantic meanings, but, when it comes to discussions of musical meaning, ‘other senses of “meaning” won’t do the job’ (ibid., 149). The problem with Kivy’s account of musical meaning is that he rejects the idea of meaningful music rather than discard a semantic conception of meaning for its failure to account for music. The fact that Kivy bases his understanding of meaning on a narrow, propositional model of meaning is enough to ensure that the concept ‘meaning’ and the object ‘music’ will never match up.

Although other philosophers of music do not champion the semantic conception of meaning to the same extent as Kivy, many, like Davies, advocate the determinacy of meaning, completed meaning, meanings as what W. V. O. Quine

called ‘obscure intermediary entities’ (Quine 1980, 22), realist conceptions of necessity and essentialism, all of which, as Wheeler argues, contribute to a ‘presence’ model of meaning. It follows that the question of ‘what is meaning in music?’ is similar to the question asked by essentialists, ‘what is art?’ The essentialist, as we have seen, sees art’s essential character as internal to the concept, such that there is something ‘given’, some sort of non–contingent and non–inferential foundation of ‘presence’ that is intrinsic to art. Similarly, as we saw with Davies, musical works are thought to contain intrinsic and unchanging meanings by virtue of being ‘of the author’.⁴ Stecker also sees intentions as important, claiming that intentions can be transferred from people to things thus making the latter ‘ontologically dependant on those intentions’ (Stecker 2005, 130). Although Stecker does not affirm the account of intentionalism whereby the meaning of the work is solely what the artist intended it to be, he does argue that there are intentions which contribute to the meaning of the work, intentions that are tied to operative, contextual conventions. Kivy is also an intentionalist (Kivy 2002, 148), although, as we have seen, he would deny that intentions determine meaning, purely because, in his opinion, music is meaningless.

The case of R. A. Sharpe is slightly more complex. Although he claims that ‘interpretations cannot be circumscribed by what the composer could have intended to be understood by it [the musical work]’ (Sharpe 2004, 117), he nonetheless proposes that ‘music can clearly have a meaning and the meaning is suggested by the context in which it was produced and by its history in very much the way that “the meaning” of *King Lear* is determined by history and context’ (ibid., 112). Sharpe went on to look at Davies’ problem of distinguishing between what can be read off the music itself and the composer’s intentions conveyed by independent information. He argues that the critic should step outside what can be directly read off the artwork, and so use biographical information ‘to construct a meaning that goes beyond the obvious and this information is extraneous to both poem and music’ (ibid., 113). Sharpe proposes the separation of expression and meaning such that, when it comes to deciding on the meaning of music, ‘a way in which interpretations might be kept on the straight and narrow is to restrict acceptable interpretations to those that the composer intended to be possible interpretations’ (ibid., 116). To consider ‘acceptable interpretations’ of a work to be ones which align themselves with the composer’s

⁴ Wellmer (1995) also demonstrates how accounts that reduce meaning to subjective intentions are bound up with what he calls ‘objectivistic’ conceptions of meaning.

intentions is, as we have seen in the two previous chapters, to suggest that the work is an object with properties that exists in some sort of causal relationship with a creator-subject. It follows that Sharpe, who criticises other philosophers of music for their obsession with philosophical analysis and with uncovering general patterns, was, himself, attempting to discern what Wellmer calls ‘objectivistic’ or ‘presence’ properties that are ‘already there’ in the music.

This talk of musical properties also extends to Sharpe’s account of musical expression, specifically, his theory of arousalism, whereby the ‘character’ of a piece of music is determined by its effect on the listener. Sharpe claims that ‘the normative element introduced requires the notion of a match between the descriptions of music and the description of its effect upon us. *That requires that the character of the music be something independent of and prior to the response*’ [italics added] (ibid., 99). Sharpe’s claim suggests that we must know the ‘expressive character’ of the music independently of our experience of it in order to discern whether reactions are correct or not. For Sharpe, we ‘ascribe meaning to music by interpreting the *sequence of characters that the music possesses*’ [italics added] (ibid., 90). Indeed, for Sharpe, expressive pluralism renders ‘the work of art internally inconsistent’ because ‘*a work of art cannot possess contradictory properties*. There cannot be inconsistencies within it’ [italics added] (ibid., 74). As we have seen in the previous two chapters, and as Bowie illustrates, the notion of musical properties is empty because there is no reason not to think that what the meaningfulness of a work depends on the interpreting individual within a specific historical, cultural, social and political context as much as on its so-called properties (Bowie 2007, 22). Furthermore, the notion of an ‘expressive character’ of music ‘does little to account for the intensity that can go into the development and reception of new forms of expression in the history of music’ (ibid., 27). In other words, as Bowie proposes, and as we observed with regards to Adorno’s distinct interpretations of Wagner’s works, ‘a particular piece of expression can give rise to new forms of emotion’ as a result of a socially- and culturally-mediated subject responding to the effects of their relationship to the object.⁵ ‘This possibility’, Bowie claims, ‘would be excluded if one perceives emotion as a property: how in that case would one do anything but register an already familiar emotion as embodied in music?’ (ibid.).

⁵ See Bowie 2007, 20-29.

Having looked at how the philosophy of music deals with the issue of musical meaning, it seems clear that in order to engage with the meaningfulness of musical praxis, that is, to understand how and why music matters to us in everyday circumstances, we need to challenge and potentially transcend the ‘presence’ model of meaning that continues to fuel theories of meaning within the philosophy of music.

Beyond Presence, Beyond the Philosophy of Music

The first step in moving beyond the presence model that dominates the philosophy of music is to tackle the issue of analyticity. Quine argued that ‘once the theory of meaning is sharply separated from the theory of reference, it is a short step to recognising as the primary business of the theory of meaning simply the synonymy of linguistic forms and the analyticity of statements; meanings themselves, as obscure intermediary entities, may well be abandoned’ (Quine 1980, 22). Quine’s sequence of attacks on the analytic/synthetic divide not only challenged the existence of meanings as ‘obscure intermediary entities’ – ‘what essence becomes when it is divorced from the object of reference and wedded to the word’ (ibid.) – but also the foundations of essentialist approaches to items and language. In effect, what is called into question by Quine is what James O’Shea calls the ‘look-for-an-entity approach’, which aims ‘to posit a so-called “third world” of *abstract entities*’ (O’Shea 2007, 53), entities that, as Wheeler observes, ‘have their own theory-independent natures’ and which terminate analysis and interpretation (Wheeler 2000, 40).

For Quine, analyticity was to lean on a notion of synonymy so that analytic statements could be turned into logical truths by putting synonyms for synonyms. The issue is that any attempt to explain analyticity in terms of definition, that bachelor is *defined* as unmarried male, owes its explicative function to pre-existing synonymies. Further, the idea that analyticity can be explained through the idea of interchangeability is also problematic because there is no assurance that both bachelor and unmarried male as referring to the same thing ‘rests on meaning rather than merely on accidental matters of fact’ (Quine 1980, 31). So, Quine argued, ‘definition turned out to be a will-o’-the-wisp, and synonymy turned out to be best understood only by a dint of a prior appeal to analyticity itself’ (ibid., 32). The point Quine is making is that we do not, in fact, understand what is meant by analyticity. Similarly, the term ‘analytic’ cannot, in Quine’s opinion, be adequately clarified. ‘Quine’, as

Gary Gutting observes, ‘discusses a number of ways of clarifying “analytic”, showing that they are either strictly circular or at best define “analytic” via terms such as “self-contradictory” or “necessary”, which we understand no better than we do “true in virtue of meaning”’ (Gutting 2009, 21).⁶ The problem of being able to draw a clear distinction between analytic and synthetic statements has a knock-on effect in terms of the second dogma – reductionism. For Quine, as Gutting observes, the issue is not really one of reductionism but of holism. As Quine argued, ‘our statements about the external world face the tribunal of sense experience not only individually but only as a corporate body’ (Quine 1980, 41).⁷

One could be justified in claiming that despite the criticisms that are levelled at Quine’s attack on the analytic/synthetic divide,⁸ post-Quinean, Anglo-American philosophy has either withdrawn from discussing the question of analyticity or joined Quine in the refutation of the distinction. As Gutting observes, ‘although this picture [of epistemological holism] provides no compelling reason for giving up the analytic-

⁶ The problem, however, as Gutting sees it with Quine’s attack of analyticity in ‘Two Dogmas’ is that it ‘either offers no reason for its demand that the “circle” of terms surrounding “true in virtue of meaning” (“necessity”, “synonymy”, “self-contradictory”, etc.) be defined in other terms; or it (implicitly) offers a highly controversial behaviorist reason’ (Gutting 2009, 22).

⁷ According to Gutting, who cites Tyler Burge, Quine’s holism is not argued anywhere in depth and his criticisms against the second dogma, criticisms that take Quine into the regions of the indeterminacy of translation, the inscrutability of reference and ontological relativity, are, citing Burge, ‘no better grounded than the grandiose metaphysics of Whitehead or Bradley’ (Gutting 2009, 29). The point to raise against Burge and Gutting is that both Donald Davidson and Richard Rorty believed that something like these ideas could be ‘philosophically’ defended, as Davidson demonstrates, for example, in relation to his idea that ‘there is no such thing as a language’ (Davidson 2006, 265). The point being that, for Davidson, language is not some sort of ‘thing-in-itself’ that constrains what can be understood. In this sense, knowing a language is not prior to interpretation and does not make communication possible. Instead, Davidson looks to argue almost the opposite point; specifically, that ‘radical interpretation’ determines the possibility of linguistic communication in the first place. With Davidson, we move from the extensional model of language, one which sees language as an organising tool based on predicates, quantifiers, variables and singular terms, to a theory of truth for a language based on whole sentences. According to Davidson, ‘it is sentences that predict (or are used to predict), sentences that cope or deal with things, that fit our sensory promptings, that can be compared or confronted with evidence’ (ibid., 204). In this single move, we turn from an account of conceptual scheme as organising experience or reality to a theory of language that “fits our sensory promptings”. As Davidson claims, ‘a sentence or theory fits our sensory promptings, successfully faces the tribunal of experience, predicts future experience, or copes with the pattern of our surface irritations, provided it is borne out by the experience’ (ibid.). In effect, when Davidson states that language ‘copes or deals with things’, that it ‘fits our sensory promptings’ or that ‘familiar objects...make our sentences and opinions true or false’ (ibid., 208), one could, justifiably, draw similarities between Davidson’s views of language and a Heideggerian position which upholds the importance of our pre-conceptual involvements in an interactive world as a determining factor in linguistic practice. In other words, Davidson looks like he is pointing towards a ‘world-disclosive’ conception of language as opposed to a ‘world-constituting’ account. Others, however, including Wheeler, have drawn a more radical conclusion, arguing for analogies between Davidson’s ideas and meaning nihilism in general. According to Wheeler, there is no presence behind language, ‘what is behind language is inseparable from further language’ (Wheeler 2000, 30).

⁸ See, for example, Burge 2003, 199-249.

synthetic distinction, it does give a sense of what it might be like to do so. Reflecting on this possibility led many philosophers to suspect that there might be little price to pay for dropping the distinction' (Gutting 2009, 74). It follows that whatever we think of Quine's specific criticisms, his offer of a possibly fruitful alternative to tinkering with the old positivist theses and the en-masse negation of the divide in post-positivistic philosophy, in effect, normatively brought to an end the grip that objective necessities – a 'hidden realism built into the kind of present meaning-content that will make the necessary the *a priori*' (Wheeler 2000, 43) – held over philosophy. Because the notion of analyticity presupposes a termination in analysis, then, with analyticity discarded, there can be no magic anchors to which analysis can attach itself. As Wheeler claims, 'there is no meaning or meaning bearer behind language that is not itself a languagelike phenomenon' (Wheeler 2000, 44).⁹

Overcoming the so-called dogmas of empiricism has important implications for a theory of meaning that bases itself purely upon a causal relationship between the created artwork and an artist's intentions. Such a theory is supported by the idea that meaning can be separated from fact. However, with regards to Quine's attack on reductionism, his critique challenges the idea that a statement is a unit of meaning and hence capable of confirmation by experience. Specifically, Quine sought to challenge the notion that each such statement has both an 'empirical component' and a 'linguistic component'. Indeed, he denied that such a separation is possible. A theory that reduces meaning to the intentions of some creator-subject survives on the idea that something purely linguistic is present to us, capable of being grasped in order to give meaning to an utterance. If intentions are found to either contain empirical

⁹ Wheeler shows that Davidson, Derrida and Sellars all agreed with Quine's rejection of the idea of meanings as 'obscure intermediary entities'. As Sellars observed, the real test for theories of language had been to posit an 'account of "thinking in presence" – that is to say, its account of those occasions on which the fundamental connection of language with nonlinguistic fact is exhibited' (Sellars 1997, 65). This approach, based on the assumption 'that meaning is a relation between a word and a nonverbal entity', was rejected by Sellars (*ibid.*, 67). Indeed, Sellars's attack on the myth of the given, an attack on the idea that 'empirical knowledge rests on a "foundation" of non-inferential knowledge of matter of fact' (*ibid.*, 15), is another fundamental attack on the presence model. Rorty, subsequently, argued that Sellars' and Quine's 'holism is a product of their commitment to the thesis that justification is not a matter of a special relation between ideas (or words) and objects, but of conversation, of social practice' (Rorty 1979, 170). What Rorty illustrates in constructing his epistemological behaviourism is that Sellars and Quine are effectively making the same argument, which bears equally against the myth of the given and the analytic/synthetic divide. Rorty's epistemological behaviourism, however, took the arguments of Sellars and Quine one step further, so that knowledge, rather than attempt to mirror nature, is 'what society lets us say' (*ibid.*, 174). What Quine, Sellars and Rorty all presented, as the latter claimed, are 'forms of holism', 'a conception of philosophy which has nothing to do with the quest for certainty' (*ibid.*, 170-171).

content, or, if we take Davidson's line, fit the totality of possible sensory evidence, then they will suffer from the same problems as languages do, mainly that without something present to act as an anchor, the 'presence' meaning of an intention, as a meaning bearer or meaning determiner in the ways we have discussed, is nothing but a chimera. If we look to interpret artworks by way of intentions, we will, consequently, according to Wheeler, continue to regress into more and more text that lies behind the text of the intention.

To deny presence, certainty and essentialism is to concede, as Wheeler observes, to the indeterminacy of interpretation (Wheeler 2000, 27). So, he argues, 'on a theory that denies presence (i.e., a theory without the myth of the given), no level of meaning escapes indeterminacy problems. All the way down there is just more language. All significant items are signlike, non-self-interpreting, and thus defer something' (ibid., 28). However, the problem we ultimately encounter regarding discussions of indeterminacy is that, as Cooper observes, arguments for indeterminacy at most show that we can't be sure of what is meant, not that there was nothing meant (Cooper 2003, 64). Nevertheless, Cooper demonstrates that many meaning sceptics are also meaning nihilists, that is, rather than state that they aren't sure whether a meaning is true, they argue that there is nothing to know or hold reasonable beliefs about. Cooper claims that meaning sceptics should really complain not against those who claim that there are meanings but against a certain conception of meaning, 'an "objectivist" or "realist" one according to which a judgement could only be true by corresponding with states of affairs that obtain quite independently of human perspective, sentiment, concern and the like' (Cooper 2003, 76). Regarding the case of moral truths, Cooper proposes that once the sceptic agrees that moral truths are of a different ilk from scientific ones, then, 'there is no need to indulge in sceptical or nihilist rhetoric' (ibid.). For Cooper, '*anything at all* may, in an appropriate context, be spoken of as having meaning' (ibid., 21), but, in this instance, meaning is not some 'obscure intermediary entity'.

Meaning, for Cooper, is related to the articulative and disclosive dimension of the world. This is in stark contrast to the assertive and fact-establishing account of language that, Charles Taylor claims, has occupied the majority of approaches to language in twentieth-century analytic philosophy.¹⁰ 'Reason-alone' thinking,

¹⁰ See Taylor 2011, 39-55.

encouraged by the natural sciences and which aims to tackle human problems on its own, has, as Taylor illustrates, aided the focus on the purely assertive, fact-establishing dimension of language in analytic philosophy. Having been ontologised and applied universally, this narrowed conception of reason has no need for the disclosive-articulative-dimension of human language until, that is, it is acknowledged that this narrowed reason is, in fact, ill-equipped to tackle all the inescapable issues of life. Indeed, as Taylor argues, ‘the articulative/disclosive is the essential background to our most immediately “practical” discourse’ (Taylor 2011, 51). Taylor is convinced that the articulative and disclosive dimension of language cannot be peeled off from the public giving of and asking for reasons. It is with this focus on the ontological and logical primacy of the disclosive aspects of language that Cooper argues that ‘to provide explanations of meaning, I suggest, is to respond to actual or potential questions about the relationship of items (utterances, gestures, rituals or whatever) to Life’ (Cooper 2003, 31). According to Cooper, ‘Life’ is both the permanent subject and permanent background of meaning, and it is the failure to attend to this background that has been responsible for what we have seen in this chapter as some pretty narrow conceptions of meaning in the philosophy of music. In Cooper’s words, meaning-explanations give an indication of something’s ‘appropriateness to Life’ (ibid., 57), whether it is the appropriateness of Adorno’s interpretations of Wagner’s works to the respective worlds of 1937/38 and 1963, which we discussed in detail in chapter two, or the appropriateness of Oi! and punk rock to Thatcherism, neoliberalism and the collapse of the British consensus as discussed in chapter one. More importantly, having positioned ourselves towards meaning in such a way that meaning is no longer an ‘obscure intermediary entity’, meaning can be detached from essence in order to accommodate a conception of musical meaningfulness based upon aesthetic experiences, experiences that are, in part, fore-structured by our particular situatedness in the everyday practices of social and cultural ‘Life’. Furthermore, as we shall now see, if we separate essence from meaning, we can still work with essence within a framework of disclosure rather than accede to relativism or meaning nihilism.

There and Back Again

When it comes to music, if we deny meanings as ‘obscure intermediary entities’, which include meanings as artistic intentions, we are faced with non-text, an absence of any explicit and objective text behind the music. Understanding music without realism’s final say of a meaning as an unchanging, ‘present’ entity is, as Wheeler argues, an ‘in-principle uncompletable explication, elucidation, and discussion’ of the music (Wheeler 2000, 52). For Cooper, artworks are sites of world-disclosure, or, as Heidegger claimed, it is through art that the world opens itself. An artwork ‘may display the meaningful relations of appropriateness in which the things they present stand to Life’ (Cooper 2003, 111). Coming back to our investigations of Adorno’s interpretations of Wagner in chapter two, what was the meaningfulness of Wagner’s works for Adorno in 1938? It was that they disclosed a culture industry of Hollywood, the radio, cinema, advertising, phantasmagoria and commodification. What was the meaningfulness of Wagner’s music dramas for the Adorno in 1963? It was that they disclosed the same truths about the world as those unconcealed by practitioners of modern autonomous art. Adorno even made a point of discussing Wagner’s ‘appropriateness to Life’ when he titled his 1963 speech at the Berlin Festival ‘*Wagners Aktualität*’.

Meaning-explanations as indications of appropriateness to Life ultimately come down to questions of truth. As Heidegger argued, ‘if we consider the old, traditional definition of truth from this perspective – the definition *veritas est adaequatio intellectus ad rem, homoiôsis*, conformity, assimilation of thinking to the thing that is thought – then we can see that this old definition of truth is indeed correct in its approach’ (Heidegger 1992a, 497). In other words, to see how and whether what an artwork presents conforms or corresponds to what Wittgenstein calls the ‘form of life’ from which it emerges is to engage with truth. Indeed, the content of truth was a central concern for Heidegger. Steven Crowell observes that if, for Heidegger, ‘truth...is a normative notion’ (Crowell 2013, 239), then an account of why we can and must act in the light of norms is not as a result of Dasein’s ability to reflect on itself *qua* rational animal as might be case with certain metaphysical readings of Kant and Hegel, but as a result of a tripartite ‘care’ [*Sorge*] structure – ‘to

understand myself as suspended between success and failure – to exist in a normative space – is possible only because my being is care’ (ibid., 288).¹¹

The first two parts of this three-part structure illustrate the importance that pre-propositional practices play in determining the success or failure of claims to truth. Firstly, ‘it is because we are always affectively disposed towards the world in certain ways that things can matter to us; and we are disposed towards the world in certain ways because we are *exposed* to it – “thrown”, in Heidegger’s language’ (ibid., 240-241). It should be noted here that the concept of ‘world’ in Heidegger is, as Crowell observes, ‘a space of intelligibility or meaning’ (ibid., 285). Indeed, it is because we are ‘thrown’ into an inherently meaningful world that – secondly – ‘the care structure involves our practical skills and abilities, which Heidegger calls “understanding” (*Verstehen*), in the sense of know-how’ (ibid., 241). According to Heidegger, Dasein is not a theoretician but something that first learns to make sense of the world practically. It is because we, as individuals, are born into, raised within and inseparable from socio-cultural practices, which include pre-linguistic, tacit practices, that things can show up as this or that or as being for this or for that. So, Crowell explains, ‘things show up as “equipment” (*Zeug*), that is, in light of what they are good for. What they are good for is what they are used for. Thus, to grasp a pen *as* a pen is not to predicate something of it but to use it to write’ (ibid., 286). Indeed, our practical skills and abilities have a normative aspect. For example, Crowell suggests that ‘the pen is “appropriate for...”; the hammer is “suitable for...”; the nails are “serviceable for...”. Such norms – that is, the standards of appropriateness, suitability and serviceability – are relative to the work to be done’ (ibid., 286). It follows that Heidegger’s is a hermeneutic, pre-linguistic account of what makes us comport ourselves in particular ways in the world so that propositions conform or correspond to the way the world is. As Wrathall illustrates, Heidegger’s pre-propositional account of truth is required in order to fill the gap between a primitive, causal account of human behaviour in the world and an intentional account of propositional states that leaves out the stage where intentional content—that which

¹¹ Crowell argues that ‘the predicate “true” properly applies to propositions because they can be assessed in terms of a distinction between correct and incorrect, measured against the entity as it is in itself’ (Crowell 2013, 193). According to Crowell, ‘Heidegger argues that for an entity to serve as such a measure or norm, it must show up in a holistic context of significance (“world”) that has been disclosed in advance, a disclosedness he terms “ontological truth”. Such truth does not stand in normative relation to falsity but to “closed-off-ness” (ibid.).

is intended in an assertion—becomes fixed.¹² For Wrathall, it is Heidegger's account of discovery within a practical – not linguistic – context that explains the fixing of intentional content in propositional states.

Johnson goes even further in his discussions of embodied meaning, arguing that even prior to conscious experience, our bodies interact meaningfully with the world around us beneath the level of conscious awareness. He suggests that at a nonconscious level, our bodily movements form the basis both for the meaning of our movements and, at once, the meaning of the world we move within. In short, Johnson claims that 'meaning is not just what is consciously entertained in acts of feeling and thought; instead, meaning reaches deep down into our corporeal encounter with our environment' (Johnson 2007, 25). Meanings, therefore, are grounded in our bodily connections with things, and, as cognitive science illustrates, must be constantly made and re-made via our sensorimotor engagements. If we follow Johnson's arguments based on phenomenology, pragmatism and discoveries in the neurosciences, then one could be justified in claiming that it is the practical totality of involvement that brings with it the possibility of rightness and wrongness in our way of relating to things, such as when we realise that a hammer is for driving nails as opposed to chopping wood. Such practical involvements are, according to Crowell, the grounds of 'care' – the conditions of truth – that make linguistic interaction possible.

An account of the conditions of truth based upon the ontological and logical primacy of our practical engagements in a world has, as we have seen in the previous two chapters, important ramifications for how we account for the meaningfulness of musical praxis. Music as an embedded practice protests against the reification that would turn it into purely an object of perception, that is, what Bowie calls an 'object with properties' or what Braver refers to as a 'present-at-hand object'. If the experience of art is an experience of meaning, then musical meaningfulness, as Gadamer proposed, is already socially and culturally mediated. To be sure, the disclosure of being relies on entities having an essence. However, as Heidegger argued, by essence we do not mean a kind of presence model of essence, a conception of essence which Heidegger called *des unwesentliche Wesen*, what Wrathall translates as 'the unessential essence' and what I prefer to call 'the unessence-like essence'. As

¹² See Wrathall 2011, 49-52.

Wrathall claims, ‘the point is simply that...the essence is fixed not by a property that an entity now possesses or an abstract type that it presently instantiates, but by that in the view of which we take it as that thing it is’ (Wrathall 2011, 28).

Authentic essence is changeable. The reason for this, as we explored in chapter two, is because when we engage with actual works of music, we are bringing with us our socially- and culturally-cultivated tacit norms and practices that make up the particular *style* of our world, and by which we come to make sense of the world. Our experience of music and the articulation of that experience are, in part, fore-structured by our situatedness within the world of everyday practices. As Wrathall explains, ‘we disclose the essences that we do, according to Heidegger, because the way we are moved by or disposed to things allows a particular style of being “to be ascendant”’ (ibid., 32). So, Crowell argues, the norms that give shape to my skills and know-how ‘belong first of all to the social context in which I find myself. My “abilities-to-be” are not instincts but roles and socially recognised practices into which I have been born and according to the norms of which I must act if I am to be recognised as acting at all’ (Crowell 2013, 245). Indeed, in terms of the tripartite ‘care’ structure that Crowell puts forward, if we are disposed towards the world in the ways we are and if we are able to measure our approaches to the world against certain standards because of our practical skills and abilities then this understanding [*Verstehen*], this tacit know-how, can be articulated in the form of ‘discourse’ [*Rede*] – ‘a shared, publically articulated space of meaning’ as opposed to a ‘*forum internum*’ (ibid., 241). In other words, just as we are accountable to others through our practical engagement with the world, we are also still part of the same structure of ‘care’ when we come to articulate what Christine Korsgaard (1996) refers to as our ‘practical identities’ in the inferential sphere of intersubjective legitimacy.¹³ As Crowell explains, for Heidegger, ‘because Dasein is *Mitsein*, agency also entails the unconditional – that is, moral – obligation to be *accountable* to others’ (ibid., 284),

¹³ Korsgaard defines ‘practical identity’ as ‘a description under which you value yourself’ (Korsgaard 1996, 101). Although I agree with the principle of individuals as partly determined by their place in specific socio-cultural practices, I think Korsgaard’s definition is too narrow, constricting our identities to professional titles and socially-cultivated roles such as being a ‘friend’ or a ‘father’. What I would suggest is that, as Dasein, we do not have a specific practical identity that can be narrowed down to the particular roles we play in a world but one which is constituted by the particular style of the *whole* world, which includes other ‘practical identities’, in Korsgaard’s sense, that we may not describe ourselves as having. Indeed, some may choose to shun self-descriptions and labels entirely for fear of self-reification or of alienating oneself from other worlds of diverse and capacious groups and individuals.

specifically, ‘to be responsible is equally to be *answerable* to others’ (ibid., 302).¹⁴ Authentic essence, therefore, inasmuch as it is entwined with ‘socially recognised practices’, including what Crowell calls the ‘meta-practice’ of ‘discourse’, is itself a norm in that it is only in the sphere of public legitimacy, a trans-cultural and trans-historical space of truth, that, after the end of meanings as ‘obscure intermediary entities’, we can even speak of essence as somehow related to truth and meaningfulness. For those looking for a naturalistic explanation of normativity, this may seem like a particularly bitter pill to swallow. Indeed, it is the transience of essence that, in the context of creative practices such as music, makes it extremely difficult to produce a naturalistic or metaphysical account of the grounds of normativity. Creative practices like music have shown themselves to be constantly in the business of norm-appraisal and norm-transcendence. It seems more obvious and intelligible, therefore, that the normalisation of norm-transcending practices such as musical interpretation can be made sense of through the historical and social changes to ways of being that they helped initiate and not by some paradigm-shifting change that takes place within nature.

When it comes to asking why a particular interpretation of a musical work prevails over any other or why, say, two understandings of a piece seem to be equally authoritative so as to produce a debate, Heidegger was less thorough in his hermeneutical account than his student Gadamer. Heidegger argued for the existence of a clearing [*Lichtung*] that allows particular ways of being disposed to the world by concealing others – ‘the clearing maintains a world by keeping back (concealing) possibilities that are incompatible with the essence that is currently operative’ (Wrathall 2011, 34). As we saw in chapter two, Gadamer went some way to disclosing the structure of the clearing through his ideas of historically effected consciousness and horizon. Here, understanding and interpretation are partly determined by our historically determined situatedness providing us with the right horizon of enquiry, so that we are effected in finding the right questions to ask of the work of art when we are caught up in the event. No particular meaning of a piece of music will be true a priori because the ‘objectivity’ of a specific meaning terminates in the ‘fusion of horizons’ between the interpreter and the work of art. Essence and meanings are, therefore, historically contingent, and, as we saw in the previous

¹⁴ The relationships between discourse, accountability and our practical engagements with the world will form the basis of our discussions regarding the future of critical musicology in chapter five.

chapter, have the propensity to change with the world. Musical works, indeed, all artworks, when it comes to interpretation, are, therefore, nothing more than unfinished events.

If we move beyond the paradigm of philosophy that has taken for its starting point the assertive, fact-establishing dimension of language-games and acknowledge that artworks are unfinished events, we come to realise that the philosophy of music, in its current guise, is in need of an upgrade. The philosophy of music thinks it can disclose the secrets of music, its identity, its ontology, its meaning, its expressivity and its profundity, all of which, it is supposed, can be grasped either through disengaged contemplation of Kivy's 'precepts and propositions' that act as the unspoken foundations of music or through the creation of what Zangwill, as we saw in chapter one, refers to as 'rational explanatory stories'. By revealing that such beliefs and ways of thinking about music are chimerical, and, instead, taking as our starting point music's fundamental embeddedness in creation, performance and reception, music as historically, socially and culturally mediated, music as anti-presence and music as disclosive and articulative, we start to realise that the philosophy of music is ill-equipped to provide definitive answers to the problems of music. Indeed, as we have seen, when it comes to music, such problems are nothing more than Wittgensteinian pseudo-problems.

As explored in the previous two chapters, in order to avoid reifying music, the current practices of fashioning or analysing concepts must, arguably, be replaced with engagement with actual manifestations of musical praxis - its creation, performance and reception. Discussion must, if there is to be a non-reified engagement with music, now revolve around musical events and the contexts in which they are embedded. So what is the place of philosophy when it comes to music? Rather than attempt to come up with all the answers, philosophy could support the work of critical musicologists and musical practitioners by bringing certain issues regarding musical praxis to light. Rorty once said that the task of the intellectual, with regards to social justice, is not to provide refinements of social theory but to sensitise us to the suffering of others and to help us in becoming more other-minded. Similarly, when it comes to a philosopher's interaction with music, their task is not necessarily to do with grasping answers to aesthetic questions – partly because, as discussed, such answers may not exist in graspable form – but to suggest how lessons learnt from philosophical speculation on music can be useful for assisting performers, composers, musical

spaces, musical institutions and critical musicologists in their task of innovative exploration of musical praxis. In other words, certain 'philosophical' ideas could be required not to explain and describe but to phenomenologically remind us of our experiences of music in everyday practices and also to articulate the meaningfulness of those experiences. And this is what I will aim to do in the next chapter. We will now take our leave of philosophy and see how what has been discovered in the past three chapters could potentially impact upon current practices and future ways of doing in critical musicology.

MUSICOLOGICAL ANALYTICITY

At the start of the previous chapter, I put forward the idea that using the subject-object model to account for the nature of our relationship, as interpreters, to works of art is both a philosophical and musicological problem. More importantly, in the context of a thesis that aims to discuss the relationship between music and reification, to base our engagement with artworks on a model that consists of a reflective subject separated from and aiming to enquire after an object with properties is to set up a situation that can allow for the reification of aesthetic praxis. This is not to suggest that reification can merely be equated with objectification because, as discussed, certain objectifications are needed to make music, to make it comprehensible and to debate interpretations. The issue is that the act of detached contemplation of the nature of music, in order to make it into an object of philosophical enquiry, rigidly severs all links with our everyday interactions with musical phenomena. In other words, disengaged contemplation of the nature of music ignores the particulars of musical experience that help to explain why music matters to us and why it forms such an important part of our socio-cultural practices, practices that can be transformed by music and that can also bring about a change in the status and meaning of music as well as a transformation of what is thought to be its 'nature'. For Adorno, the result of reification is that objects are reduced to concepts of 'pure speculation'; for Bowie, philosophical contemplation gives rise to objects with properties; for Braver, inherently meaningful phenomena are relegated to decontextualized, unchanging entities. Thus, we see that the subject-object model for understanding art and artworks both allows for and is, simultaneously, affirmed by the reification of aesthetic praxis. If, however, music is not to be thought of as an object of philosophical enquiry but as a phenomenon that we, as historically- and

culturally-mediated subjects, respond to differently at different times then it is these responses that matter when it comes to making sense of musical praxis. Indeed, it is our aesthetic experiences that call into question the dogmatic separation of the ‘subject of knowledge’ from the ‘object of knowledge’. With regards to the inherent meaningfulness of aesthetic experiences, I have been arguing for a non-reified engagement with musical praxis based upon the interpretation of concrete musical situations, whereby our concepts are used to ‘open up the nonconceptual’, that is, to conceptualise our aesthetic experiences, which cannot be inferred purely from the sonic configuration and stylistic norms of the music. Indeed, to consider musical works as what Wellmer calls ‘objective correlates of aesthetic experience’ is, as was discussed in chapter one, to acknowledge that music cannot be isolated from acts of interpretation, criticism and analysis. To make music ontologically reliant upon acts of interpretation is, therefore, to trade in contemplative, ‘objective’ accounts of the nature of music for a conception of music as world-disclosive, as thematising how individuals and groups come to make sense of the world and each other. It follows that to think of works of music as ‘disclosive’ is nonsense if we maintain the distinction between what comes from the subjective side of the interpretation and what comes from the objective side.

But how is the subject-object model a problem for musicology? It would be obvious to most musicologists that their main ways of doing do not involve reifying attempts to provide explanatory theories for music’s ontology, meaning and value. Indeed, many would now affirm something like the non-reified approach to understanding musical praxis that emphasises music’s world-disclosive potential. For example, many might share Nicholas Cook and Mark Everist’s view that music is *now* open ‘to the multiplicity of possible interpretations and a studied avoidance of value judgement’ (Cook and Everist 2001, x).¹ They may feel an affinity with those musicologists Cook and Everist describe as assuming ‘neither music’s self-sufficiency (as early proponents of formalism did) nor its lack thereof (in the manner of much of the New Musicology)’, thus wishing to problematise the issue of musical autonomy (ibid., xii). They may also empathise with recent commentators who have

¹ I stress that music may *now* be open to multiple methods of enquiry. This, as musicologists will contend, has not always been the case. In fact, the crude, reductionist ‘story’ of the New Musicology, is, generally, one of a discipline’s overcoming of its former self, a self that, like the philosophy of music, based its techniques of musical engagement on the premise of musical autonomy. Such a ‘story’ is hinted at if not explicitly narrated by, for example, Agawu 1997, Cook and Everist 2001, Hooper 2006, Kerman 1985, L. Kramer 1992, Samson 2001, Tomlinson 1993 and Williams 2000 and 2001.

attempted ‘to “ground music”...[to] embrace social cause, but...also to what we may call “social trace” (the imprint of the social world on musical materials themselves) and to the social production of musical meanings (the subject-matter of a reception history)’ (Samson 2001, 50). They might also agree with Lydia Goehr’s argument for the dependant, culturally emergent nature of musical works and the discourse about them.²

The point of this chapter is not to propose a new way forward for musicology. Instead, I want to offer some suggestions for how the previous investigations into a non-reifying engagement with music could help us to better understand the current climate of musicology and its future possibilities. How does musicology fare when it comes to engaging with music without attempting to provide explanatory theories for its ontology, meaning and value? Does musicology treat the musical work as an ‘objective correlate of aesthetic experience’, thus allowing for a conception of musical praxis as an unfinished event? Do musicologists respect the particularity of aesthetic experiences and how do they go about articulating those experiences?

Cook and Everist argue that there seems to be a ‘widespread loss of confidence’ in what musicologists thought they knew (Cook and Everist 2001, v).³ This loss of confidence does not just apply to a particular method of analysis, a specific argument in the debate about performance practice or some long-standing, generally accepted theme that has become entwined with the history of a particular composition or composer. When Cook and Everist claim that the musicological community has lost confidence in what it thought it knew, they argue that the community is no longer sure about the ‘object’ of its enquiry. In short, Cook and Everist claim that musicology has lost confidence in its knowledge of music. Philip V. Bohlman provides a summary of the dilemma facing musicology: ‘music may be what we think it is; it may not be’ (Bohlman 2001, 17).

Rob C. Wegman affirms Cook and Everist’s notion that there appears to be a loss of confidence in what musicologists took to be a transparent, objective and

² See Goehr 1992.

³ Cook and Everist put this loss of confidence down to the decline of musical autonomy. Richard Middleton goes further and argues that it was a disdain for post-Enlightenment conception of culture ‘and the political thrust of its usages in late modernity, which, within music studies, has generated a whole range of characteristic impulses: attacks on “the canon”, on “great composer history”, and on “transcendental” aesthetics; critiques of “positivistic” historiographies and analytical methods; deconstructions of patriarchal, ethnocentric, and other “ideological” interpretations; valorization of popular music cultures; the relativising of differences between musical systems; and so on’. (Clayton, Herbert and Middleton 2012, 4-5).

‘given’ point of enquiry, the consequence of which ‘throws into doubt the comfortable distinction of objective description of fact and the subjective judgement of value’ (Cook and Everist 2001, v). Indeed, Wegman takes this narrative one-step further, claiming that current musicology is enamoured with the past and suffers from ‘a profound and despairing sense of melancholia’ as a result of this lost confidence (Wegman 2012, 45). ‘Like Narcissus’, Wegman proposes, ‘or so critics remind us, we have gazed into a fountain, and have become enamoured of the image reflected in its surface’ (ibid., 43). What musicologists long for, so he claims, is for their view of the past ‘to be real, objective, autonomous, authentic, other’ (ibid.). Recognising that such a vision of the past does not exist, Wegman states that musicologists either question whether musicology is possible at all or repudiate the past entirely. In asking whether historical musicology is possible, ‘musicologists have become engaged in a desperate search for legitimation’, a search that is, ultimately ‘doomed to fail’ (ibid., 46). Whether or not we agree with Wegman’s representation of the discipline, what it illustrates, going back to our discussions at the beginning of chapter one, is that when it comes to treading the path of supposed uncertainty within a disciplinary context of ‘lost confidence’, musicology will potentially encounter the foundationalist threats of either realism or idealism. These threats, according to Wegman, are what keep the debates in musicology going round in circles.

The ‘third’ way between realism and idealism, as we saw in chapter two with regards to Adorno’s ‘historically different reaction’ to the works of Richard Wagner, is the idea that musicologists are neither simply reflecting the world in their descriptions of it nor merely imposing their own descriptions on the world without taking into account the way the world really is. For musicologists, what Putnam has referred to as a ‘God’s–Eye View’, whereby the world as it is in itself matches up with our descriptions of it, is unavailable.⁴ As such, there is no authoritarian standpoint beyond those of historically-mediated human beings located in contexts responding to the specific issues that arise within them. We are responding – sometimes spontaneously – to the way the world is even though that response cannot be definitively encapsulated within a philosophical theory.⁵ With these claims regarding the inseparability of mind and world, one could suggest that musicology

⁴ See Putnam 1992.

⁵ For commentaries on receptivity and spontaneity in the works of the early German Romantics see Bowie 2003a, 183-220 and Pinkard 2002, 131-171.

has entered a realm where the mind is no longer thought of as mirroring nature, but where objectivity is a matter of social agreement or what Rorty calls ‘solidarity’ among inquirers – this idea will be explained in chapter five.

As we saw in chapter three, Kivy and Davies’ respective theoretical positions are illustrative of a form of musical engagement that aims to separate the ‘subject of enquiry’ from the ‘object of enquiry’ (Kivy 2002, 67). When Davies considers the artwork to be ‘of the author’ with a meaning that is causally related to the creator-subject or when Kivy considers musical practice to be illuminated by ‘precepts and propositions’ there is danger that what the culturally- and historically-mediated interpreter brings to their engagement with musical praxis will go unacknowledged, leaving music to be reducible to the properties, propositions and precepts that supposedly govern it. However, in defending the idea that we, as historically- and culturally-mediated individuals, are responding to musical praxis, I do not wish to condone idealism. Music *is* physically instantiated, bringing with it an interpretive history, interpretive norms and formative and stylistic conventions. Music without some sort of sonic configuration based upon certain historical and cultural stylistic norms would be incomprehensible.⁶ Nevertheless, my understanding of what music is cannot be solely determined by inferring from its presence as sound because it relies on my ability to recognise music in a world that is full of diversity and constant change. Kivy’s conception of music according to its precepts and propositions or Dodd and Zangwill’s respective accounts of music’s so-called properties cannot explain why I am able to recognise new pieces of music that I have never heard before *as music* as well as understand such diverse works as a chant by Leonin, Scarlatti’s K. 141 sonata, Miles Davis’ *All Blues*, The Smiths’ ‘Girlfriend in a Coma’, Karlheinz Stockhausen’s *Kontakte* and John Cage’s *4’33”* as all being music. It is not surprising, therefore, that with musicology’s loss of confidence in the objectivity of music, some musicologists have begun to advocate a hermeneutic approach to aesthetic praxis.⁷

Against the background of disciplinary ‘lost confidence’ this chapter will seek to discuss an approximation of the current state of play of critical musicology in relation to the non-reified critique of music offered earlier in this study. The first section will attempt to take a snapshot of current musicology using the ideas of some

⁶ See Samson 2001.

⁷ See L. Kramer 2011.

of its leading proponents, whilst, at the same time, attempting to situate this snapshot within a ‘story’ of twentieth-century musicology. This familiar, albeit reductive, story concerns the emancipation of musicology and music analysis from the bonds of text-based, ‘positivistic’ research and ‘formalist’ analysis, the rise of the ‘New Musicology’ followed by its overdue confrontation with an alienated sibling – music analysis. Indeed, it is the role played by music analysis in this story that helps shed light on the current state of musicology with regards to the relationship between music and reification. Music analysis – at times considered to be ‘a discipline predicated on the blithe assumption of music’s separateness from the rest of the universe’ (Cook and Everist 2001, xii) – has been discussed and questioned by a number of commentators since Joseph Kerman’s call for critical interpretation in the mid-1980s. However, as Cook and Everist seek to demonstrate, it has only been fairly recently that the discipline has accepted that the rumours of the ‘death of analysis’ are unhelpful. The second section of this chapter looks at the arguments of a number of recent commentators who have discussed how analysis could be or has already been incorporated into the framework of critical musicology.

On Critical Musicology

In 1992, Lawrence Kramer encouraged the acceptance of what he called ‘postmodernist thinking’ in musicology. According to Kofi Agawu, Kramer’s rallying call meant that:

We should now accept that there are no nuggets of identity, no positivisms, no irreducible essences. There are no invariant first principles, no God or universal reason, no single grand narratives by which human history can be conceptualised. Our epistemologies are constructed and situated. Everything is fragmented and discontinuous; all truths are partial and provisional. Nothing is ever objective, nothing is ever “new”, and nothing can be taken for granted (Agawu 1997, 301).

Although, as Giles Hooper observes and as was discussed in the introduction to this study, certain aspects of ‘postmodern’ musicology were influenced and partially determined by some flagrantly anti-postmodern ideas,⁸ Kramer believed that what set ‘postmodernist thinking’ apart from what we could presumably refer to as ‘modernist thinking’ is the desire to overcome the fear of harming the music *itself* through

⁸ See Hooper 2006, 5-40.

language. For ‘modernist’ musicology, Kramer explains, ‘language is denied access to music, it cannot represent musical reality; music is the very means by which the epistemological limits of language, that would-be omnivore, are set’ (L. Kramer 1992, 8). In short, for those Kramer is criticising, music’s autonomy was something real that warranted protection from linguistic imperialism.⁹

Kramer was not the first musicologist to attempt to rid musicology of what Ridley refers to in the context of twentieth-century analytic aesthetics as ‘automania’.¹⁰ Kerman, seven years before Kramer’s article, called for music criticism to replace both ‘positivistic’ research into musical facts and ‘formalistic’ music analysis; although, as Agawu observes, the ideological baggage and complex histories of both these terms were suppressed in Kerman’s call to end or, at least, limit ‘old’ and outmoded theory-based analysis.¹¹ Indeed, it is questionable whether musicology, as a whole, was ever quite so coherent or quite so determined by a single over-arching ‘modernist’ paradigm as is sometimes implied. Nevertheless, as Samson observes, Kerman’s call to overcome a specifically ‘modernist’ musicology did ‘signal the end of a particular project, one of those mysterious caesuras which punctuate intellectual history and which no amount of context can fully explain’ (Samson 2001, 54).

Kerman’s major criticisms of ‘old’ and outmoded musicology can be found in his discussion of Iain Fenlon and Anthony Newcomb’s contrasting approaches to sixteenth-century Italian music. Whereas, according to Kerman, Newcomb engages with the music *itself*, Fenlon is interested with the issue of patronage as well as the broader socio-political context that grounds the music. As Kerman explains, ‘by Fenlon’s standards, Newcomb deals with music in too purely “internalist” a fashion, paying insufficient attention to the socio-political conditions that produced it. By Newcomb’s standards, such “relationships between music and society” as Fenlon is able to address without getting into the music itself must necessarily be superficial’ (Kerman 1985, 119). For Kerman, the fundamental issue is that ‘musicology is perceived as dealing essentially with the factual, the documentary, the verifiable, the analysable, the positivistic’ (ibid., 12) – ‘the emphasis was heavily on fact. New manuscripts were discovered and described, archives were reported on, dates were

⁹ See L. Kramer 1995, 13-19 for a development of these initial ideas.

¹⁰ See Ridley 2004.

¹¹ See Agawu 1997, 299.

established, *cantus firmi* traced from one work and one composer to another. Musicologists dealt mainly in the verifiable, the objective, the uncontroversial and the positive' (ibid., 42). Kerman saw such an approach to musicology as synonymous with the formalistic enterprise of music analysis – 'It is a historical fact about the present that theoretical speculation about music...is dominated by theories of form' (ibid., 62). He challenged the idea that musicological research should be governed by 'the presentation of the texts of early music and of facts and figures about it, not their interpretation' (ibid., 42). Equally, when it came to music analysis, Kerman implicitly called for reform when he asked, 'why should analysts concentrate solely on the internal structure of the individual work of art as an autonomous entity, and take no account of such considerable matters as history, communication, affect, texts and programmes, the existence of other works of art, and so much else?' (ibid., 18).¹²

Is musicology still occupied with a Kermanian positivism and is music analysis still committed to a Kermanian formalism?¹³ In terms of 'positivistic' musicology, critical musicologists acknowledge, at least at what Hooper calls 'the more subterranean level of the disciplinary sub-conscious' (Hooper 2006, 5), that the discipline evolved into a predominantly US-initiated New Musicology, an institution which, according to Alastair Williams, licensed 'unbridled relativism and pluralism' and operated with 'a set of postmodernist beliefs that are sometimes as dogmatic as their purportedly outmoded predecessors' (Williams 2000, 386). Indeed, Judy Lochhead (2002) illustrates how the terms 'postmodern musicology' and 'New Musicology' are, in some quarters, considered to be interchangeable.

Parts of New Musicology, in all its diversity, then went on to become what is known as 'critical musicology', or what Williams refers to as 'current musicology', a discipline that no longer renounced its 'modernist' – that is to say its 'positivist' and 'formalist' – past, yet continued to draw upon wider theoretical enterprises in one

¹² Although commentators have refuted Kerman's 'cruel caricature of analysis', 'there was', Cook and Everist claim, 'enough truth in the charge for at least some of the mud to stick' (Cook and Everist 2001, xi). Alastair Williams (2001) illustrates how Kerman's study is regarded as a watershed.

¹³ Williams (2001) provides an overview of the problems confronting the discipline. He also explains the intellectual currents involved and attempts to chart the transformation of the various sub-disciplines throughout the twentieth century. Hooper (2006) goes even further, charting how senses of terms like 'critical', 'positivism', 'modern', 'postmodern' and 'formalism' differ between the disciplines, leading to a gradual obfuscation of what such terms mean in the context of meta-musicological discourse. It follows that when such terms are discussed here, it is what Hooper would refer to as the crude, reductive (musicological) sense that is being referred to. However, that does not mean that I do not agree with Hooper that 'far greater care should be exercised in delineating their various applications and appropriations in the context of contemporary musicology' (Hooper 2006, 17).

form or another.¹⁴ In general terms, the notions of ‘modern’ and ‘postmodern’ are, perhaps unhelpfully, owing to the genealogical complexity and inconsistent application of both terms, used to demarcate Kermanian conceptions of ‘positivistic’ musicology and ‘formalist’ music analysis from a ‘New’ and ‘critical’ engagement with music that aimed to rid itself of the perceived failures of the past and ‘to displace notions such as integration, depth, teleology and grand narrative that at one time, we are told, were accepted unquestioningly’ (Williams 2000, 386).¹⁵ Jonathan D. Kramer also articulates some of the characteristics of what he sees as postmodern music, which could equally be applied to the way music is appreciated by ‘postmodern’ musicologists; mainly that music ‘shows disdain for the often unquestioned value of structural unity’, is considered ‘not as autonomous but as relevant to cultural, social, and political contexts’, that it ‘embraces contradictions’, ‘distrusts binary oppositions’, ‘includes fragmentations and discontinuities’, ‘encompasses pluralism and eclecticism’, ‘presents multiple meanings and multiple temporalities’ and ‘locates meaning and even structure in listeners, more than in scores, performances, or composers’ (J. Kramer 2002, 16-17).

Musicologists, in writing the history of twentieth-century musicology, generally, albeit crudely, distinguish an ‘old’, ‘modern’, fact-governed musicology and subject-determined music analysis from what was to be a ‘new’, ‘postmodern’ New Musicology, which Kramer, Cook and Everist suggest commenced in the early 1990s, but, as Hooper observes, any ‘attempt to identify a “prima causa” for any historical development inevitably risks sliding toward an untenable determinism or

¹⁴ The generalisations made here with regards to the historiography of musicology are done so in order illustrate how the current situation in critical musicology involves a discipline working through its past in the wake of so-called postmodern developments. As Hooper observes, ‘of course few, if any, scholars would actually adhere to such a simplistic account of recent disciplinary developments; indeed, pointing up the clichéd nature of such accounts has become a kind of second-order cliché in itself’ (Hooper 2006, 5). For example, Kofi Agawu’s article, ‘Analysing Music Under the New Musicological Regime’, illustrates how the spirit of critical musicology still existed despite the ‘unbridled relativism and pluralism’ of the New Musicology. Furthermore, Cook’s *A Guide to Musical Analysis* demonstrates how a will to dissolve the postmodernist/modernist binary in musicology even pre-dated the birth of the New Musicological regime.

¹⁵ It should be noted that the cultural turn in musicology was, as Richard Middleton observes, not just confined to the New Musicology. Ethnomusicology, popular music studies and the New Musicology, according to Middleton, all followed concurrent narratives through the final three decades of the twentieth century having taken quite distinct routes (Clayton, Herbert and Middleton 2012, 4). Trevor Herbert (2012), similarly, argues that the changes to musicology throughout the twentieth century coincide in many respects with the development of the social history discipline. Williams provides an analysis of how the intellectual movements of structuralism and poststructuralism map onto musicology and music analysis throughout the various stages of their transformation (Williams 2001, 21-47).

over-simplification' (Hooper 2006, 6).¹⁶ Indeed, if 'postmodern' musicology is anything like the postmodern music characterised by Jonathan D. Kramer (2002), then no sharp distinction can be drawn between 'modernist' and 'postmodern' ways of doing musicology as the latter is deemed to operate, simultaneously, as a break from, a response and extension to the former. Wellmer, similarly, suggests that if we look at the postmodern movement 'from the right angle, it is possible to discern in it also the contours of a radicalised modernism, of an Enlightenment that has acquired a higher consciousness of itself, and of a post-rationalist concept of reason. Looked at this way, postmodernism takes on the appearance of a de-mythologised Marxism, a continuation of aesthetic avant-gardism, or a radicalisation of language philosophy' (Wellmer 1985, 48). Thus, for Wellmer, in one sense, it would be wrong for us to merely equate postmodernism with cynicism, irrationality and particularism. Ultimately, as he demonstrates, postmodernism can, to a certain degree, also be seen as a 'critique of modernity' just as Nietzsche, Adorno, Heidegger and Lacan's respective projects face up to the social, cultural, political and philosophical problems posed by Western modernity. However, even though, as Wellmer is aware, the concept of postmodernism can only be made sense of in terms of its (critical) relationship to modernism, ultimately, as shall be demonstrated in greater detail in chapter five, there are significant differences between a 'radicalised' or 'critical' modernism and 'postmodernism', differences that can no longer be ignored if the discipline of musicology is to avoid 'postmodernising' itself out of existence.

As shall be explored in chapter five, the terms 'New Musicology' and 'postmodernism' are, arguably, out-dated and disparaging. It is not surprising, therefore, that Lawrence Kramer stresses that what used to be known as the New Musicology should now be called 'critical musicology' (L. Kramer 2011, 64). Re-labelling the discipline does more than address the negative connotations that had become attached to the New Musicology. In doing away with the term 'New Musicology', the musicological community is, in effect, doing away with the

¹⁶ Despite an ability to locate the emergence of the New Musicology at the American Musicological Society's annual meeting in Oakland in 1990, as Cook and Everist observe, opinions vary as to how the term 'New Musicology' came about (Cook and Everist 2001, viii). Furthermore, while some of that which came to be called 'New Musicology' was certainly influenced by 'postmodern' theory, it is also clear, as Hooper (2006) observes, that the opportunities for 'postmodern' theory have not been completely exhausted by a localised and transient New Musicology. This leads to Hooper to claim that although the term 'New Musicology' has become rather 'old', 'the label "postmodern"...has lost none of its actuality, even though it is more often than not closely associated, if not directly identified, with the 'new' musicology' (Hooper 2006, 8).

negative connotations of a New Musicology that, due to certain misconceptions,¹⁷ failed to acknowledge its reliance upon the handed-down materials of ‘modernist’ musicology, and, instead, tried to claim an outright rejection of those materials.¹⁸ Although Hooper articulates the confusions and contradictions surrounding the term ‘critical musicology’ as well as its links to both Critical Theory and critical theory *qua* theory *per se*, one of the most exciting developments that sets critical musicology apart from its predecessor is that, as Williams notes, it ‘critically transforms modernism, valuing its achievements and jettisoning its failures’ (Williams 2000, 386). Critical musicology, at least the British strand, aims to collapse the divide between what can be construed from a musicological perspective as ‘postmodern’ and what can thought of as the ‘modern’, incorporating aspects of pre-Kermanian or pre-Kramerian musicology into the achievements of the New Musicology, achievements that opened up a space for the critical interpretation of music, a pluralistic approach to musical works, a respect for cultural, social, political, sexual and gender difference and a re-enchantment of musical meaning and ontology. One would be justified in claiming that the title of Cook and Everist’s edition – *Rethinking Music* – emphasises the *modus operandi* of the critical musicology: having realised the traps of dogmatism and subjective value judgements, critical musicology aims to constantly rethink what it thought it knew about music in order to avoid the objectively-given and subjectively-determined orthodoxies of the past whilst, nevertheless, incorporating the gains made by both ‘old’ and ‘new’ musicologies.

One of the most exciting innovations of critical musicology, which we will look at in depth in the following section, is its attempt to use music analysis to assist us in the process of interpreting the meaningfulness of specific manifestations of musical

¹⁷ See Hooper 2006, 5-40.

¹⁸ Hooper has highlighted the self-contradictions of the New Musicology. For example, ‘there is a tendency, in at least some “new” or “critical” musicological writing, to imply that positivism is simply and inherently a “bad thing”...Yet it is clear that the weak(er) version of “positivism” can actually incorporate a strikingly diverse range of research activities. For example, it might include: establishing the provenance of a given work, the biographical details for a given composer, or the financial transactions of a seventeenth-century opera-house; collating data on the educational arrangements at a medieval cathedral or the sales figures for a particular genre of popular music; or investigating, at an empirical level, the emotional or cognitive reaction of listeners to a particular piece of music. Although such undertakings might be categorized as historical musicology and the sociology or psychology of music respectively, they all embody a common set of methodological and epistemological assumptions. They also account for a very significant proportion of contemporary musicological research; in fact, it is difficult to envisage any research project that does not in some way, at some level, in relation to some of its material, rely upon a weak positivism in establishing its basic terms of reference’ (Hooper 2006, 19).

praxis. However, no less important is the idea that ‘no final, universally applicable decision on the matter is possible or even desirable’ (Cook and Everist 1999, xi). Cook, writing in 1987 on the ideology of a theory of the Tristan chord, a theory which aims to settle the debate on the structural significance of the opening chord of Wagner’s *Tristan und Isolde*, claims that the century of controversy surrounding the chord highlights the fact that no single interpretation ‘has a monopoly of the truth’ (Cook 1987, 232). Cook’s fundamental criticism is that both historical musicology and music analysis have attempted to speak with authority – a ‘scientific’ and ‘theoretical’ authority – on matters relating to music and musical works. However, what Robert Gjerdingen refers to as the ‘eternal verities’ of musicology – those concepts of music analysis and musicology which are treated as concrete, metaphysical facts, and, in some sense, grant musicologists and music analysts the authority to disenchant music – are no longer conceived as such (Gjerdingen 2001, 162). For Kerman, no single individual in his dealings with music – whether critic, musicologist, ethnomusicologist, music theorist, music analyst, performer or composer – will be able to account for music in its entirety or even for a specific form of musical praxis through a definitive theory or interpretation.

In coming to realise that any attempts to account for the totality of music or musical praxis will result in a failure to appreciate the uniqueness and capaciousness of either what we think is (and are yet to call) music or a particular composition or performance, musicology, in certain quarters, manages to avoid the perils of reification as identity-thinking, which, as we have seen, reduces qualitative ‘individuals’, ‘particulars’ and ‘heterogeneities’ to what is identical with the ‘form’ of disengaged contemplation. The major theme of what follows is to explore the ways in which musicology has responded to the repressive effects of certain manifestations of identity-thinking. However, as already discussed, that is not to say that all forms of identity have negative effects. It is not necessarily the case that by identifying something as music, we have restricted the capaciousness of the object; we have merely brought that particular piece of music into the inferential sphere of the giving of and asking for reasons. Furthermore, no concept or set of concepts has the ultimate role in determining the constitution of the object; one of the great benefits of seeing language as disclosive as opposed to being merely assertive and fact-establishing, and the fact that we can come up with new metaphors to solve cognitive problems, is that there will always be additional concepts we can use to account for the object *ad*

infinitum. As was observed in the previous chapter, by engaging with music in a world full of change and diversity, there will be no final say in what we think about or take from a particular piece of music.

In addition, as was explored in chapter one, although general assertions about particular pieces of music can distort their particularity, to focus purely on the particulars would result in a failure to see how such particulars fit in with the general situation. In other words, we would fail to account for music as what Wellmer calls a 'hidden totality' that invites contextually-formative interpretation, analysis and criticism but, at the same time, resists it. Such a failure could not only lead to an inability to identify music as music in the first place, but it could also ignore the ways in which specific works, performances and interpretations are, in part, determined by their general surroundings. The failure to connect particular pieces of music to the wider context of their creation, performance and reception also takes place when works are subsumed under an autonomistic conception of music. Lawrence Kramer's way out of positivist and formalist mind-sets was to 'situate musical experience within the densely compacted, concretely situated worlds of those who compose, perform and listen' (L. Kramer 1992, 10). Williams echoes Kramer when he declares that 'social [and we should add historical, cultural and political] and musical aspects are not...easily separated...in fact all music is social' (Williams 2000, 402). Similarly, Karol Berger problematizes the distinction between musical and non-musical facts. He claims that 'individual actions can make sense only within a broader context of premises and constraints established by social practices, shared activities with relatively stable and continuous, though not unchanging, aims, means by which these aims are realised, and the institutions that support the activities of all those engaged in the practice' (Berger 2005, 492). The crux of the matter for these musicologists is that when music is considered to be more than just pure, sound structure, a sonic configuration that language cannot penetrate, but something by which individuals and groups articulate how they make sense of the world, we are not able to clearly distinguish the so-called musical aspects of works and performances from the world in which these events emerge.

When we engage with performances of Beethoven's *Eroica* symphony, we can, of course, marvel at either the unfolding of Heinrich Schenker's *Ursatz*, how the *Urfinie* of the first movement moves within a space of a third, or the organic development of Fritz Cassirer's motifs, but to look at these issues as eternal verities

of the autonomous Third Symphony is to ignore the fact that issues of style and of compositional technique are derived and inseparable from the world in which Beethoven was composing. Indeed, the fact that the *Eroica* fits Schenkerian analysis so well is no mystery of some transcendental, absolute object, but a consequence of a moment of congruity between a culturally-derived style and a theory that aims to show how that style – tonal music of the early nineteenth century – functions. Similarly, the fact that Schenkerian analysis takes up the form that it does during the early twentieth century, when it aims to affirm the German art of composition from J. S. Bach to Johannes Brahms, is because Schenker's theory is entwined with his deep-rooted nationalism, a psychological concern with hearing music 'properly', a desire to uncover authorial intention and a long-standing organicist polemic against Wagner and Hector Berlioz for their betrayal of the 'immutable laws' of German composition. The fact that the analysis of the *Eroica* in *Das Meisterwerk der Musik 3* (1930) follows an article, '*Rameau oder Beethoven? Erstarrung oder geistiges Leben in der Musik?*', in which Schenker provides a polemic against Rameau and French theory in general, illustrates that Schenkerian analysis can be understood as an aesthetic project that emerged with – amongst other things – nationalist ideology and nineteenth-century organicist aesthetics.

Embedding Music

The question of how to deal with music's embeddedness within socio-cultural practices has been a concern for both New Musicology and critical musicology. In a now infamous disciplinary debate between Lawrence Kramer and Gary Tomlinson, the latter accused Kramer, who, as we have already seen, was calling for a particular brand of 'postmodern' thinking in musicology, of 'linger[ing] over old viewpoints more than suggest[ing] new ones' (Tomlinson 1993, 18). Although Tomlinson agrees with Kramer's call for musicologists to abandon 'the myth of music's autonomy' by 'welcoming the complex situatedness of musical utterances in webs of extramusical forces', he believes that Kramer clings to too much modernist ideology. Specifically, Tomlinson accuses Kramer of appealing to ahistorical and formalist conceptions of music, of being too 'internalist'. According to Tomlinson, Kramer 'locates the context of music...in the music itself' (ibid., 19). Tomlinson is concerned that 'an internalist engagement of the critic with the work' – a close reading of notes – will

‘sweep away in a single stroke the epistemological and phenomenological quandaries attendant on the contextualisation Kramer has just finished advocating’ (ibid., 20).

Tomlinson then summarises his aims:

[My] contextualism will not circle back narrowly to the notes but instead will *resolutely historicise musical utterance*, exploding it outwards through an imaginative building of contexts out of as wealthy a concatenation of past traces as the historian can manage. Such contextualism will aim to describe a local set of meanings in as full a volume as possible. It will not pose as a reconstruction of some putative and unitary “original” situation the music inhabited but will recognise the myriad situations we as historians might construct around a musical utterance and the plurality of meanings the music might thus engage (ibid., 22).

Despite the shadows of positivism and relativism lingering over Tomlinson’s claims, his proposals touch upon some important themes that we have considered throughout this thesis. If we are to attend to the musical work as an ‘objective correlate of aesthetic experience’, then the experience of music and the articulation of what that experience discloses cannot be confined to the study of works in the common, score-derived sense of the term. Firstly, to purely analyse and discuss works as notes on a page, with no concern for what lies outside the edges of the score, would turn musical works into what Goehr refers to as ‘concrete physical objects’ that have a ‘self-sufficiently formed unity, expressive in its synthesised form and [the] content of a genius’s idea’ (Goehr 1992, 242). Secondly, by calling into question the autonomistic conception of music, Tomlinson, like Goehr, argues that musicologists must recognise that the category of the ‘work’, is a ‘cultural construction’, not a ‘given’ that can only be understood through disengaged contemplation (Tomlinson 1993, 23). The diversity and ever-changing nature of the world ensures that the question of the ontology of the musical work will generate as many answers as the meanings that are attributed to these works. Indeed, as we observed in chapter one, once we understand that the work only emerges in act of mediation between the interpreter and the sounds that we tacitly grasp as being music, this makes the ontological status of the work unclear. For Tomlinson, it is because of cultural diversity and change that we cannot habitually and tacitly deploy musicological concepts as ‘given’, monolithic truths.

Furthermore, as Cook and Everist observe, by calling into question what were thought to be the objective truths of music’s ontology and autonomy, musical subjectivity is also destabilised. As Tomlinson proposes, ‘we cannot successfully

challenge these myths [the myths of genius and individualism] while we remain bound to models of culture that see it as made exclusively through the conscious and subconscious intents of historical actors. Neither can we do so while we adhere single-mindedly to conceptions of subjectivity that grant it unrivalled culture-making powers' (ibid., 22). For those who are suspicious of the subject's role in determining value, who do not wish to derive meaning purely from subjective judgements and who question the identity of any would-be subject that attempts to determine value, disciplinary authority suffers a loss of confidence.

If we move away from a score-based conception of the musical work and all the formalist and autonomanic baggage associated with it, and consider works as events, whereby, as was observed in chapter two, the work does not exist outside of its presentation [*Darstellung*], then the articulation of what is disclosed will not be confined to the analysis of notes on a page or to certain acoustic phenomena. For Gadamer, the experience of the work is the 'non-differentiation of the mediation [*Vermittlung*] from the work itself'; the work is actualised as a work only through its presentation and in its presentation (Gadamer 2004, 118). When we consider the musical work as that which only has its being through mediation, then the meaningfulness of aesthetic experience will be drawn from the entire context of presentation, including, but not restricted to, the bodily movements of the performers, the context of the performance, the medium through which a performance is transmitted, the constitution of the audience, the work's reception, the instruments used, the economic, cultural, social and political background to the event *as well as* the sounds we understand to be music. Furthermore, if we acknowledge that our understanding of a piece of music does not occur in a vacuum, isolated from all other experiences in and of the world, then all understanding of a particular event will be based on (but not completely determined by) the background of our prior involvement in the world.

For example, the question of the meaning of the so-called 'invasion theme' in the first movement of Shostakovich's Seventh Symphony has been a long-standing bone of contention for those engaged in the 'Shostakovich debate' over the composer's life, intentions and works. Is the theme an expression of the Nazi war-

machine bursting into life of the Leningrad people?¹⁹ Alternatively, as Solomon Volkov claims, was the composer thinking about other enemies of humanity when he composed the theme?²⁰ These questions demonstrate how the Shostakovich debate between revisionists/Volkovists and anti-revisionists/Taruskinites is still tainted by too much ‘modernist’ ideology in its pursuit for facts surrounding the political views of the ‘real’ Shostakovich. For those concerned with biography, Shostakovich’s views concerning the Stalinist regime may still prove to be fruitful, especially as such views are, as the debate illustrates, so difficult to pin down. The problem with coming to read Shostakovich’s political views off the music itself is that, as we saw with Adorno’s contrasting interpretations of Wagner’s works in chapter two, the works themselves can change with the world. To understand meaning as determined by a causal relationship between an artwork and the creator-subject is to fail to understand why music, rather than just being a historical relic or a tool of the biographer, continues to play such an important role in our everyday practices. As we have seen, with the change in the event’s situatedness, the meaningfulness of aesthetic experience will change as we respond to musical praxis from out of a different series of contexts. Therefore, rather than ask whether the ‘invasion theme’ is an expression of the Nazi war-machine or an expression of the Stalinist regime, perhaps a better question to ask in the age of lost confidence is ‘do we interpret the theme as programmatically representing such and such?’ Even Richard Taruskin, who argues that the programmatic elements of the Seventh Symphony cannot be read out of the context of the immediate, overriding urgencies of the war, observes, through the ideas of Leo Mazel, that if focus is taken away from what the author intended, ‘wartime listeners [due to their particular historical situatedness and through their specific horizons of enquiry] were justified in hearing a representation of Nazis, and we [for the same hermeneutic reasons] are justified now, if we are still interested in anti-Soviet revisionism, in hearing a representation of Bolsheviks’ (Taruskin 1997, 488). Ultimately, in acknowledging the world in all its change and diversity, then different horizons of enquiry will generate different meanings, satisfying Tomlinson’s call for the recognition of a ‘plurality of meanings’ that surround a musical utterance. As Taruskin claims, ‘the putative original

¹⁹ See Shostakovich’s explications for the programmatic nature of the first three movements of the symphony in Fay 2000, 129.

²⁰ See Volkov 1981.

identification of the invasion theme with Stalin does not preclude its later use as a symbol for the Nazi aggression' (ibid., 489). The danger with such hermeneutic approaches to the question of music's meaningfulness is that there is a tendency to suggest that 'anything goes'. This, as we shall discuss in detail later in the chapter and in chapter five, raises certain ethical and political questions that cannot be ignored if musicology, as an institution, is to be seen as a legitimate enterprise.

What divides Tomlinson and Kramer is the question of the place of music analysis in the New Musicology. For Kramer, the crux of the matter is that 'we cannot understand music "in context" thick or otherwise, if we have no means of representing concretely what the music does as utterance' (L. Kramer 1993, 31). The problem is a familiar one. How are we to understand the context within which music is created, performed and received if we do not understand a particular performance or piece of music? For Kramer, there *can* be moral and political problems in using certain aesthetic tools to engage with a particular manifestation of musical praxis. We can question the motivations behind the use of set theory as opposed to Schenkerian analysis or the deployment of Derrida as opposed to Adorno. However, for Kramer, rather than rule out any of what he calls 'aesthetic ideologies' for fear that this might damage the 'myriad situations we as historians might construct around a musical utterance and the plurality of meanings the music might thus engage', we need ways of analysing particular pieces of music in order to show how such pieces are meaningful. To 'resolutely historicise musical utterance' without reference to the 'utterance' itself could not only lead to general assertions being made about music without a care for the qualitative differences between works and performances (something Tomlinson would not wish to condone) but it could also make it difficult to distinguish musical praxis from any other sort of world-disclosive phenomenon, be it artistic or otherwise.

Whether or not one agrees with Agawu, who, in 1997, claimed that 'note-by-note analysis has so far not played a central role in the new musicology' (Agawu 1997, 302), the contributions made to Cook and Everist's edited volume illustrate that the question of the New Musicology's engagement (or lack thereof) with music analysis has been a matter of debate for the past decade. Although the idea of musical autonomy has suffered a decline, we cannot doubt music's specificity. Music analysis has been shown to be an appropriate method for engaging with music precisely because, as a specialist method of analysis with its own concepts and

techniques, it affirms music's irreducibility. However, there is also a danger that music analysis, precisely because it cannot be reduced to the analysis of any other thing in the world, becomes, as Wegman states, 'self-serving, self-centered and self-indulgent' and attempts to speak with authority on the totality of music with little or no concern for the other discourses capable of accessing music (Wegman 2012, 45). As shall be discussed, Wegman's concerns emerge by linking music analysis to the aesthetic project of formalism, which, once we acknowledge that musical praxis is an 'objective correlate of aesthetic experience', no longer presents us with a problem.

On Music Analysis

Kerman chided music analysis for being a formalistic enterprise that concentrates 'solely on the internal structure of the individual work of art as an autonomous entity' (Kerman 1985, 18).²¹ However, unlike Tomlinson, Kerman imagined a future for music analysis 'if it [could] only be taken out of the hothouse of theory and brought out into the real world' (ibid.). Debates over Kerman's representation of music analysis as a caricature of the discipline are ongoing.²² In the main, these debates focus on Kerman's equation of formalism in music analysis with positivism in historical musicology as well as the equation of music theory with analysis. For example, Kerman claims that 'the appeal of systematic analysis was that it provided for a positivistic approach to art, for a criticism that could draw on precisely defined, seemingly objective operations and shun subjective criteria' (ibid., 73). As Williams observes, while historical musicology mainly involves the preparation of manuscripts and the study of sources with a focus on authorial intention, thus sacrificing the contingencies that occur in performance, formalist analysis seeks internal structure with little concern for historical details (Williams 2001, 5). The underlying coherence valued by formalist analysis is, therefore, according to Williams, incompatible with the historical data sought by positivism. For Cook and Everist, Kerman's association

²¹ As Williams observes, the suggestion that music can somehow be removed from the discourses in which it is embedded is also a problem for the intellectual movement of structuralism (Williams 2001, 21-27).

²² For example, as Berger observes with regards to the work of Heinrich Bessler, there was plenty of interpretation going on before Kerman's call for an emancipation of musicology and music analysis from the grips of positivism and formalism (Berger 2005, 492). Similarly, as Herbert argues, when it came to the study of history, there were those historians who anticipated the so-called 'cultural turn' in the discipline claiming, like Croce, that all history is contemporary history determined by the cultural and ideological baggage of those that interpret history (Herbert 2012, 50)

of positivism in musicology with formalism in music analysis is problematised by the fact that although formalist music theory asserts ‘that music is what we make it’ (Cook and Everist 2001, vi), musicological positivism demands the complete separation of researcher and music – ‘for the musicological positivist (as indeed for some of Kerman’s earlier “formalists”, like Schenker), the music is *there*, regardless of what we think it is, and it will coincide with what we think it is only to the extent that we happen to be right’ (ibid.). So, Cook and Everist observe, formalism and positivism ‘are similar, in that each embodies a stance of unproblematical authority; the difference is that in the one case authority is invested in the musical thinker, while in the other it is invested in the music that is thought of’ (Cook and Everist 2001, vi).

A ‘formalist music theorist’ as described by Kerman might agree with Hanslick, in that, if music is to be a language, it is a purely musical language incapable of representation or conceptualisation. The spectre of formalism, for example, seems to haunt Murray Perahia’s claim that the reason he values Schenkerian analysis is for its ability to demonstrate ‘why each note is essential to the coherence of the whole, and why each note is inevitable even though they each seem to be a surprise’ (Gaussin 2012). Indeed, he goes on to associate the ‘essence of a composition’ or the ‘secret of a piece’ with the ‘complex [harmonic and melodic] relationships that tie them together’ (Gaussin 2012). By discounting the music’s emergence from socio-cultural practices and its inherent meaningfulness as a result of such practices, the retreat into an inner realm of musical ‘secrets’ and ‘essences’ creates the illusion that Schenkerian analysis merely affirms an autonomanic conception of music. However, as William Rothstein observes, the separation of Schenkerian analysis from religion, nationalism and metaphysics was predominantly a mid-twentieth-century American college phenomenon, clearly distinguished from Schenker’s original conception.²³ Samson suggests that what allowed for this mid-twentieth-century ‘aesthetic’ project was ‘an inherent (energetic) organicism, purged of context’ that ‘enshrines the work concept’ (Samson 2001, 39). Williams takes Samson’s argument a step further, proposing that the search for ‘abstract logic’ that occupied the twentieth-century structuralists could also be located in formalist music analysis whereby detail, discourses and context are sacrificed to a vision of internal unity and internal logic – ‘a willingness to bypass the subject and a reluctance to

²³ See Rothstein 1990, 193-203.

reflect on the historical location of its own discourses are structuralist problems that remain endemic to poststructuralism' (Williams 2001, 29).

The institutionalisation of analysis at the turn of the twentieth century, Samson argues, emerged as a consequence of the aesthetic project of autonomy, the nineteenth-century fetishisation of organicism and the construction of the work concept. Music analysis, he argues, 'both grew from and served to validate aesthetic autonomy, that essentialist Enlightenment project which carved out a space for art in the precarious middle ground between sensory perception and intellectual cognition, between *sensus* and *ratio*' (Samson 2001, 39). Although acknowledging that this was not a single shift of paradigm, Samson claims that it is at the stage where organicism becomes an aesthetic project 'which enshrines the work concept and marks the transition to an analytical philosophy of art in general and to music analysis in particular' (ibid.). The point Samson wishes to stress is that Kerman's *criticisms* of music analysis as a 'formalistic' enterprise ignore the fact that the institution of analysis emerged from a specific series of contexts. Thus, Samson claims, 'the unified musical work, celebrated by the institution of analysis, was a necessary, valuable, and glorious myth, but it was a myth shaped in all essentials by a particular set of social and historical circumstances' (ibid., 42).

As a result of the Kerman's misrepresentation of what Samson shows to be a complex initiative, the call to escape formalism is, as Agawu observes, more problematic than it first seems (Agawu 1997, 299). Even if we, like Scott Burnham, approach music analysis as a form of hermeneutic interpretation, suggesting that 'it involves a back-and-forth motion between the world of the work and the experience and tendencies of the analyst', thus blurring Kerman's divide between hard-line formalism and hermeneutic and historically aware criticism, the divide itself cannot be dissolved. As Burnham demonstrates, music analysis *qua* hermeneutic interpretation is still different to what he calls 'truly hermeneutic interpretations' (Burnham 2001, 198). For 'truly hermeneutic interpretations', the work is open and prone to change. Burnham, therefore, merely shifts the focus of his critique from the formal analyst to the dichotomy 'between surveyors of the open work and purveyors of the closed work' (ibid.). Again, we are presented with two distinct groups; those that perceive music as 'in and for itself', removed from the effects of extraneous influence; and those that treat music as open, prone to change and contingent upon the contexts in which it is created, performed and commented upon. No matter how

we label the purveyors of the closed work, we still are not able to escape the clutches of formalism, which, as Samson, observes, is committed ‘to the closure that separates the work of art from the world’ (Samson 2001, 40). But it is not altogether obvious that we should need to ‘get out of’ music analysis, in the sense of score-based enquiry, as Kerman suggests. As we shall now go on to see, where a score is present, and where certain aspects of it can be legitimately be regarded as relatively fixed, music analysis, as Samson observes, can still play a vital role in assisting with the articulation of musical meaning, although what is meant does require a ‘truly hermeneutic’ approach as Burnham sees it.

Music Analysis and the Internal Negativity of Music

If we think of the musical work as an ‘objective correlate of aesthetic experience’ then we can claim that studies of music cannot be derived from ‘positivistic’ study of contexts or ‘formalistic’ music analysis alone without taking into account hermeneutic anticipations of meaning. Leo Treitler, however, adopts the opposite view, fearing that an over-intellectualised, over-conceptualised and over-contextualised musical work will cause music to lose its value as an ‘aesthetic object’ (Treitler 2001, 358). The problem of how to overcome the issue of autonomy without devaluing the irreducibility of music is not just confined to musicology. Wellmer, for example, argues that the relationship between language and music can be viewed from several different perspectives.²⁴ If we discuss music as the language of the emotions or as, in some sense, representational of the world, in short, as an analogy to ‘lingually-articulated semantic contexts’, it is difficult to explain how a specifically *musical* context can be brought forth with the aid of historically contingent and technical acoustic material. Wellmer explains that the question of how specifically *musical* contexts can be articulated can no more be answered by reference to music as representation than a reference to language as the representational-fixing of the world can provide an answer to the question as to how literature can constitute a form of art (Wellmer 2004, 83). Similarly, even if we engage with what Wellmer calls the ‘*context-forming*’ aspects of music – such as the technical means which generate the idea of a ‘tonal’ language of music – as projections of syntactical, grammatical and

²⁴ See Wellmer 2004.

rhetorical terms of verbal language, he argues that ‘the constitutive *difference* between specifically musical context-formations and those of everyday (that is, non-literary) verbal language is lost from view’ (ibid., 89).

As was observed in chapter one, conceptual identification or what Wellmer refers to as ‘*Versprachlichung*’ brings about the equivalence of qualitatively distinct things so that, as Adorno claimed, ‘if I subsume a series of characteristics, a series of elements, under a concept, what normally happens is that I abstract a particular characteristic from these elements, one that that they have in common: and this characteristic will then be the concept, it will represent the unity of all the elements that possess this characteristic’ (Adorno 2008, 7). In terms of reification, Adorno aimed to offer a counteraction to reified thought through the notion of non-identity, ‘namely the divergence of concept and thing, subject and object, and their unreconciled state’ (ibid., 6). Although, as Bowie observes, the issue of non-identity can be applied to the Leibnizian idea that no two entities are completely identical, the issue we have specifically been concerned with is the Hegelian notion ‘that, because the determinacy of things depends on their relations to other things, they can never be definitively subsumed into a timeless classificatory concept which expresses their essential identity’ (Bowie 2013, 25). In the case of what Bowie refers to as the ‘trivial’ sense of non-identity, Adorno claimed that ‘by saying that A is everything that is comprehended in this unity [between concept and object], I necessarily include countless characteristics that are *not* integrated into the individual elements subsumed under it. The concept is always less than what is subsumed under it’ (Adorno 2008, 7). Indeed, for Adorno, there is a link between the negative effects of identification, which reach their zenith in the dehumanising objectifications of the Holocaust, and a certain type of thinking that renders two things identical mainly because, as he illustrated, ‘when a B is defined as an A, it is always also *different from and more than* the A, the concept under which it is subsumed by way of a predicative judgment’ (ibid.). But, as we have seen, not all forms of conceptual identification have negative effects. We need, for example, to make identifications in order to bring things in the world into the inferential sphere, to read music from a score or to communicate with others in general. Bowie also raises the notion of the ‘emphatic concept’ in Adorno’s account of non-identity, according to which, taking the concept ‘freedom’ as an example, ‘every concept is not simply the unity of the characteristics of all the individuals who can be defined as free on the basis of a formal freedom

within a given constitution. Rather, in a situation in which people are guaranteed the freedom to exercise a profession or to enjoy their basic rights or whatever, the concept of freedom contains a pointer to something that goes well beyond those specific freedoms' (ibid.). Thus, as Bowie claims, 'concepts can cut off dimensions of the object that do not accord with a dominant ideology, but they can also keep alive what is missing in a given state of understanding of the object' (Bowie 2013, 67).

As was illustrated in chapters one and two, Adorno was no 'naïve realist' who maintained the complete separation of mind and reality. Negative dialectics does not do away with conceptuality altogether. Indeed, as Adorno claimed, 'negativity 'is made concrete and goes beyond mere standpoint philosophy by confronting concepts with their objects and, conversely, objects with their concepts' (Adorno 2008, 25). In other words, 'the idea at the heart of philosophy is to use the concept to reach beyond the concept' (ibid., 95) – 'to open up the non-conceptual' (Adorno GS 6, 21). When it comes to musicology, we can still engage with the particulars of musical praxis, specify what we are referring to and offer justifications for those specifications without the fear of being accused of identity-thinking. Indeed, Adorno discussed the analysis of works of art to be representative of the kind of approach to the world that would satisfy his conditions for a negative dialectics. Thus, Adorno hinted at Wellmer's proposal that artworks exist only as 'objective correlates of aesthetic experience' when he claimed that 'there is a sense in which works of art have their life' in the process of analysis, 'a process made possible only by an aesthetic philosophy which includes analysis and, in particular, a micrological analysis' (Adorno 2008, 84) For Adorno, 'analysis can be very helpful in articulating the infinite meanings contained within works of art' (ibid.). Preceding Wellmer's comments regarding the need to articulate an artwork's 'spirit' or 'content' through interpretation, analysis and criticism, Adorno suggested that 'works of art live because the advance of analysis gradually increases our knowledge of their objective intellectual meanings' (ibid.). This may sound trivial, but how we make identifications without Treitler's fears of over-conceptualising, over-intellectualising and over-contextualising music is a problem for contemporary musicology, inviting debate over the place of music analysis within musical understanding. The debate can be summarised through recent comments made by Treitler and Lawrence Kramer, for example. For Treitler, we need to maintain a 'provisionally autonomous status for the musical work' in order not to reduce it to cultural meanings whose explication will

become the ultimate aim of musicology (Treitler 2001, 358). However, Kramer has observed that despite music being ‘now widely conceded to embody cultural meanings through and through’, such meanings can only be expressed through analytic and semiotic means, which, for Kramer, causes musicology to lapse into the ‘new-style assumption...that even if musical meaning is an actual, effective, intrinsic phenomenon, it must still be based on the bedrock of musical form’, an assumption that has its roots in the ‘old-style assumption...that musical form (the object of analytic-technical description) is self-sufficient, the substantial musical reality to which any external meaning is at best a flimsy supplement, at worst an illusory one’ (L. Kramer 2011, 148-149).

With regards to Treitler’s comments on musical autonomy and Tomlinson’s criticisms of ‘internalist’ engagements with musical works, we can see how the musicological exploration of musical praxis has been problematised by two extreme positions. The first stresses music’s autonomous or ‘provisionally autonomous’ status, thereby extolling the virtues of music analysis as a method of enquiry that preserves the ideology of music’s self-sufficiency. The second demands a ‘contextualist’ approach that will, as we have already observed, ‘*resolutely historicise musical utterance*’ but with an apparent lack of engagement with the music *itself*. But the hackneyed debates that circle the questions of music’s ‘formalisms’ and ‘positivisms’ will continue to be espoused so long as a contextual approach such as Tomlinson’s and an analytic engagement such as Treitler’s are thought to be mutually exclusive. Through philosophical hermeneutics, which relies on the interplay of part and whole, of phenomenon and context, the distinction between music as the object of analytical enquiry and the context in which it is created, performed and receive is disabled. To see musical autonomy as in conflict with the world in which music is located is to create a pseudo-problem, one which does not exist when we consider music’s place in everyday practices. For if we are to separate music’s autonomy from its worldliness, we will need a theory by which we can consistently draw a line between the two. What are the criteria for making such a distinction? How do we come up with a theory for the separation without presupposing the distinction that we wish to establish?

The issue for Heidegger, as was discussed in chapter one, is that to disassociate artworks from world-disclosure in order to treat them, ontically, as formed matter or as substances with properties is to deploy a conceptual scheme characteristic of

traditional approaches to aesthetics, one that is still prevalent in the work of analytic aestheticians.²⁵ As Bowie claims, Heidegger's response is to avoid those 'objectifying' accounts 'which could be construed as being part of Western metaphysics, as that which makes the world into what can be technologically manipulated' (Bowie 2007, 302). From a Heideggerian perspective, the problem is that to make a distinction between Treitlerian 'form' and Tomlinsonian 'content' – the 'metaphysics of modernity' (Heidegger 2003, 15) – is to presuppose a subject-object divide that, as we have seen throughout this thesis, calls into question our common-sense understanding of the importance of music in our daily practices. So, Heidegger argued, 'if one correlates form with the rational and matter with the irrational, if, moreover, one takes the rational to be logical and the irrational the illogical, and if, finally, one couples the conceptual duality between form and matter into the subject-object relation, then one has at one's disposal a conceptual mechanism that nothing can resist' (ibid., 12). Nevertheless, the artwork's 'being-in-the-world' 'is not first and foremost the relationship between subject and object, but is instead that which has already made such a relationship possible in advance' (Heidegger 1998, 235). The issue revolves around the idea that in order to enquire after music in what Ridley calls its 'pure state' or as Braver, *après* Heidegger, calls 'present-at-hand objects', that is, in order to consider music as autonomous or 'provisionally autonomous', we first have to know that what we are engaged with is, in fact, music. This understanding is, for Heidegger, a 'pre-conceptual' understanding that takes place in the context of our 'everydayness' and only as a result of which music is intelligible *qua* music. Thus, we can interpret Heidegger's reference to Dasein in the following claim as also applying to musical praxis: 'All understanding...is *thrown*, i.e., it is determined by the dependency of Dasein on the being already in the totality, a dependency over which Dasein itself does not have control' (ibid.). To acknowledge that artworks 'set up a world', one which 'is never an object that stands before us and can be looked at' (Heidegger 2003, 31), is not to deny what Heidegger calls the 'object-being' of the work (ibid., 20), but to suggest that the objective features of an *artwork* are objective *of an artwork* and *not of anything else* because such a work is *firstly* meaningful *qua* work as a result of its emergence from background practices on the basis of which anything at all shows up

²⁵ See Heidegger 2003, 1-74.

as intelligible. According to Heidegger, therefore, the ‘object-being’ aspects of a work only show up as being objective *of a work* on account of the artwork’s worldliness. Indeed, Wellmer reaches a similar conclusion, claiming that the ‘object quality’ of the artwork, including its form and material, can only be understood as an ‘objective correlate’ of inherently meaningful aesthetic experiences.

A Hermeneutic Approach to Music Analysis

If we understand music’s irreducibility as being in conflict with its entwinement with socio-cultural practices then, as already mentioned, we will continue to circle the same worn-out debates concerning music’s ‘formalisms’ and ‘positivisms’, between analytic description and contextualism. Treitler affirms the presence of such a tension when the analysis of the interior of works leads interpreters to ‘entertain the very conceptions that they programmatically reject’ (Treitler 2001, 370). In other words, to carry out an internal analysis of works is, so Treitler believes, to accede to an autonomanic conception of music, which ‘postmodern’ musicologists wish to denounce. To accept Treitler’s claims regarding the problems of music analysis is to accept that, as Carolyn Abbate claims, music ‘is at once ineffable and sticky; that is its fundamental incongruity’ (Abbate 2004, 523). To conceive of music as, in a sense, bipolar, leads us to apologise for the fact that when music is regarded as autonomous or ‘provisionally autonomous’ the meaning of music ‘can only be paraphrased, reiterated, cited, and, in the process, reconfigured’ (L. Kramer 2011, 8). For Kramer, the fact that ‘the discussion cannot replicate the phenomenon it discusses is obvious and irrelevant’ (ibid., 14). As a result, he calls for a ‘hermeneutics released from the anxieties that have traditionally hemmed it in’ (ibid., 11).

Cook observes that one way in which analytic techniques can be made more useful ‘is through their being employed in combination with one another’, ‘becoming part of the taken-for-granted professional equipment of the historical musicologist and the ethnomusicologist’ (Cook 1987, 3). Indeed, Treitler reaches a similar conclusion despite his initial reservations.²⁶ The crux of the matter is that, as Kramer claims, analytic description need not be clearly distinguished from hermeneutic

²⁶ See Treitler 2001, 372.

intervention.²⁷ Wellmer also affirms such a notion. On the one hand, he argues that in order to avoid considering music as analogous to speech, we need to acknowledge music's '*formative* potencies' 'of a play of repetition and variation, identity and difference with a particular sonic material and hence formative potencies of a kind not geared towards *semantic* context' (Wellmer 2004, 84). Yet, as he goes on to illustrate, technical – that is specifically musical – vocabulary already contains what he refers to as a 'sedimentation of extra-musical connotations' (ibid., 105). Terms such as 'motive', 'theme', 'exposition', 'transition', 'development' and 'recapitulation', along with formal, motoric or expressive terms and descriptions that seek to account for the movement of the musical material ('high', 'low', 'tension', 'resolution' and 'flowing' etc.), 'contain a metaphorical element which simultaneously relates the music to something extra-musical; in all of them one finds an echo, as it were, of music's world-relation' (ibid.). In other words, with regards to Tomlinson's criticisms of 'internalist' approaches to music, music's presence as stylistic and formal norms can be regarded as important world-disclosive features of the music *itself*, thus contradicting the notion of music's self-sufficiency. Nevertheless, by implication, due to the 'world-relation' of analytical vocabulary, such vocabulary can also change with the world, becoming out-dated in the process. Terms which held for tonal music, such as 'theme', 'exposition', 'development', 'recapitulation', 'melody' and 'motivic-thematic development' or certain methods of analysis such as Schenkerian analysis or Cassirer's motivic analysis, have little application in the context of the most structurally- and stylistically-complex music of the past sixty years due to a more pronounced focus on, for example, compositional indeterminacy and 'chance' elements, improvisation, open and flexible forms and the serialisation of dynamics, timbre and articulatory techniques. This idea can be found as the basis for Wellmer's discussion of the relationship between music and language. For Wellmer, the end of what could be considered 'speech-like' in music through the transcendence of the norms of tonality in favour of 'parametric' modes of thinking is entwined with stylistic developments in 'New Music', 'concrete' music and 'electro-

²⁷ See L. Kramer 2011, 151.

acoustic sound production'. The development of the speech-like aspects of music is nothing more than the result of a 'historical change *in music*' [italics added].²⁸

The starting point for Kramer is to ask the question of 'how analytic description can be reconciled or integrated with worldly knowledge' (L. Kramer 2011, 144). The problem with Kramer's ideas surrounding the integration of music analysis and music's world-disclosive aspects is that he confines music analysis to the analysis of musical scores. A purely score-based analysis cannot account for those aspects of performance that move beyond the notes on the page. In short, a score-based analysis is unable to account for variations in tempo, interval classes, timbre, dynamics, phrasing, instrumentation, bodily movements, gesture, performance contexts and overall sound qualities that emerge from the work as event. As Cook observes, each system of notation, and the analysis that takes place based on that notation, 'involves its own pattern of emphasis and omission' (Cook 1987, 227). Different music-making cultures will have their own forms of notation that contribute in different ways to the performance of the music of that culture. What Cook refers to as a 'strictly "scientific" analysis of a score' in western notation not only stifles cultural difference if used as the sole means of interpretation, it also ignores the fact that there is more to the musical event than what is contained within the score. Indeed, as Cook observes, 'the more strictly deductive your analysis of the score is, the more directly will it be conditioned by the particular cultural and pragmatic assumptions built into the notation and the less bearing it will have upon the music you actually wanted to find out about' (ibid., 228).

Once music's irreducibility is seen as being part of the world, music analysis has no choice but to progress beyond the abstract, score-based conception of the musical work towards what Abbate calls the 'material, present event' (Abbate 2004, 506). Abbate argues for a drastic – as opposed to gnostic – approach to musical engagement, an engagement that focuses on 'actual performances' and 'musical experience'. But such labels involve more than what can be thought of as the opposition between music in practice and music in theory. So, Abbate argues, 'drastic connotes physicality, but also desperation and peril, involving a category of knowledge that flows from drastic actions or experiences and not from verbally

²⁸ See Wellmer 2004. It should be noted that Wellmer, despite what he states at the start of his essay, does believe that the language-topos has sustained itself, in a syntactical, form-based sense, beyond the end of tonal music.

mediated reasoning' (ibid., 510). It follows that 'gnostic as its antithesis implies not just knowledge per se but making the opaque transparent, knowledge based on semiosis and disclosed secrets, reserved for the elite and hidden from others' (ibid.). In other words, musical performance is thought to be 'a "site of resistance to text" or as something so contingent upon present human bodies that it remains opaque' (ibid.). Therefore, to bring music analysis to bear on the live performance would undermine her whole project. The crux, for Abbate, is that 'performances with all their allure need not become just another object awaiting decipherment, a recordable text subject to some analytical method yet to come. To treat them this way would be to transfer the professional deformations proper to hermeneutics to a phenomenon or event where those habits become alien and perhaps useless' (ibid., 513). The problem, however, with Abbate's call to move beyond the disembodied abstraction that is the work is that, by appealing to the drastic-gnostic binary, by declaring music to be both 'ineffable and sticky' and by referring to the drastic state as 'unintellectual and common' in contrast to the gnostic state that is, according to Berger, 'intellectual, supra-audible, mediated (that is, interpreted) meaning' (Berger 2005, 495), she, too, wishes to separate out the sensuous and intellectual aspects of music.

Abbate's call for a drastic musicology allows her to denounce the 'clandestine mysticism' involved in musical hermeneutics. Although she believes that musical hermeneutics has merit for exposing music's 'social contingency and nonautonomous messiness', it is clear that she shares with Tomlinson a disdain for those aspects of musical hermeneutics that look for the trace of the world on the music by investigating musical works and describing their configurations either in technical terms or as signs. In other words, she disagrees with those approaches that, in part, engage with music in an internalist fashion. For Abbate, musical hermeneutics, which she describes as a wanna-be 'growth hormone' for the classical music industry, is a form of nostalgia 'that would bring back, in some new form, the lost delights of a bourgeois era when this now-ossified and marginal repertory was still alive and nearer the centre' (Abbate 2004, 515-516). The ultimate failure of hermeneutical approaches to music is that they are gnostic – they aim to make 'the opaque transparent', discovering meanings within the music itself and thus granting music 'certain grandiose powers' to give aura to and make monumental cultural values,

biographical facts and social truths.²⁹ ‘Conjuring authority out of beautiful noise’, Abbate argues, ‘involves a ruse, and giving music the capacity to convey the best truth remains a romantic cliché and need not be accepted at face value’ (ibid., 522). While the work is, for Abbate, the site of intellectual activity for bourgeois musicologists, actual performances are ‘viscerally powerful and ephemeral, so personal, contingent, [and] fugitive to understanding’ (ibid., 529). Therefore, it is clear that Abbate does not condone approaches to music that, in one sense, seek to prioritise the analysis of musical works over and above ‘a category of knowledge that flows from drastic actions or experiences’. The issue is, however, that in criticising hermeneutics for its concern with form, structures and the meaningfulness of aesthetic experience and by separating the drastic, performative realm from the gnostic, internal realm of textual secrets awaiting decipherment she, in effect, ends up replacing the formalist conception of the autonomous musical work with the idea of the *autonomous musical performance*. Here, an unintellectual, sensuous and immediate conception of music emerges which cannot be reconciled to ‘verbally mediated reasoning’ – Abbate warns against turning performances and performers into ‘yet another captured text’ and argues for ‘unmediated musical experience’.³⁰ As we have observed, when music is no longer open to conceptual identifications, there lies the possibility for autonomania. Therefore, the major problem with Abbate’s call for a drastic approach to music engagement is that, by believing the work to be something distinct from live performances, and, thus, by confining hermeneutics and analysis to the realm of the work, she ends up articulating central formalist ideas in a new guise – the musical performance.

What this thesis has sought to illustrate is the difficulty in separating the object-quality of music from its world-disclosive aspects. How would we draw a line between the drastic and the gnostic without presupposing the distinctions we wish to make? Ultimately, as Berger observes, the hermeneutic element that Abbate seeks to criticise cannot be banished entirely from the arena of performance. ‘There is no such thing as pure experience, uncontaminated by interpretation’, Berger argues (Berger

²⁹ See Abbate 2004, 517-523.

³⁰ Abbate’s arguments for a drastic approach to musical engagement parallel, in many ways, Lyotard’s call for an avant-garde art that replaces ‘semiotics’ with ‘energetics’. For a thorough and enlightening discussion of this aspect of Lyotard’s work, see Wellmer 1985, 62-70.

2005, 497).³¹ As Wellmer claims, ‘aesthetic effect and aesthetic understanding are mutually interdependent; the one cannot exist without the other’ (Wellmer 1985, 65). The fact of the matter is that in demanding an ‘unmediated musical experience’, Abbate must, when engaged in such an experience, already have interpreted the event in order to state that it is a *musical* event she is experiencing as opposed to any other sort of event. Music does not exist without interpretation because it is only through a tacit understanding of what music is, an understanding that takes place with musical praxis forming a part of our socio-cultural practices, that music is intelligible as music in the first place. Due to the fact that music is both context- and interpretation-dependant, we cannot separate a drastic engagement with music from a gnostic engagement because an element of the ‘gnostic’ – of understanding – is an inherent part of our so-called drastic aesthetic experiences.

Once we sever the unhelpful ties between music analysis and formalism, then analysis can become part of the hermeneutic enterprise by which the event is articulated. Once we see the work as that which only exists during the event through presentation and mediation, then, as Adorno observed, analysis, like translation, criticism and commentary and, indeed, ‘positivistic’ enterprises that were theoretically (but not practically) shunned by the New Musicology can become ‘one of those media through which the very work unfolds’ (Adorno 1982, 176). The point is that once we recognise music as interpretation-dependant, as an ‘objective correlate of aesthetic experience’, then the work is no longer some mysterious, abstract ideal that we try and isolate from the world and investigate through the lens of scientific objectivity. Instead, the work, as we observed in chapter two, emerges as an event whereby the event itself is dependant upon interpretation and what Gadamer referred to as ‘mediation’ [*Vermittlung*]. The event can, as Abbate argues, involve actual performances of music, thus taking us away from the score-based work concept. However, once we acknowledge that performances are events, then music analysis can be one of the many discourses involved in the interpretive process upon which the event depends. Analysis, like all the other discourses that aim to make sense of

³¹ Mark Johnson (2007) provides an account of how the cognition/emotion distinction has become ingrained in the western philosophical tradition through the Cartesian emphasis on the mind-body distinction. Johnson, calling on central ideas in phenomenology and pragmatism as well as recent research in the cognitive neurosciences, goes on to criticise accounts of meaning that would look to separate cognitive meaning from the visceral and aesthetic states of emotion, feeling and bodily processes. Ultimately, for Johnson, all meaning is embodied meaning.

the event, is vitally important, because it is a means by which we articulate meaning, and, thus, as Adorno observed, ‘is no mere stopgap, but is an essential element of art itself’ (Adorno 1982, 177). However, music analysis cannot bypass the event by lapsing into analysis for the sake of analysis, a crime which Kerman and Cook accused it of in the 1980s.³² Although Cook and Everist believe that formalist music analysis based on an autonomistic conception of music is no longer a disciplinary problem, there is a danger that ‘necessary component[s] of any adequate reading of musical meaning’ (Cook and Everist 2001, 8) can become valorised as the means of uncovering the whole truth or rejected outright for their irreconcilability with other discourses. The turn towards self-sufficiency can only come about when the context- and interpretation-dependant nature of music is forgotten and music is isolated as an ineffable, autonomous entity.

A non-formalist music analysis was, according to Agawu (1997), missing from youthful New Musicology. However, as we have seen, with a move towards a critical musicology, the idea that music analysis can have a part to play is now largely accepted. Samson argues that by (re)defining the boundaries of analytical knowledge through exposure of the false identity of concepts and objects and by underlining the mediated character of analysis, then analysis is able to mix ‘freely with other categories of knowledge, openly embracing the metaphorical status of all discourses on music, and in the process accessing expanding realms of meaning’ (Samson, 2001, 50). Burnham, similarly, shares Samson’s view that music analysis can enhance other forms of musical discourse as well as articulate the determinacy of music that recedes to an interpreter’s horizon of enquiry.³³ Viewing music from different horizons of enquiry, based upon differing historical and cultural situatedness, and using different forms of engagement will generate a plurality of interpretations. Some may argue that meaning pluralism is a good thing because it upholds the principles of cultural, gender, racial and political difference. Others may claim that interpretive difference distracts from scientific rigour and objectivity. Ultimately, meaning pluralism is not ethical in itself – meaning is not concerned with what is right or wrong. One interpretation may satisfy the appetite of a particular community of individuals who

³² See Cook 1987, 2-3 and Kerman 1985, 168.

³³ See Burnham 2001, 215. John Rink shows how indispensable music analysis is both for performers and for interpreters whose job it is to articulate meaning. However, it seems that Rink becomes too embroiled in the problems of *Werktreue*, musical authenticity and ahistorical presence as a result of his appeals to music’s ‘spirit’ and its ‘essential qualities’. See Rink 2001, 217-238.

all share the same historical, cultural and political situatedness, and who look upon the event with the same horizons of enquiry. But such an interpretation will not satisfy everyone. Thus, what contributes to the knowledge base of musical understanding is a body of contrasting interpretations. However, as discussed in both the introduction to this study and chapter two and as will be the focus of chapter five, meaning pluralism should and cannot be seen as an end in itself.

‘Postmodern’, ‘New’ and ‘critical’ musicologies affirm, in certain quarters, the indeterminacy of musical meaning, the plurality of interpretive acts and the irreducibility of locally developed norms. Yet, one can articulate indeterminacy of interpretive acts only up until a certain point before such assertions undermine the validity of the institution that articulates them. As Williams knowingly asks, ‘what is the point of showing that the institutions of the canon are elitist and patriarchal if, at the same time, one supports a relativism that would grant elitist, patriarchal readings as much validity as decentred critique?’ (Williams 2000, 386). In order to avoid ‘postmodernising’ itself out of existence, critical musicology, if it is to continue to give the institutional go-ahead to the interactions between ‘modernisms’ and ‘postmodernisms’, must face up to the political questions of legitimacy which maintain it as an institution and which presuppose its very existence. At first sight this point may seem trivial. However, it acquires rather more significance when contrasted with certain theoretical assumptions that typically inform a ‘postmodern’ engagement with music, ones which seek to emphasise the incommensurable plurality of musical meanings. In those quarters where ‘postmodern’ thinkers stress the insoluble separation of interpretive positions, their claims to legitimacy, as we shall see in chapter five, performatively contradict their own theoretical convictions.

REIFICATION AND RELATIVISM

Dissonance is the truth about harmony.
(Adorno 2004, 144).

Looking back at the previous chapter, what was explored was the idea that critical musicology has become distanced from its ‘old’, outmoded and ‘modern’ self, one that was concerned with upholding, at least in certain quarters, the principles of musical autonomy and formalism. In addition, I attempted to demonstrate that a ‘new’, ‘postmodern’ shared inclination to affirm a plurality of interpretive and evaluative styles of description and explanation has allowed musicology to call into question dogmatic, explanatory approaches to musical ontology and musical meaning. In the sense that critical musicology is concerned with interpreting actual forms of musical praxis, it can be distinguished from analytic aesthetics and its attempts, through reifying theory construction, to account for the nature of music, its meaning and its value. In terms of reification, to subsume the meaningfulness of specific manifestations of musical praxis under disengaged contemplation of the object ‘music’, to inflate the particular to the general, is to ignore those aspects of the object that cannot be subsumed under the ‘form’ of what Adorno called ‘pure speculation’ because such aspects are dependant upon a degree of human interaction that can be understood only within concrete situations. Detached contemplation of musical works, in a sense, deaestheticises music, yielding ‘things’ or ‘present-at-hand objects’ stripped of their particularity, individuality and heterogeneity – their non-conceptuality. This non-conceptual substance of the concept of music cannot, by definition, be captured by detached contemplation of the object ‘music’. As Marx claimed in the second of his *Theses on Feuerbach*:

The question whether objective truth can be attributed to human thinking is not a question of theory but is a *practical question*. Man must prove the truth, i.e. the reality and power, the this-sidedness of his thinking in practice. The dispute over the reality or non-reality of thinking that is isolated from practice is a purely *scholastic* question (Marx 1970, 121).

The questions that occupy disengaged and contemplative thought – pseudo-problems or pseudo-issues in Wittgenstein’s critique of picture-based, philosophical contemplation – are, according to Marx, purely scholastic questions which, through the creation of abstract formulae that reify the open-ended and endlessly adaptive and critical nature of real-life practice, ignore the fact that the truth they aim to uncover, as we have seen throughout this dissertation, comes down to the historical norms of socio-cultural practices, norms which, importantly, can be transcended precisely as a result of creative practices such as music making and interpretation.

Wellmer, whose ideas, along with those of Gadamer, Heidegger and Adorno, have been utilised to derive my understanding of what a non-reified approach to music might look like, refers to musical works as ‘objective correlates of aesthetic experience’. For Wellmer, it is necessary for us to bring about the mediation of music’s ‘object quality’ – its form, stylistic features and overall presence in sound – in order to bring the work into existence. Gadamer, as we saw in chapter two, reached a similar conclusion. For Gadamer, the work of art is its presentation [*Darstellung*], an event [*Ereignis*] that involves the appropriation of the interpreter to the sensuous, material aspects of the work. Indeed, Gadamer claimed that the experience of the work is the ‘non-differentiation of the mediation [*Vermittlung*] from the work itself’ – the work exists only insofar as it is mediated in the context of some ‘dialogical’ event. Without this mediation, there is no music as we understand it in the context of our everyday practices. Similarly, for Wellmer, music possesses an ‘internal negativity’, whereby it is considered to be both an object of perception and, at the same time, more than the sum total of what is presented to the senses. To accept music as internally negative is to suggest that there are limits to music’s objectivity. Indeed, such way of understanding music and musical works brings about a crisis in a certain type of philosophy that aims to search for absolutely determinate definitions and answers through generalising identifications or what Wittgenstein called ‘pictures’.

It is in this context where the limits of music’s objectivity are exposed that, as we observed in the introduction with regards to Rorty’s critique of traditional, Anglo-

American philosophical praxis, the possibility of relativism emerges. Rorty observes three separate views that are commonly referred to by the name ‘relativism’:

The first is the view that every belief is as good as every other. The second is the view that “true” is an equivocal term, having as many meanings as there are procedures of justification. The third is the view that there is nothing to be said about either truth or rationality apart from descriptions of the familiar procedures of justification which a given society – *ours* – uses in one or another area of inquiry (Rorty 1991b, 23)

Whereas the third view is a negative thesis, and, as a result, defended by Rorty as an explicitly ‘pragmatist’ worldview as opposed to a relativist one, the first and second views can be considered to be the foundations for what Rorty calls ‘positive theories’ of truth and meaning that impact upon current musicological practice. As shall be explored, after we bring to an end that sort of explicit, disengaged thinking about music that places music as an object in the foreground, shouldering out the far more common mode of being around and interacting with music in concrete situations, there is a tendency to suggest that our interpretations of musical events are not true in any absolute sense, but only in the context of specific cultural and historical ways of being-in-the-world. Such a claim seems to affirm Rorty’s second view of relativism. But this view, in turn, seems to shelter and support the self-refuting first kind. Indeed, the relationship is made explicit by the musicologist, Judy Lochhead, when she claims that ‘if all knowledge reflects the cultural and historical place and time of the one who knows, then no single perspectival knowledge is privileged and hence no particular way of understanding the world is true in any absolute sense’ (Lochhead 2002, 6). As will be shown, such self-refuting claims, along with notion that meaning and truth can only be justified by local procedures, only make sense, as we observed in the introduction, in the context of the Platonic and Kantian distinctions and, more importantly, in light of what empiricist theories of meaning rely on, specifically what Wheeler and Wellmer call the ‘presence’ of truth or what Quine referred to as ‘obscure intermediary entities’.

As demonstrated in previous chapters, the traditional philosophical distinctions between, for example, ‘subject’ and ‘object’, ‘rationality’ and ‘irrationality’, ‘means’ and ‘ends’, ‘absolute’ and ‘relative’, ‘reality’ and ‘appearance’ and ‘nature’ and ‘convention’ are called into question by actual musical practices through our transformed and transforming relationships to music. Consequently, once we start to loosen the grip that the Kantian and Platonic

frameworks have traditionally held over both philosophical and musicological praxis, and once we, as Rorty suggests, realise that the debates between realists and relativists presuppose that the things we are attempting to understand are thought to contain ‘real essences’, what Heidegger called *des unwesentliche Wesen*, then we see that relativism, as Marx implies, is nothing more than a ‘scholastic question’. Relativism, as a theoretical means of accounting for or, indeed, questioning the truth of our interpretations, does not take sufficient account of the diverse ways in which individuals and communities come to make sense of the world and each other in concrete situations. For Rorty, the terms ‘relativism’ and ‘postmodernism’, entwined as they often are, ‘are words which never had any clear sense, and...both should be dropped from our philosophical vocabulary’ (Rorty 1999, xiv). As he went on to claim, ‘insofar as “postmodern” philosophical thinking is identified with a mindless and stupid cultural relativism – with the idea that any fool thing that calls itself culture is worthy of respect – then I have no use for such thinking’ (ibid., 276). Nevertheless, although Rorty’s characterisation of postmodernism, as shall be observed, holds for a certain amount of thought that falls within the postmodern movement, postmodernism, taken as a whole, as Wellmer observes, is full of ambiguities and contradictory ideas about what counts as ‘postmodern’.¹ Having said that, when taken from a certain perspective, Wellmer, like Pippin, as we observed in the introduction, discerns certain themes that are significantly representative of the plethora of ideas that are put forward in the name of postmodernism. So, according to Wellmer, ‘the moment of postmodernism is a kind of explosion of the modern *épistème* in which reason and its subject – as guarantors of “unity” and the “whole” – are blown to pieces’ (Wellmer 1985, 50). However, as he is also aware, postmodernism turns out to be a movement towards the destruction of not just the *cogito* in Western philosophy but of totalisation in all its forms. Thus, in ways which will prove useful to the discussions about the current state of musicology, Wellmer states that ‘the movement against totalising reason and its subject is at the same time a movement against the autonomous work of art and its pretensions to unity and fullness of meaning’ (ibid., 51). The ‘unmaking’ of totalities that becomes postmodernism’s ultimate aim, thus finds its way into other ‘postist’ concepts, including, as Wellmer notes, ‘post-industrialism’, ‘post-structuralism’, ‘*post-histoire*’,

¹ See Wellmer 1985, 48-114.

‘post-empiricism’ and ‘post-rationalism’. For Wellmer, ‘from this point of view the “revolution of postmodernism”, as Jean Baudrillard has termed it, can then be presented as “the gigantic process of loss of meaning” which has led to “the destruction of all histories, references and finalities”’ (ibid., 53). Quoting parts of Lyotard’s *The Postmodern Condition*, Wellmer elaborates, claiming that ‘postmodernism would thus be a modernism without regret, without the illusion of a potential “reconciliation between language games”, without the nostalgia for “the whole and the one”, for “the reconciliation of the concept and the sensible, of the transparent and the communicable experience”, in brief, a modernism which would cheerfully accept the loss of meaning, values, reality – postmodernism as a Nietzschean “gay science”’ (ibid., 55). As we shall go on to see, the break with totalising reason and practices perhaps, when it comes to making sense of current musicological praxis, assumes its most important form in Lyotard’s notions of the abandonment of “grand narratives” and the irreducibly ‘local’ character of all discourse, agreements and justifications. Ultimately, it is these kinds of ‘delegitimation’ movements that are fuelling much of what counts for both musicological and philosophical practice, and it is these ‘delegitimising’ approaches that this chapter seeks to call into question. Having said that, postmodernism, as what Wellmer calls a ‘critique of modernity’, is still vitally important for making sense of social, cultural and political problems posed by Western modernity – an issue we will explore in detail throughout this chapter.

For Rorty, an alternative to the ‘mindless irresponsibility’ of relativism and postmodernism is ‘pluralism’ based upon ‘pragmatically justified tolerance’ (Rorty 1999, 276). According to this alternative, ‘*only in the context of general agreement does doubt about either truth or goodness have sense*’ [italics added] (Rorty 1979, 309). For Rorty, the concept of truth is neither an ‘Idea of Pure Reason’, which ‘precisely stand[s] for the Unconditioned – that which escapes the context within which discourse is conducted and inquiry pursued’, nor is it something that we can say is confined to local and isolated cultures. Rorty, instead, suggests that truth is entwined with the notion of ‘warranted assertibility’ (ibid., 308-309). As he claimed, ‘for pragmatists, the desire for objectivity is not the desire to escape the limitations of one’s community, but simply the desire for as much intersubjective agreement as possible, the desire to extend the reference of “us” as far as we can’ (Rorty 1991b, 23). For Rorty, ‘to say that what is rational for us now to believe may not be *true*, is

simply to say that somebody may come up with a better idea' (ibid.). Therefore, just as, for Rorty, truth and objectivity are entwined with solidarity, that is, with 'warranted assertibility', so, in the same pragmatic universe, our interpretations of musical praxis are true if recognised as legitimate within an intersubjective sphere of appreciation and debate, a sphere that transcends cultural, historical and geographical borders. In this sense, the concept 'true' is, as Price (2003) claims, a norm, as opposed to what Rorty calls 'correspondence to reality' or the 'intrinsic nature of things' (Rorty 1991b, 22). Indeed, it is the idea that there is a normative basis to the meaningfulness of musical practice that I have been arguing for in all previous chapters. Nonetheless, as Rorty demonstrates, none of this is to say, as will be shown, that what we consider to be legitimate cannot be called into question and, indeed, transcended by additional processes of normalisation which norm-transcending practices such as music making may initiate.

Just as, for Rorty, truth has neither a 'deep, hidden, metaphysically significant nature' (Rorty 1979, 373) nor 'as many meanings as there are procedures of justification', Wellmer and Gadamer claim, in their own respective ways, that interpretations of artworks neither affirm the indeterminacy of aesthetic meaning nor do they terminate in 'obscure intermediary entities'. An alternative, one that will be explored in detail, is to suggest that interpretation operates within the sphere of norms, norms that, in some cases, may appear to be relative to a specific culture situated at a particular point in history but, in others, have, on account of being debated or practiced in a public sphere of intersubjective legitimacy, crossed cultural, social and historical boundaries and have become legitimate ways of understanding the world for different groups, thus tending towards the ideals of truth. For example, in terms of trans-cultural norms, Pippin, as Bowie observes, suggests that 'there can be real moral development. This is evident in those things which were once acceptable but have come to be inherently unjustifiable, such as slavery, the oppression of women, and racism. All these still exist, but a legitimation of them, of the kind which was possible in the terms of some pre-modern societies, has become impossible, and this testifies to the development of free self-determination that transcends the horrors within which that development takes place' (Bowie 2013,

121).² But, and this is the key issue where music is concerned, one that will be discussed later, where certain ways of making sense of the world have become legitimated for seemingly different communities and societies, it is also the case that such norms can bring about other forms of domination. So, Bowie argues, ‘the concrete development of modernity involves some of the most brutal events of human history, even as moral awareness seems to progress in key aspects’ (ibid.).

With regards to music, when we interpret manifestations of musical praxis we do so from out of our situatedness in a particular ‘world’ of historical socio-cultural practices with our interpretations either articulating certain norms that have become associated with a piece of music or going against them. This way of viewing musical interpretation might seem to affirm the idea that the truthfulness of our interpretations is relative to some particular culture, place or history, that is, that every ‘world’ contains its own locally developed, isolated and irreducible norms. But such a view undermines the power of a ‘world’ as a space of intelligibility to embrace and account for interactions between different cultural, social and historical groups. In chapter one I illustrated how musical praxis can only be understood as being irreducibly *musical* as a result of aesthetic experiences and their connection to a shared space of interpretation, analysis and criticism. Because such aesthetic experiences bring the life experiences of socially, historically and culturally mediated groups and individuals to bear on the sounds we commonly construe as music, then music can be considered to be a form of ‘world disclosure’. In other words, music is what Bowie refers to as a form of ‘metaphysics₂’, a phenomenon that allows us to scrutinise our ways of knowing how things hang together, to make sense of how people make sense of the world and, most importantly when it comes to aesthetic practice, to create new sense. As Gadamer was aware, however, and as shall be explored in greater detail in what follows, the possibility exists for a worldview to contain every other worldview within it as different worldviews meet and interact within actual political and cultural spaces. The point to acknowledge is that a ‘world’ is not fixed and isolated by some discernable geographical, historical or cultural boundary; it is not something that can only ever apply to a specific cultural, social, political or historical community. A ‘world’ can embrace multiple worldviews as different cultures, societies and

² Jürgen Habermas makes a similar claim, arguing that ‘once the corresponding prejudices against people of colour, homosexuals, or women are overcome, no components of “otherness” remain to which a *justified* rejection that was generally recognised as legitimate could refer’ (Habermas 2008, 259).

historical groups come into contact with and try and understand one another with the possibility of bringing about new, shared practices. As John McDowell claims, ‘this talk of different “worlds” is only vivid imagery for the undisputed idea of striking differences between mutually accessible views of the one and only world’ (McDowell 2009, 140). Nevertheless, as Charles Taylor observes, that is not to say that something like alternative horizons or conceptual schemes exist by which we are able to pick out the systematic differences between two different cultures that act as partial barriers to our understanding.³ Ultimately, as I shall go on to demonstrate, to claim that music is world-disclosive is not to affirm cultural relativism but to suggest that real musical praxis operates by showing us how different worldviews come into contact with each other, how they understand one another, how new contexts of shared practices arise and the challenges different groups face in coming to an understanding. In addition, by allowing society to engage with worldviews other than their own, that is, by setting society’s perceptions, concepts, and its relationship to different worldviews in motion, musical praxis can, as well as being world-opening, play a prominent role in the transformation of socio-cultural norms.

We first need to understand that the argument for music as world-disclosive is grounded on the notion that experiences of music are, fundamentally, *meaningful* experiences – experiences that happen immediately or tacitly, but, vitally, are mediated by the fore-structures of our understanding. It follows that by destabilising the classical conception of ‘knowing the meaning’ of a musical work, the regress of our musical interpretations terminates not in ‘obscure intermediary entities’ but in the response of the interpreter, whose horizons of enquiry are fore-structured but not entirely fixed by their situatedness in a certain ‘world’, to what the artwork presents. As demonstrated in chapter two, what we bring to our aesthetic experiences are the social and cultural practices that make up the style of one’s world, and it is what Braver refers to as these ‘spade-turning moment(s) of non-interpreting reaction’ that, in the absence of ‘presence’ forms of musical meaning, determine the normative basis of the meaningfulness of musical praxis. As we observed in chapter two with regards to Bowie’s comments on ethical life, there is a need for social acknowledgement if musical meaning is to have any substance at all. Thus, how we interpret a particular manifestation of musical praxis is only intelligible in the light of public norms that

³ See Taylor 2002.

are developed in everyday, communal practices. It is this kind of social *style* of making sense of the world, which determines what should be done and what ought to be, that can change – sense can literally be made anew – when new norms displace previous norms as a result of norm-transcending practices such as music making and interpretation.

When it comes to musicology, the end of a reified engagement with music and the ‘turn’ towards interpretation suggests, for some, that we foster what Lawrence Kramer refers to as ‘fragmentation and intellectual razzle-dazzle for their own sakes’ (L. Kramer 1995, 6). The danger is that musicology is seen as advocating a cultural relativism that places the whole discipline in jeopardy. In other words, to believe that the knowledge base of the profession should merely consist of a body of contrasting interpretations resulting from multiple horizons of understanding is to call into question the legitimacy of that discipline. Hooper, for example, claims that ‘the characteristic “postmodern” belief in the indeterminacy or ultimate plurality of interpretation poses real problems in so far as the purpose and legitimacy of an institutionalized discourse is concerned’ (Hooper 2006, 66). He goes on to argue that ‘it is indisputable that music will have multiple meanings and significances, not only for each individual, but also for any one individual. However, this is not, in and of itself, a justification for one’s simply proffering, on the basis of one’s particular reaction to a musical work or utterance, an interpretation that is “equally valid as any other”’ (ibid.). The critique of postmodernity that Hooper offers is a familiar one, one that arises when critics of modernity seemingly proclaim a retreat from the modern world altogether; when, as Wellmer explains, ‘the critique of technocratic rationalism turns into irrationalism, contextualism becomes particularism, the cult of local tradition becomes mere fashion (or worse, it becomes regression), and the rediscovery of the symbolic function of architecture becomes an ideological or authoritarian gesture’ (Wellmer 1985, 128). Hooper goes on to demonstrate how the theoretical affirmation of pluralism, contingency and cultural relativism in the New Musicology is performatively undermined when statements are made within the discipline claiming third-person assent. As Hooper shows in respect to three separate claims made by Kramer, Samson and Susan McClary (not all of whom would class themselves as ‘postmodern’ or ‘New’ musicologists), their references to certain norms of meaning and value, which are only intelligible in so far as there exists a set of conventions or criteria in accordance with which such judgments can justifiably be

made in the first place, undermine postmodernism's distrust of or open hostility to the notion of authority and justifiable legitimacy.⁴ For Hooper, claims to legitimacy are not compatible with a 'postmodern' musicology in which 'no mode of knowledge is ever to be privileged over any other' (Hooper 2006, 39).

Writing on the relationship between postmodernism and music, Derek B. Scott argues that what characterises 'postmodern' musicology is 'a readiness to engage with, rather than marginalise, issues of class, generation, gender, sexuality and ethnicity in music, and to address matters such as production, reception and subject position, while questioning notions of genius, canons, universality, aesthetic autonomy and textual immanence' (Scott 2001, 145). Kenneth Gloag (2012) affirms Scott's characterisation, demonstrating that such musically specific matters arise out of broader issues to do with what could be construed as the postmodern movement. Thus, as we observed in the introduction, Gloag makes a common-sense, albeit reductive, link between the 'turn' in 1980s/1990s musicology and the ideas of Lyotard, specifically the definition of postmodern as an 'incredulity towards metanarratives'. What Scott sees as a readiness to accept and engage with a plurality of musical meanings through the exploration of music's production and reception in different societies, cultures and histories and its meaningfulness for diverse social classes, historical communities, ethnicities, sexual and gender groups is supported by Gloag: 'multiple stories [as opposed to metanarratives], now suggest a culture made up of many different things: a plural and fragmented cultural, social and political landscape, with each fragmentary "little narrative" potentially claiming its own identity and value without at any point coalescing into a larger totality' (Gloag 2012, 6). Kramer anticipates both Scott's and Gloag's respective discussions, arguing that 'postmodern strategies' seek a '*localised generality*' (L. Kramer 1995, 9). Following in the wake of Lyotard and Haraway, Kramer argues that 'postmodern' discourses 'operate by assuming that any formulation of or within a master narrative can be read as responsive to a set of more local interests – local that is with respect to the general terms of the master narrative but still general with respect to the phenomena that the narrative seeks to cover' (ibid.). Ultimately, for Kramer, 'postmodernist strategies of understanding are incorrigibly interdisciplinary and *irreducibly plural*' [italics added] (ibid., 5). Although Gloag notes that the interpretation of musical praxis does not

⁴ See Hooper 2006, 53-59.

‘necessarily mean that such work automatically forms a postmodern musicology’, he does claim that ‘the sense of plurality, the openness of interpretation, and the importance of context, all provide certain convergences between such work and wider conceptions of postmodernism’ (Gloag 2012, 19). The problem is that many of these ‘postmodern’ aspects of musicology are, as we have seen, the results of any hermeneutic enterprise that seeks to interpret actual manifestations of worldly phenomena rather than theoretically account for the nature of such phenomena. Not wishing to become bogged down in the debates as to what does or does not constitute ‘postmodern’ musicology or even if such a thing exists, what I suggest is of greater importance is the question of how we can account for the validity of our musical interpretations once we have taken the disciplinary ‘turn’ towards the interpretation of specific aesthetic experiences. The danger is that with postmodernity’s distrust of totalising conceptions of truth, anything that would repress the plurality of different subject positions and their respective claims to truth and knowledge would be seen as aligning itself with the more ethically problematic aspects of modernity. It is on this either-or basis, that is, the opposition between postmodernism and the ‘modern’ concepts of legitimacy and validity, that Rorty describes both postmodernism and relativism as ‘mindless irresponsibility’ (Rorty 1999, 276).

As Scott, Gloag and Kramer’s respective characterisations of New Musicology illustrate, the discipline’s ‘incredulity towards metanarratives’ appears when we acknowledge that music emerges from, is embedded in and is disclosive of the worldly contexts in which it is created, performed and received. Indeed, in appealing to the idea of music as fundamentally world-disclosive, a conception of the musical work as an ‘objective correlate of aesthetic experience’ does not rest upon the disclosure of the world of the individuated, substantive self. A hermeneutic engagement with musical praxis presupposes that we are always among others from the start; our being with others is a feature of our nature rather than due to the accidental fact of exposure to humans. Dasein’s *Mitsein* is primordial. Along with the world, an essential relatedness to others fundamentally belongs to our way of being. As Braver explains by drawing together two principle figures in seemingly contrasting philosophical traditions, ‘just as Wittgenstein’s form of life with its agreement with others grounds the training which endows us with reason, so Heidegger’s being-with opens Dasein to the meaningful shared world, and the world to Dasein’ (Braver 2012, 164). In other words, what Braver is claiming with regards

to Wittgenstein and Heidegger is that all individuals are engaged in roles and articulating a reason that are derived from their communities and that largely define them. Indeed, in order to be a self at all, we need a community to provide a repertoire of practices, reason and language, as well as the equipment and institutions necessary for their practice.

Pippin wishes to suggest something even stronger, mainly that ‘for the action to count as mine, it must make a certain kind of sense to the agent, and that means it must fit in intelligibly within a whole complex of practices, and institutions within which *doing this now* could have a coherent meaning’ (Pippin 2008, 5). Against metaphysical interpretations of Hegel, Pippin, developing his conception of freedom based on a revised view of agency, claims that ‘spirit is a self-imposed norm, a self-legislated realm that we institute and sustain, that exists only by being instituted and sustained’ (ibid., 112). In other words, ‘practical reasoning is a norm-bound activity (one wants to get the right answer about what one ought to do), and the norms in question are not themselves simply “up to me”; they reflect social proprieties, already widely shared, proprieties functioning as individually inherited standards for such deliberation’ (ibid., 149). Therefore, for Pippin, agency is ‘as much, if not more, a matter of retrospective justification and understanding and mutual recognition than a matter of prior deliberation and the power to choose’ (ibid., 146). The idea that practical reasoning always involves a responsiveness to social norms, that one deliberates ‘*qua* “ethical being” (*sittliches Wesen*), not *qua* rational agent’ is vitally important for understanding the position of critical musicology with respect to both reification and relativism.

Lawrence Kramer, in taking up the baton of musicology’s ‘ethical being’, asserts that the ‘epistemic shift [to postmodernism]...is practical as well as theoretical; it has substantial moral and political implications’ (L. Kramer 1995, 33). One doesn’t have to dig too deep into the meta-musicological literature of the last twenty years to see that the ethical implications of the ‘New’ and ‘critical’ musicologies have been widely acknowledged. There now seems to be general institutional acceptance of, for example, feminist, postcolonial, gender and queer ways of doing and thinking. But with what Kramer sees as the ‘ethical’ turn in musicology, that is, the turn from what Lochhead (2002) calls ‘absolute’ knowledge and ‘grand narratives’ to the ‘situatedness’ of knowledge claims and ‘local stories of understanding’, we are presented with a problem; with the idea that interpretations of

musical practices are ‘irreducibly plural’, ‘with each fragmentary “little narrative” potentially claiming its own identity and value without at any point coalescing into a larger totality’, musicology is faced with a situation whereby any notion of a *legitimate* interpretive claim is severely undermined. In other words, with a focus on plurality, fragmentation, localisation, heterogeneity, difference and the ‘self-contained legitimacy’ of ‘little narratives’, the ideal of *truth* in human affairs, what Price calls ‘the dialogue of mankind’, is in danger of being reduced to ‘the chatter of disengaged monologues’, that is, the chatter of isolated, locally developed and irreducible norms (Price 2003, 170). Scott illustrates the problem in musicological terms when he suggests that even though ‘values and meanings relate to particular historical, political and cultural contexts’, different cultures have ‘*their own specific cultural values, so that a cultural arbitrary is not misrecognised as an objective truth*’ [italics added] (Scott 2001, 145). Similarly, the problem arises when Kramer suggests that ‘postmodern strategies’ ‘focus on diverse, culturally constructed subjectivities and objectivities’ (L. Kramer 1995, 5-6)⁵ and when Gloag claims that ‘incredulity towards metanarratives’ causes ‘each “little narrative”’ to construct ‘its own sense of a self-contained legitimacy and place within a broad spectrum’ (Gloag 2012, 6). In short, the problem, as Price hints at, is that with the turn towards an appreciation and preservation of difference, what is ignored is the fact that, in real life situations, cultures are not isolated from one another. For better or worse, as we shall see, what is always at work is the ‘dialogue of mankind’. Indeed, it is on the basis that priority is given to the notion of ‘self-contained legitimacy’ of ‘little narratives’ that, according to Rorty, ‘any fool thing that calls itself culture is worthy of respect’ (Rorty 1999, 276). Ultimately, in view of Price’s account of truth as the ‘dialogue of mankind’, what we witness with postmodernism, including ‘postmodern’ New Musicology, is the theoretical devaluing of truth for fear of becoming entwined with

⁵ Kramer explains his relativising hopes for his particular brand of ‘postmodern’ musicology, claiming that ‘postmodern strategies’ ‘insist on the relativity of all knowledge, including self-knowledge, to the disciplines – not just the conceptual presuppositions but the material, discursive, and social practices – that produce and circulate knowledge’ (L. Kramer 1995, 6). The problem with such a claim is that Kramer also seeks to criticise theoretical enterprises that affirm the idea of cultural relativism. So, he cites Donna Haraway: the challenge is ‘to have *simultaneously* an account of radical historical contingency for all knowledge claims and knowing subjects, a critical practice for recognizing our own “semiotic technologies” for making meanings, and a no-nonsense commitment to faithful accounts of the “real” world, one that can be partially shared and friendly to earth-wide projects of finite freedom, adequate material abundance, modest meaning in suffering, and limited happiness’ (L. Kramer 1995, 7-8). Relativism is, hereby, potentially undermined by Kramer’s vague call for ‘fluctuation and negotiation among different standpoints’ (ibid., 8).

modernity's metanarrative of legitimacy. Therefore, even though, as Rorty illustrates, relativism exists in tension with absolute conceptions of truth, that is, in tension with what, according to Wellmer, is 'objectively present' [*objektiv 'Vorhandenes'*], those who uphold the irreducibility and self-contained legitimacy of each 'little narrative' also treat any claims to legitimacy that are made in the here and now with suspicion. Ultimately, as Rorty observes, such distrust of norms and the notion of legitimacy in general stems from the idea that when we say that norms exist, this 'is only to say, with Foucault, that knowledge is never separable from power – that one is likely to suffer if one does not hold certain beliefs at certain times and places' (Rorty 1991b, 26). As Ihab Hassan claims, the postmodern movement, as a movement of 'unmaking', refuses 'the tyranny of wholes; totalisation in any human endeavour is potentially totalitarian' (Hassan 1977, 19). Postmodernism, in other words, tends to focus on the destruction of not just the *cogito* in Western philosophy, but also all claims to totalisation no matter which sphere of life they are made in. The issue is, however, that even though truth claims and their corresponding arguments and justifications may be – in the here and now – bound up with power structures that might dictate what we take to be legitimate or acceptable, in practice even postmodernists cannot isolate themselves indefinitely from the 'dialogue of mankind'. To face up to this dialogue and the questions of power that surround it, is, I will argue, one of critical musicology's most pressing issues.

The degradation of truth in musicological affairs seems to stem from the discipline's over-reliance on postmodern theory, specifically, the ideas put forward by Lyotard. In setting up an imaginary dialogue between Lyotard and Habermas, Manfred Frank makes the key point that Lyotard's ideas, specifically his notion of the *différend*, suffer from a 'performative contradiction' (Frank 1988, 19), one that is similar to the contradiction Hooper observes in Samson, Kramer and McClary's respective claims to legitimacy. Lyotard's notion of the *différend* is a hindrance to mutual comprehensibility because it is based on the idea that arguments are irreconcilable due to the heterogeneous 'rules' of interlocutors' 'phrase regimens'. Specifically, for Frank, the *différend* is based on the idea that different types of discourse cannot result in a meta-discourse of agreement (*ibid.*, 32). Ultimately, for Lyotard, the goal of discourse is not consensus (*Verständigung*), the possibility of which, according to Frank, every communicative act should presuppose (*ibid.*, 73), but dissent. Although Habermas has discussed his aversion to the totalising effects of

agreement, an issue Frank draws our attention to with regards to the ‘conflicting aspects’ of consensus theory (ibid.), the problem with Lyotard, according to Frank, is that the argument concerning the *différend* is self-refuting because it depends on a set of conventions or criteria in accordance with which it can justifiably be made in the first place. Which subject position and which ‘phrase regimens’ can make the universalising claim regarding the *différend*? Without the possibility of shared norms, Lyotard’s argument regarding the impossibility of meta-discourse cannot hope to attain validity. To espouse the idea that all discourse is merely what Price calls ‘the chatter of disengaged monologues’, that is, to make the claim that one type of discourse or subject position is so radically unintelligible to another that it precludes the possibility of consensus, is to presuppose something like the ideal of truth or the ‘dialogue of mankind’ in the first place. It is not surprising, therefore, that general ‘postmodern’ judgments regarding irresolvable differences, judgments that, according to Rorty’s first view of relativism, would, ultimately, allow supremacist readings of musical works as much validity as gender, queer, postcolonial and feminist interpretations, have resulted in many musicologists explicitly disavowing postmodernism and its influence on musicological praxis without, that is, giving up on its valuable ethical achievements. Nevertheless, the threat of the degradation of truth through hermeneutic intervention is not just a problem for New Musicology, but, as a result of its continued focus on understanding the meaningfulness of specific manifestations of musical praxis, impacts upon what Kramer refers to as ‘critical musicology’, a musicology that no longer upholds the separation of ‘old’ and ‘modern’ ways of musicological doing and thinking from ‘new’ and ‘postmodern’ methods and sensibilities.⁶

Björn Heile, in advocating what he calls a ‘critical modernism’, claims that ‘postmodernism has lost momentum’ (Heile 2009, 1) leading to a ‘resurgence of interest’ in modernism (ibid., 2). Heile accounts for this shift by suggesting that

⁶ A distinction should be made between what Kramer calls ‘critical musicology’ and what Scott refers to by the same term. Although the former is used to denote such musicological ways of doing and thinking that call into question the divide between modern and postmodern, for Scott, critical musicology still maintains unhelpful links to the ineffective concept of New Musicology. So, Scott claims, ‘critical musicologists in the UK are generally agreed that the biggest problem facing current musicology is the collapse of the binary divide between pop and classical; it is the fundamental importance accorded to this perception that sets them apart from the “new musicologists” of the USA, who tend (with few exceptions) to concentrate on canonic works’ (Scott 2001. 145). Such a characterisation of critical musicology is, in the light of Kramer’s revised account of the term, no longer adequate.

musicology has established enough reflective distance from modernism in order to treat it as a ‘more multifaceted phenomenon than it was given credit for’ (ibid.). He also suggests that the age in which we live calls into question the applicability of the term ‘postmodern’ to our current ways of doing and thinking. So, he states, we are living ‘in an era of disorientation, musically speaking as well as culturally, ideologically and, indeed, politically’ (ibid.). Heile invokes 9/11, the second Iraq war, the developing world and global warming as examples of the disorientating socio-cultural events of our age. Furthermore, we could also suggest, as Gloag does, that the applicability of the term ‘postmodern’ to our present socio-cultural situation has been undermined by the creation of one big story about its many little narratives. Gloag claims that ‘rather than being incredulous towards metanarratives, as Lyotard asserts, we have now begun to witness the construction of postmodernism’s own metanarrative: the repeated storytelling of how postmodernism plays with fragments of the past, how different music may be intertextual in different ways but the actual process remains similar, if not the same’ (Gloag 2012, 159). None of this suggests, however, that Heile and others like him, so-called critical musicologists in Kramer’s sense, are concerned with reviving purely ‘positivistic’ and ‘formalistic’ approaches to music nor do they (at least explicitly) advocate those questionable aspects of ‘modern’ ways of doing and thinking that have been accused of affirming, for example, the role of instrumental reason in human affairs, the notion of the centred subject, the authority of the natural sciences in the demystification of life, cultural elitism and the disregard of questions of difference and the ethical treatment of others.

Despite Heile’s (critical) engagement with the links between new music and a revised, multifaceted approach to the question of modernism, he and the rest of the authors that contribute to the edited volume, *The Modernist Legacy: Essays on New Music*, cannot give up on the gains made by New Musicology. Heile claims that there is still a need for a ‘considerable variety of viewpoints’ from which to make sense of musical praxis (Heile 2009, 3). The focus is still very much on plurality and difference, if not completely on fragmentation, as Heile demonstrates through his study of the globalisation of new music.⁷ Ultimately, Heile’s demand for a critical treatment of both modernism and new music rests upon hermeneutic anticipations of

⁷ See Heile 2009, 101-121.

meaning – interpretation of musical praxis is key, as he illustrates through his claim that ‘readings of individual composers or works’ complement broader historical and aesthetic discussions (ibid., 9). As was discussed in previous chapters, from a hermeneutic perspective, interpretations bring the life experiences of a culturally- and historically-mediated individual to bear on musical praxis. With it, meanings as ‘obscure intermediate entities’ are replaced with articulations of specific, particular, individual and heterogeneous experiences, ones which, nevertheless, have, in part, been fore-structured by one’s place in a shared world. The distinction, as I have sought to explain in previous chapters, rests upon the difference between what Taylor refers to as ‘knowing an object’ through reifying theory construction – that there is ‘some finally adequate explanatory language, which can make sense of the object, and will exclude all future surprises’ – and ‘coming to an understanding with an interlocutor’ (Taylor 2002, 127), a – what Gadamer calls – ‘dialogical’ event [*Ereignis*] of presentation [*Darstellung*] that involves the mediation [*Vermittlung*] and play [*Spiel*] – a conversation, if you will – between music as some sort of sonic presence and the interpreter. The issue, as Taylor puts it, is that ‘experience is that wherein our previous sense of reality is undone, refuted, and shows itself as needing to be reconstituted. It occurs precisely in those moments where the object “talks back”’ (ibid., 128). By contrast, ‘the aim of science, following the model above, is thus to take us beyond experience. This latter is merely the path to science, whose successful completion would take it beyond this vulnerability to further such refutation’ (ibid., 128-129) Indeed, in such a climate, the charges of postmodernism and relativism seem inescapable; as Taylor explains:

The days are long gone when Europeans and other “Westerners” could consider their experience and culture as the norm toward which the whole of humanity was headed, so that the other could be understood as an earlier stage on the same road that we had trodden. Now we sense the full presumption involved in the idea that we already possess the key to understanding other cultures and times.

But the recovery of the necessary modesty here seems always to threaten to veer into relativism, or a questioning of the very ideal of truth in human affairs. The very ideas of objectivity, which underpinned our social science, seemed hard to combine with that of fundamental conceptual differences between cultures, so that real cultural openness seemed to threaten the very norms of validity on which social science rested (ibid., 126).

The issue remains, however, that the charge of relativism only seems to make sense within the context of certain binary oppositions – the Platonic and Kantian distinctions. This is clear when Taylor, for example, makes the Rorty-esque

distinction between ‘objectivity’ and ‘relativism’. Wellmer, too, suggests that relativism or ‘hermeneutic anarchism’ can only make sense when contrasted with ‘foundationalism’ or what he also refers to as ‘metaphysical objectivism’, a tradition, he suggests, in which empiricism remains trapped (Wellmer 1993, 222). Scott goes a step further when he attempts to align the distinction between objectivity and relativism with the divide between ‘modernism’ and ‘postmodernism’. So, Scott claims, ‘modernism, an attempt to defend one universalist culture, was often forced to attack regionalism as parochialism, nationalism as chauvinism, popular music as entertainment not art, and ethnic music as primitivism or “ghetto culture”’ (Scott 2001, 139). Conversely, ‘the postmodern alternative is to accept that we are living in an age of cultural relativism. Cultural relativism, a perspective taken from anthropology, was the key to socio-musicological interpretation in the 1980s. The argument that cultural values could be historically located was already familiar and was expanded by the recognition that significance could also be socially located’ (ibid., 139-140).

Heile claims (or hopes) that what he calls ‘binary logic’ is now all but meaningless for the younger generation of musicologists (Heile 2009, 3). On the contrary, when we consider the distinctions between ‘postmodernism’ and ‘modernism’, ‘musical autonomy’ and ‘cultural contingency’, ‘formalist-analytical and cultural-historical’ in the context of the broader Platonic and Kantian distinctions between, for example, ‘subject’ and ‘object’, ‘rationality’ and ‘irrationality’, ‘means’ and ‘ends’, ‘absolute’ and ‘relative’, ‘reality’ and ‘appearance’ and ‘nature’ and ‘convention’, these concepts still seem to be the principal means of making sense of the world in mainstream musicological and, indeed, philosophical praxis. Thus, in the context of the Platonic and Kantian conceptual distinctions, relativism, when contrasted broadly, as Rorty claims, with objectivity, and, more specifically, with the idea that we can accept ‘the Greek distinction between the way things are in themselves and the relations which they have to other things, and in particular to human needs and interests’ (Rorty 1999, xvi), still seems like an attractive option. The problem is that how we function in concrete situations tends to involve ways of doing that operate outside of such clear Kantian and Platonic distinctions. Indeed, even if we take into account more pragmatic approaches to making sense of what counts for ‘objectivity’ in normal, everyday circumstances, we see that Rorty’s conception of objectivity as ‘solidarity’ or Frank’s idea of *Verständigung* are also

treated with suspicion by the advocates of cultural relativism, specifically, as was observed with Frank's critique of Lyotard, by those who suggest that irreducible differences at the level of discourse preclude a meta-discourse of agreement. But before we get to that, we need to ascertain why relativism might be considered to be an attractive option for those who insist on working *within* a distinctly Kantian or Platonic conceptual framework?

As was discussed in the previous chapter, the shift towards postmodernism in general is entwined with what Lawrence Kramer sees as important 'ethical' changes in musicological praxis. Thus, as Scott observes, the calling into question of formalist conceptions of music in New Musicology opened up a space of possibility to understand music as something 'that satisfied widespread social needs' thereby 'uncovering the complicity between art and entertainment rather than drawing a contrast between these two terms' (Scott 2001, 135). Similarly, 'the related issue of the evolution of musical style was now questioned' (*ibid.*, 134). As Scott goes on to argue:

The dominant grand narrative for musical modernism was that of the evolution and dissolution of tonality. Schoenberg claimed that serialism grew out of necessity, yet this necessity was itself born of a set of particular cultural assumptions. Empirical data can be used to demonstrate that the change from extended tonality to atonality was an evolution, but it can equally well show that this was a qualitative leap. A belief in the historical necessity of atonality led to the neglect of many areas of twentieth-century music history, such as the importance of Vienna to Hollywood (Korngold) or of Puccini to "The Generation of the 1880s" in Italy. Worst of all, perhaps, was the almost complete disregard of jazz (*ibid.*, 137).

The 'old' and 'modern' interpretations of music history emphasised formal and technical values based on a conception of music as autonomous, as something free from the vagaries and contingencies of everyday life. As Scott observes, such a conception of music together with the notion of autonomous cultural development, of evolution and dissolution, marginalised those who failed to participate in that particular development, or who sought alternatives. Thus, Scott argues, 'the linear paradigm is a means of defending a single authentic culture, but that requires a common practice and modernism failed to establish one' (*ibid.*, 138). By bringing to an end the universal aspirations for Western art music, the idea that music could be socially and culturally situated, thus lending a voice to those individuals and groups that had been marginalised by an overpowering 'modernist' aesthetic, gained new ground. In this context, relativism seems like an attractive option because it

emphasises the idea that, according to Scott, ‘musical meanings are not labels arbitrarily thrust upon abstract sounds; these sounds and their meanings originate in a social process and achieve their significance within a particular social context’ (ibid., 140). As already mentioned, in the context of the Platonic and Kantian distinctions, the end of reified conceptions of musical meaning as ‘obscure intermediate entities’ and the calling into question of universalist narratives surrounding music history, seem to leave little room for anything other than the subjectivisation of meaning and the ‘little narratives’ of irreducibly different cultures.

The degradation of truth as the ‘dialogue of mankind’ in musicological affairs as a result of its ‘postmodern’ turn is an issue that Stanley Cavell indirectly hits upon in articulating the similarities he sees between aesthetic claims, both evaluative and interpretive, and the logic peculiar to ordinary language philosophy. For Cavell, ‘the familiar lack of conclusiveness in aesthetic argument, rather than showing up an irrationality, shows the kind of rationality it has, and needs’ (Cavell 2002, 86). Elaborating, Cavell suggests that the arguments which support aesthetic claims ‘are not conclusive the way arguments in logic are, nor rational the way arguments in science are. Indeed they are not, and if they were there would be no such subject as art (or morality) and no such art as criticism. It does not follow, however, that such judgments are not conclusive and rational’ (ibid., 88). Turning to Kant’s *Critique of Judgment*, Cavell notes that one kind of aesthetic judgment, what Kant called judgments of taste, are reflective assertions that lay claim to *intersubjective legitimacy*. This attempt to overcome or at least call into question the traditional Platonic and Kantian distinctions that support relativism is not, Cavell notes, an ‘empirical problem’ but ‘an a priori requirement setting the (transcendental) conditions under which such judgments as we call aesthetic could be made *überhaupt*’, that is, broadly, in the first place (ibid.). Unlike ‘the taste of sense’, which encompasses what we, as subjects, find pleasant, ‘the taste of reflection’ and the judgments that go with it, Cavell argues, ‘demand’, ‘impute’ or ‘claim’ ‘general validity, universal agreement with them; and when we make such judgments we go on claiming this agreement even though we know from experience that they will not receive it’ (ibid., 89). In other words, aesthetic claims of the reflective kind demand that we ‘ought’ to agree with the interpretation – there is a normative impulse to such judgments. However, the norms of aesthetic judgments, as we have seen throughout this study, are neither what Cavell calls ‘a matter of factual rectitude’ nor ‘of formal

indiscretion'. They are not subjective and 'psychological' nor are they 'logical' necessities. As Jay Bernstein summarises, aesthetic claims of the reflective kind 'claim objectivity, they aim to speak with a "universal voice", for everyone, and thus demand that others see things in the same way. Yet there is no matter of fact or reason (no concept or principle that my judgment comes under) that grounds any such judgment and thus empirically or logically necessitates that others judge the same' (Bernstein 2003, 113). The most we can say is that what aesthetic claims terminate with – even though Cavell admits that he cannot describe *what* it is, instead suggesting that Wittgenstein calls it 'grammar' and others might call it 'phenomenology' (Cavell 2002, 93) – are the horizons of enquiry of both the interpreter and the artwork to be interpreted that are historically formed by their belonging to a particular world of socio-cultural practices. As we have seen in this study, therefore, rather than 'retreating', as Cavell calls it, into the realm of purely subjective, personal or 'psychological' judgments due to the vulnerable 'objectivity' of our aesthetic claims, we can continue to debate interpretations with one another within the potentially trans-historical sphere of norms on which the necessity of aesthetic judgments rests.

If the musicologist does not recognise that he is making judgments about musical praxis that claim third-person assent, that is, that operate outside the remit of the object/subject binary, then, if he '*retreat[s]* to personal taste', 'there is a price he will have to pay in our estimate of him' (Cavell 2002, 92). As Wellmer indicates:

Understanding should not be confused with the feeling that we have understood, rather it can only be grasped in its manifestations. And these are located in an arena of public communication – which is what makes it possible to have a dispute, with arguments, about aesthetic understanding or failure to understand, or (what amounts to much the same thing) about the success or failure of works of art or performances. The existence of literary and art criticism bears witness to this (Wellmer 1985, 65).

In order to avoid 'postmodernising' itself out of existence, critical musicology, if it is to continue to give the institutional go-ahead to the interactions between 'modernisms' and 'postmodernisms', between 'old' and 'new' musicologies, must face up to the 'arena of public communication' which maintains it as an institution and which presupposes its very existence. The point to realise here is that critical musicology, which attempts to use the formalisms and positivisms of 'modern' musicology within a hermeneutic framework based on the interpretation, analysis and

criticism of actual musical events, cannot allow difference, contingency and meaning pluralism to become ends in themselves. The point that Cavell makes in direct contrast with someone like Lyotard is that our interpretive claims are constantly being judged legitimate or illegitimate within a trans-cultural and trans-historical intersubjective sphere of norms. Claims regarding the incommensurability of subject positions, the indeterminacy of musical meaning and the ultimate contingency of interpretations can only be made up to a point before they begin to offer a parody of how the discipline actually operates in concrete situations. As Wellmer demonstrates, it goes without saying that truth is 'pluralistic', in that there are as many truths as there are ways of making sense of the world. But if this were all, there would only be 'truths', not 'the truth'. If this were the case, as Wellmer claims, truth would be devalued. The key point that Wellmer makes is that all thought on the relativity of truth presupposes the ideal of truth in the first place.⁸ Lyotard's claims, as we have seen, regarding the irreconcilability of each and every discursive conflict can only be understood if there exist shared conventions by which we can judge his remarks to be valid or not; precisely the kinds of shared understanding of the truth that Lyotard is looking to refute through the concept of the *différend*. Without such norms, Lyotard's *Geltungsanspruch* is unintelligible. Furthermore, without some shared awareness of what is going on in a discursive situation, one would not be able to claim, in the first place, that what one was partaking in was, in fact, discourse. Indeed, in the case of Lyotard, 'dissent' would be impossible if there were the kind of total incommensurability that he is aiming to articulate in the *différend*; for the idea of dissent could only be made intelligible in the light of the kinds of agreement that Lyotard claims can never happen. Ultimately, the existence of shared norms, of a shared understanding of what is legitimate, is what both presupposes and maintains the discipline of musicology. Even if we disagree with the norms and conventions of a discipline that give it a semblance of identity, musicology can only operate as an institution if there exist (at the least the possibility for) norms and conventions against which one can determine the legitimacy of even the most self-refuting postmodernist claims and totalitarian, absolutist readings. By tending to the reasons why critical musicology should, in an age where the divide between 'old' and 'new' continues to

⁸ See Wellmer 1993, 204-223.

collapse, concern itself with intersubjective legitimacy, the following sections will attempt to illustrate a future for critical musicology after reification and relativism.

Music as Critique of Relativism

According to Taylor, ‘relativism is usually the notion that affirmations can be judged valid not unconditionally, but only from different points of view or perspectives. Proposition p could be true from perspective A , false from perspective B , indeterminate from C , and so forth, but there would be no such thing as its being true or false unconditionally’ (Taylor 2002, 134). Taylor, therefore, like Rorty, sets up his account of relativism on the basic principle that it is in tension with objectivity. The issue, however, as we have already mentioned, is that to make such a distinction presupposes the idea that there exists what Rorty refers to as neutral ground to what we are attempting to come to terms. In other words, to uphold the divide between objectivity and relativism is to presuppose that there is something to pick out – what Davidson calls ‘something neutral and common that lies outside all schemes’ (Davidson 2006, 202). Ultimately, it is this conceptual framework for making sense of relativism that both Davidson and Gadamer aim to criticise. So, Gadamer claims:

The criterion for the continuing expansion of our world picture is not given by a “world in itself” that lies beyond all language. Rather, the infinite perfectability of the human experience of the world means that, whatever language we use, we never succeed in seeing anything but an ever more extended aspect, a “view” of the world. Those views of the world are not relative in the sense that one could oppose to the “world in itself”, as if the right view from some possible position outside the human, linguistic world could discover it in its being-in-itself (Gadamer 2004, 444).

Taylor makes the same point; mainly that something like Gadamer’s critique needs to be ‘kept in mind in order to avoid certain easy pitfalls, such as thinking that one has a neutral, universal categorization of the structures or functions of all societies, e.g., political system, family, religion, which provide the ultimately correct description for what all the different fumbling, cultural languages are aiming at; as it were, the noumena to their phenomenal tongues’ (Taylor 2002, 139). The issue is that in the context of the Kantian or Platonic conceptual framework the real relativist challenge to the notion of objectivity, to the idea of the unconditional validity of propositions, is the idea that there are unbridgeable differences between different worldviews, and this is determined, Davidson argues, by what is thought to be the incommensurability

and untranslatability of different languages. As Davidson claims, ‘the failure of intertranslatability is a necessary condition for difference of conceptual schemes; the common relation to experience or the evidence is what is supposed to help us make sense of the claim that it is languages or schemes that are under consideration when translation fails’ (Davidson 2006, 202). Ultimately, the consequence of this (relativist) line of thought is that, as Taylor states, ‘all reasoning stops at the borders of conceptual schemes, which pose insurmountable limits to our understanding’ (Taylor 2002, 137). In other words, the concept of relativism here seems based on the idea of what McDowell calls ‘a repertoire that is meaning-involving, and so intelligible, but not intelligible to us’ (McDowell 2009, 136)

This picture of radical incommensurability is not how musical praxis or language functions in real circumstances. As Davidson, McDowell and Taylor are all aware, it also doesn’t really make sense of why translation ‘fails’ in concrete situations. It goes without saying that music is unable to make propositional claims. However, as Taylor observes, just as language can only ever be a partial and temporary barrier to understanding cultures that appear different to our own, so musical practices of different communities cannot be considered to be so radically different as to be inaccessible to ‘foreign’ enquirers. Our understanding of a piece of musical praxis, in the same way that we understand a linguistic assertion made by a member of a different culture, doesn’t involve us encountering an isolated piece of information free from the general grasp of the wider performative context from which it emerges. Like music, the isolated bit of information that is asserted in a speech act cannot exist autonomously outside of the sphere of interpretation, which, as Gadamer illustrates, also means a sphere of conversation and exchange, and eventually what Wittgenstein calls a ‘form of life’. When something is claimed, what is claimed goes beyond what is purely asserted in terms of ‘propositional content’, that is, it makes manifest or discloses a particular *style* of ‘being-in-the-world’. Similarly, we understand musical events as part of a broader understanding of the whole, a dialogical event which includes the fore-structures of our understanding that we bring with us from our practice-based engagement with the world as well as what is presented to us by the sounds that we commonly think of as being music. If we think about music, therefore, as was demonstrated in chapter one, in explicitly disclosive terms, in the sense that music, like language, can make sense of the ‘worlds’ we occupy, that is, in Heidegger’s terms, in the sense that it can ‘thematise’ or render

‘expressly visible’ what characterises our practice-based making sense of a world, then, once musical practices transcend the borders of their own culture, history and geography through trans-cultural and trans-historical interpretive acts, music can be considered to be a means of coming to terms with how communities and individuals make sense of one another. Furthermore, music can show us how this making sense is based upon the interaction of potentially trans-cultural and trans-historical norms as well as demonstrating the problems posed by such encounters between different cultures.

Geographical, cultural and historical barriers, as is evident following the globalisation and normalisation of various ‘minority’ musics during the second half of the twentieth century, cannot contain music. As Martin Stokes observes in terms of the globalisation of world music since the 1980s, and despite the questions of power that surround such claims, ‘connections have been made, ideas exchanged, pleasures gained, and everyday music making in local contexts changed in fundamental ways. Cultural creativity on the margins of our own societies, previously invisible and inaudible, has been recognised outside of those margins; we have started to *hear* our social environment more inclusively’ (Stokes 2012, 114). As different varieties of musical practice spread across the world, so those practices become re-interpreted within new horizons, appropriated by different worldviews and combined with foreign musical practices to create new forms and styles of music. All this appropriation and interpretation leaves behind a trail of evidence by which we can make sense of how cultures come into contact with one another, sometimes even across distant points in history. Music, therefore, does not just disclose a specific world and its supposedly irreducible norms and conventions, but, through its dissemination across different times and places, discloses what Bohlman calls the ‘moment of encounter’ (Bohlman 2012, 30), the encounter between one world and another, two worlds which, in stark contrast with what Lyotard suggests, *can* come to make sense of each other. Music, therefore, like language – when we consider ways in which the latter really matters to us, which, as Bowie (2007) and Taylor (2011) illustrate, must take account of its ‘musical’ aspects – shows us how we are entitled to refuse the idea of a case of intelligibility that is radically inaccessible to us.

In the case of Edgard Varèse’s *Amériques* (1922/1929), the ways in which the French-born composer comes to make sense of his emigration to New York is, to a certain extent, so obvious that it borders on the banal. Varèse’s self-professed tone

poem was written, according to composer, when ‘I was still under the spell of my first impressions of New York – not only New York seen but, more especially, heard’ (Rich 1995, 89). He explains, ‘for the first time with my physical ears I heard a sound that had kept recurring in my ears as a boy: a high whistling C sharp. It came to me as I worked in my West-side apartment where I could here all the river sounds – the lonely foghorns, the shrill peremptory whistles – the whole wonderful river symphony that moved me more than anything has before’ (ibid.). What is depicted in *Amériques* in truly remarkable detail, which we can appreciate owing to recordings made by New York’s Noise Abatement Commission in 1929, is not just the ‘river symphony’ of foghorns and whistles but the whole soundscape of the city during ‘the roaring twenties’.⁹ Included in *Amériques* are musical representations of the noises of automobiles, horns, cut-outs, exhausts, sirens, bells, doormen’s whistles, trains, pneumatic drills, birdsong, the wind and flowing water. Indeed, we also hear snippets of the sounds of different cultures occupying the various ethnic enclaves of the city; some hints at jazz and swing, at Tin Pan Alley, at Spanish rhythms and at Yiddish and Far-Eastern music as well as other musical styles that make blatant use of pentatonic part writing. All this, unlike the later *Déserts* (1950-54), which included manipulated interpolations of recordings of factory sounds at Westinghouse, Diston and Budd Manufacturers, is achieved through the ‘traditional’ means of an orchestra, albeit one that includes twenty-one separate brass parts, twenty distinct woodwind parts and nine percussionists.

What is less obvious about *Amériques* is that it illustrates how when we encounter other cultures and seek to understand them, to interpret them, the possibility exists for our norms to be transcended, an issue we will look at shortly in terms of Gadamer’s notion of a ‘fusion of horizons’. In order to understand this, we need to realise that Varèse’s musical interpretation of his ‘impressions of New York’ did not impose the pre-established European worldview of the composer on an alien culture in any instrumental sense. Varèse’s understanding of New York City does not seem to be what Taylor calls a ‘sham’, that is, ‘the end of the operation is not control...designed to manipulate my partner while pretending to negotiate’ (Taylor 2002, 128). There is a sense in which Varèse sought to function together with the culture he was trying to interpret, ‘by listening as well as talking’, thus inescapably

⁹ Emily Thompson’s website, ‘The Roaring Twenties’, provides many such sound clips as well as other sources in order to represent the soundscape of New York in the late 1920s.

altering his understanding of himself (ibid., 141). Although Wellmer perhaps puts too much weight on what he calls ‘external’ or ‘productive’ understanding as the basis of any critique of the established norms, that is, a type of understanding that transcends ‘the perspective of the other’ by ‘interpreting it from within its own language, its own understanding of the problems, its own present’, it seems to be the case that in really interesting and illuminating moments of aesthetic experience, external understanding when working in conjunction with this ‘openness to the Other’, ‘will appear as “violent” to the extent that it reconstructs the perspective, the self-understanding of a text, a conversation partner, a foreign culture *in a de-familiarising way*, as it were from a vantage point outside that perspective and that self-understanding’ [italics added] (Wellmer 1995, 147). Indeed, it is this, what Gadamer calls, ‘openness’ to the Other working in combination with what Wellmer calls an ‘external’, ‘productive’ or ‘critical’ understanding on the part of the interpreting subject that allows Varèse to transcend certain stylistic norms of Western art music, thus opening up a space of possibility for a seemingly new, modernist compositional aesthetic, one that became manifest in ‘organised sound’, based around the notion of what Varèse, in his lectures, called ‘sound as living matter’ (Chou 1966, 1). It is this idea of ‘sound as living matter’ whose genesis we find in the ‘living sounds’ of *Amériques*.

In terms of norm transcendence, Varèse realised as early as 1917 that ‘our musical alphabet is poor and illogical’ (Varèse 1966, 11). In addition to calling for new instruments as new mediums of expression, he famously passed over the ‘progressive’ developments of twelve-tone technique – what he called a ‘hardening of the arteries’ (Schuller and Varèse 1965, 33) – making moves to transcend Western art music’s fascination with pitch and duration, something Chou Wen-chung, who revised and corrected the manuscript of *Amériques* in 1929, referred to as music’s ‘*mechanical* limitations’ (Chou 1966, 3). Varèse, as a means to achieve ‘organised sound’, detached attack, decay, frequency, intensity, dynamics and timbre from their traditional association with pitch and duration in order to render them isolable features in their own right so that an individual ‘sound-mass’ could be considered as ‘a body of sounds with certain specific attributes in interval content, register, contour, timbre, intensity, attack and decay’ (ibid.).¹⁰ With music becoming, according to Varèse in 1939, an ‘art-science’ through the development of new technologies, he

¹⁰ See Erickson 1975, 47-57

hoped that these isolated aspects of music could then be taken beyond the boundaries that they previously operated within:

Here are the advantages I anticipate from such a machine: liberation from the arbitrary, paralysing tempered system; the possibility of obtaining any number of cycles or, if still desired, subdivisions of the octave, and consequently the formation of any desired scale; unsuspected range in low and high registers; new harmonic splendours obtainable from the use of sub-harmonic combinations now impossible; the possibility of obtaining differentiation of timbre, of sound-combinations; new dynamics far beyond the present human-powered orchestra; a sense of sound-projection in space by means of emission of sound in any part or in many parts of the hall, as may be required by the score; cross-rhythms unrelated to each other, treated simultaneously, or, to use the old world, “contrapuntally”, since the machine could be able to beat any number of desired notes, any subdivision of them, omission or fraction of them (Varèse 1966, 12-14).

Later, in 1962, Varèse suggested that the electronic medium had now ‘brought to composers almost endless possibilities of expression, and opened up for them the whole mysterious world of sound...Composers are now able, as never before, to satisfy the dictates of that inner ear of the imagination. They are also lucky so far in not being hampered by aesthetic codification – at least not yet!’ (ibid., 18). What I claim is that such transformations in the stylistic, notational and instrumental norms of Western art music were, to a degree, a result of Varèse’s encounter with and interpretation of the cultural Other that was New York City.¹¹

In a context where Varèse’s dissatisfaction with the norms of Western art music of the early twentieth century were entwined with his discovery of a new culture, the symbolism that surrounds the fire in a Berlin warehouse in 1918 which destroyed virtually all his work prior to his arrival in America is all the more pertinent. It should also be noted that the plural title, *Amériques*, indicated that this new ‘opus 1’ was meant to celebrate not merely Varèse’s discovery of America but, as the composer explained, it was ‘symbolic of discoveries – new worlds on earth, in the sky or in the minds of men’. *Amériques* was, by the composer’s own admission, a work intimately entwined with the notion of cultural discovery, of interpreting the Other, of new artistic horizons and of overcoming established norms. Jonathan Cross, for example, notes that having been ‘born under different auspices’, *Amériques* was

¹¹ It should be recognised that Varèse’s preoccupation with ‘blocks of sound’ did begin prior to his arrival in New York as he describes in an interview with Gunther Schuller (1965). In a sense, the works of the 1920s could be considered, therefore, as what Varèse called a ‘general refinement’ of his earlier compositions. However, it could also be argued that his specific focus on the soundscape of New York was what laid the grounds for his later ‘organised sound’ works and his conception of sound as ‘living matter’. It was this concentration on everyday, ‘living sounds’ as opposed to being concerned solely with what he called ‘architectonic form and structure’ that primarily distinguished the Varèse of the 1920s from his earlier self. See Schuller and Varèse 1965, 32-37.

able to confront Stravinsky's compositional language and, subsequently, bring about a transformation of the norms associated with this particular musical tradition in European (if not specifically Russian) modernism:

In its juxtaposition of blocks of material, in its overall structure, in its approach to melodic construction, rhythmic organisation and repetition, and in the assured way it deploys large orchestral forces, *Amériques* takes key aspects of Stravinsky's language in *The Rite* and *Les Noces* and transforms it into something new – demonstrating “the capacity for metamorphosis of a powerful language born under different auspices” (Cross 1998, 42).¹²

Furthermore, there is a sense in which the sound blocks of *Amériques*, quite literally, disclose the layout of New York City's road design and, thus, the ethnic stratification and connectedness of its various neighbourhoods. In this very obvious sense, the various enclaves of the city are accounted for by what Taruskin calls ‘discretely conceived and executed “blocks”’ of sound (Taruskin 1996, 1421). Yet, what is interesting in terms of the way such blocks of sound are brought into contact with one another, that is, the way in which what would later be termed ‘sound-masses’ are ‘discretely conceived and executed’ yet ‘interlock’, is that they seemingly disclose the tensions inherent in acts of cross-cultural engagement and interpretation on which these specific discussions of *Amériques* are based.

Varèse, from a lecture in 1936, claims that when ‘sound-masses collide the phenomena of penetration or repulsion will seem to occur’ (Varèse 1966, 11). He goes on to suggest that ‘certain transmutations taking place on certain planes will seem to be projected onto other planes, moving at different speeds and at different angles. There will no longer be the old conception of melody or interplay of

¹² As Cross is aware, we do not find Varèse's method of positing an anti-developmental musical structure made up of ‘blocks’ – what would later be termed ‘sound-masses’ – in the works of Stravinsky, in any obvious sense, until the *Symphonies of Wind Instruments*, which was not composed until the composition of *Amériques* was under way, and which Varèse would not have heard prior to the completion of his own composition. Stravinsky's method of ‘interlocking, discretely conceived and executed “blocks”’ (Taruskin 1996, 1421), which brings about a sense of ‘global coherence’ and ‘comprehensiveness’, is eschewed by Varèse leading to what Cross calls ‘the effect of a collage’ (Cross 1998, 45). Thus, although it is seemingly incontestable that Stravinsky in the *Symphonies* aims for a method of what Edward T. Cone calls ‘stratification, interlock and synthesis’ (Cone 1962, 19), whereby the ‘blocks’ are seemingly resolved in the Chorale finale, the synthesis can only be vaguely articulated, if at all, within *Amériques*. Even Jonathan D. Kramer, who, at one time, sought to denounce the pseudo-organicist interpretation of the *Symphonies*, has, subsequently, admitted that Stravinsky's motivic, harmonic and voice-leading techniques along with a linear, step-wise progression in the background does bring about a sense of continuity to the work. See J. Kramer 1981, 539-556. On the one hand, therefore, where one might argue that Stravinsky brings about the resolution of binary oppositions in the *Symphonies*, that is, the distinction between integration and disintegration and other related concepts, Varèse, on the other, leaves the nature of the resolution perhaps deliberately ambiguous.

melodies. The entire work will be a melodic totality. The entire work will flow as a river flows' (ibid.). The question of how, like Varèse's 'organised sound', worldviews 'flow' is a key issue when discussing how cross-cultural engagements take place. For Varèse, sound-masses can either penetrate or repel one another. It is this kind of dialectic that appears in acts of cultural colonisation or domination, in racism and xenophobia as well as in the seemingly democratic 'fusion of horizons' that Gadamer advocates. Before I explore how music discloses the 'flow' between different cultures, the important point to realise, initially, is that it is not possible to align the idea of total incommensurability of worldviews with real-life situations in which different cultures and their corresponding worldviews interact. In the interesting, concrete situations in which cross-cultural interactions occur, what we are faced with is the confrontation of partially overlapping worldviews and languages based on the notion that there exist some shared, practice-based norms. Indeed, as we have seen through the ideas of Rorty, Frank and Wellmer, any interesting situation in which discourse takes place must, in order for there to be a discussion in the first place, depend upon the existence or possibility of such shared conventions. That is not to say, however, that we need to possess a completely 'common language' or 'common worldview' in order to have a discussion. It follows that 'horizons', what McDowell calls worldviews and what Taylor refers to as languages, 'are thus often initially [and, I would add, partially] distinct. They divide us. But they are not unmovable; they can be changed, extended' (Taylor 2002, 134). If this is true then claims made in a certain local or cultural context can, in a sense, *transcend* their own local or cultural borders leading us to suggest that, as Wellmer observes, 'the idea of a self-contained language game is a myth' (Wellmer 1993, 223). We would miss the point of everyday communication if we interpreted it in terms of a common system of fixed 'rules' and 'criteria' that is, as it were, semantically closed.

According to Gadamer, 'the multiplicity of these worldviews does not involve any relativisation of the "world". Rather, the world is not different from the views in which it presents itself' (Gadamer 2004, 444). This idea leads Gadamer to argue that 'in the case of verbal worldviews, each one potentially contains every other one within it – i.e., each worldview can be extended into every other' (ibid., 445). The fact that each worldview 'potentially contains every other' is part of what leads Gadamer to argue for the notion of a 'shared moral world'; that is, 'in being devoted to common aims, in being absorbed in activity for the community, a person is freed

“from particularity and transience” (ibid., 229). This idea is, to a certain extent, elaborated by Habermas in his claims regarding multiculturalism:

For multiculturalism that understands itself in the right way is not a *one-way street* to the cultural self-assertion of groups with their own collective identities. The equal coexistence of different forms of life must not lead to segmentation. It calls for the integration of all citizens and the mutual recognition of their subcultural memberships within the framework of a shared political culture. The citizens as members of society may legitimately cultivate their distinctive cultures only under the condition that they all understand themselves, across subcultural divides, as citizens of one and the same political community’ (Habermas 2008, 270).

That is not to say, however, as Stokes observes, and as shall be discussed in what follows with regards to various power structures, that multiculturalism has not also ‘reduced rich musical traditions to mute tokens of otherness, to be noticed administratively or exploited commercially, but not engaged in meaningful, or lasting, dialogue’ (Stokes 2012, 114). It is precisely the point that when ‘multiculturalism understands itself in the right way’, ‘our world view’, as McDowell suggests, ‘includes its own receptiveness to the possibility of correction, not only by efforts at improvement that are internal to our practices of inquiry, but also through coming to appreciate insights of other world views in the course of coming to understand them’ (McDowell 2009, 138). It is this idea that one’s worldview can be ‘corrected’ by coming to understand the Other, that the norms of a culture can possibly be transcended through interaction with another, that my discussion of Varèse has attempted to illustrate. Such an idea calls into question the relevance of certain forms of musicological practice that affirm the idea that difference and meaning pluralism should be ends in themselves, thus, in the process, devaluing the concept of truth as a norm. In concrete situations, what Wellmer calls the ‘truths’ of particular societies and cultures or what Price calls ‘the chatter of disengaged monologues’ presuppose the ideal of ‘truth’ in the first place. Indeed, it is music’s ability to question what is considered to be legitimate or conventional that, as we shall see, allows it, at times, to adopt critical positions to various structures of power that would seek to control musical practices on their own terms.

Horizons and Norm Transcendence

McDowell, in his reading of Gadamer, claims that ‘when we come to understand the other subject, that can involve a change in how we view the world. When horizons

fuse, the horizon within which we view the world is no longer in the same position'. (McDowell 2009, 141). Such a claim is predicated on a number of issues, not least the question of power and its ability to distort mutual comprehension – something musical praxis is able to thematise as I will discuss shortly. The idea that there can be such a thing as a fusion of horizons presupposes that, as Taylor claims, 'we allow ourselves to be interpellated by the other; in which the difference escapes from its categorization as an error, a fault, or a lesser, undeveloped version of what we are, and challenges us to see it as a viable human alternative. It is this that unavoidably calls our own self-understanding into question. This is the stance Gadamer calls "openness"' (Taylor 2002, 141). In other words, according to Gadamer, 'openness to the other, then, involves recognising that I myself must accept some things that are against me, even though no one else forces me to do so' (Gadamer 2004, 355). In Varèse's terms, the act of a fusion of horizons, the 'flow' of worldviews, involves a 'penetration' as opposed to a 'repulsion' whereby distinct cultures allow themselves to be challenged, interpellated by what is different in the other culture. The challenge the notion of a fusion of horizons poses, therefore, for ways of making sense of the world that rely on the reification of what it is they aim to study cannot be missed. According to Taylor, 'this challenge will bring about two connected changes: we will see our peculiarity for the first time, as a formulated fact about us, and not simply a taken-for-granted feature of the human condition as such; and at the same time, we will perceive the corresponding feature of their life-form undistorted. These two changes are indissolubly linked; you cannot have one without the other' (Taylor 2002, 132). Thus, the coming-to-an-understanding model 'is a language that bridges those of both knower and known. That is why Gadamer speaks of it as a "fusion of horizons." The "horizons" here are at first distinct, they are the way that each has of understanding the human condition in their non-identity. The "fusion" comes about when one (or both) undergo a shift; the horizon is extended, so as to make room for the object that before did not fit within it' (ibid., 133). The important point to recognise, as my discussion of Varèse illustrates, is that by being open to the Other, a fusion of horizons can sometimes lead to a change in one's worldview, that is, in the norms and ways of doing that would have made up one's socio-cultural practices prior to one's contact with the Other. The critique, however, is not one-sided. Just as the hermeneutic situation can challenge the norms and conventions of the interpreting culture, so can the act of interpretation also challenge that which is being interpreted

to see its own culture in new and unfamiliar ways. Indeed, because coming-to-and-understanding involves certain definite interlocutors, whose life situations or goals are susceptible to change, a certain understanding may always be called into question, which would require the process of fusion to start all over again with yet more possibilities for the transcendence of socio-cultural norms.

It is this idea that undistorted mutual comprehensibility or reciprocal recognition can involve the overcoming or at least calling into question of cultural norms that makes the relationship with both aesthetic experience and reification so interesting. Bowie, for example, claims that ‘the kind of relation to the objective world present, for example, in musical performance (particularly improvised performance) relies precisely on the way that acquired norms which are necessary to perform at all are, *in the moments which really matter*, transcended by impulses that occur in concrete situations and which are not governed by those norms’ [italics added] (Bowie 2013. 127-128). As we observed with Varèse, Bowie’s claim could equally be said to apply to discussions of cross-cultural interpretation that are based on the ‘coming-to-an-understanding’ model, one that presupposes an ‘openness to the other’ as well as a critically reflecting interpreter, and that leads to a fusion of horizons. Indeed, Bowie aligns the aesthetic moment of norm-transcendence with the idea that such a moment is reached by not taking part in what Taylor calls a ‘sham’, an act of communication whose goal is the manipulation and domination of the Other. Thus, Bowie argues, ‘the jazz player’s experiences of “being in the zone”, which only sporadically occur, involve a kind of freedom which precisely manifests itself *in the disappearance of the conscious need for control and a following of impulse that creates new sense*’ [italics added] (ibid.). Wellmer also, unsurprisingly owing to Adorno’s influence on both thinkers, claims that communicative understanding enters into an interminable tension with aesthetic experience. Wellmer, as Honneth demonstrates, hits upon the idea that ‘the truth that the work of art conveys does not easily align itself with the differentiations in everyday language that may be undertaken by way of the pragmatics of language among the three validity dimensions of empirical truth, normative rightness and subjective truthfulness’ (Honneth 2009, 172). Indeed, in a Heideggerian twist to a largely Habermasian approach to Critical Theory, Wellmer argues that the cognitive effect of a work of art cannot be adequately apprehended within the differentiated frames of rational understanding, for it relates to subjective attitudes or worldviews that in some

measure pre-exist rational opinion formation in discursive speech because they form syntheses of all three aspects of validity. This is precisely where the idea of theory construction, such as we encountered in analytic aesthetics, and its reifying approach to music and musical works is called into question. The point is, for Wellmer, that what art amounts to is ‘a disruption or negation of devitalised meaning’ (Wellmer 1985, 69). This is what Wellmer refers to as ‘the subversive potential’ of aesthetic experience (ibid., 43). It is, ultimately, because our understanding of music can be challenged and, potentially, overcome through the normalisation of new interpretations that a theory which aims to definitively characterise music’s ontology, meaning and value cannot account for all that actual musical practices could present us with, both now and in the future. Indeed, for Wellmer, mutual comprehension and aesthetic experience are so intimately linked that the deaestheticization of society, which he argues took place through ‘the functionalistic modernisation of West German cities since the war’, was and still is a problem for civic freedom because ‘what was largely lost in the process of this modernisation was the city as a public space where a multiplicity of functions and forms of communication interacted’ (ibid., 121-122).

The entwinement of aesthetic experience with the notion of cross-cultural understanding, in Taylor’s sense, finds a certain amount of expression in Adorno’s reading of Beethoven’s late style, especially when contrasted with his interpretation of the middle style, which, as we saw in chapter two, can be interpreted as a harmonious reconciliation of musical particular and general form. In his reflections on late Beethoven, Adorno repeatedly emphasises the general withering of harmony as a characteristic trait:

But even where the harmony is nakedly visible, it has nothing to do with fully worked-out tonality, with the aesthetic concept of harmony...the chord as allegory replaced key as process. The term “functionless harmony”, coined for atonality, applies in a certain way to the late Beethoven (Adorno 1998, 129).

For Adorno, the harmony of the middle period, which withers in the light of the late style, symbolises the identity of subject and object, of means and ends. What emerges in the late style, however, is ‘criticism’, specifically, a ‘force of subjectivity’ that bursts the late works asunder, ‘not in order to express itself but, expressionlessly, to cast off the illusion of art’ (ibid., 125) – the illusion that the harmonious synthesis of subject and object within the artwork can be replicated within social reality. In this

way, ‘the *compulsion of identity is broken* and the conventions are its fragments’ [italics added] (ibid., 157), fragments ‘left standing’ ‘as splinters derelict and abandoned’ (ibid., 125). In claiming that ‘the fragmented landscape is objective, while the light in which it alone it glows is subjective’ (ibid., 126), Adorno contended that ‘all the categories of the late Beethoven are challenges to idealism’ (ibid., 157). In other words, the late works, in Adorno’s opinion, loosen the impulse towards the integration of the individual and thus express, in musical form, the ‘irreconcilability of reality’ (ibid., 152). ‘Harmony is avoided’, according to Adorno, ‘because it produces an *illusion* of the unity of many voices’ (ibid., 157). Such an account of musical harmony, ultimately, coincides with Adorno’s conception of ethical life. As Bowie observes, ‘Adorno does add the claim that the sedimented internal and external effects of instrumental reason are such that ethical transparency is effectively impossible. This is a kind of inverted image of Pippin’s Hegelianism, where sedimented norms are the very condition of possibility of ethical life’ (Bowie 2013, 112). According to Bowie, Pippin’s Hegel, which, as we have seen, is based on an anti-metaphysical reading of Hegel’s works, ‘regards the core of practical philosophy as a harmonisation of the individual with the norms of a community which can tell a story of their development that legitimates them, there being no other form of legitimation which would not entail indefensible metaphysical or other dogmatic claims’ (Bowie 2013, 103). But, Bowie goes on to explain, and as I have attempted to demonstrate through Varèse’s encounter with America and the relevance of music to that encounter, ‘in the situations characteristic of modernity the subject’s harmonisation with communal norms cannot be as transparent or unproblematic as it seems to be for Pippin and Hegel’ (ibid.).¹³ However, rather than discount normativity and its relevance for how we make sense of the world, which could also mean discounting the possibility of understanding someone or some culture whose worldview is seemingly different to our own, Pippin’s Hegelian position needs to bear in mind the challenge to one’s own norms that comes from any interpretive

¹³ Wellmer argues that the tensions within a Hegelian account of freedom finds its genesis in Kant’s differentiation between morally right action and the legitimacy of norms (Wellmer 1991, 188-195). Wellmer is, thus, critical of Habermas’ formulation of discourse ethics in that it is dependent upon ideal conditions in consensus theory and, thus, through an exploration of ultimate grounding of being in agreement, appealed to a absolutist conception of ethics (ibid., 145-188). Arguably, this sort of ethical determinism involves absorbing individuals into a totalising ethical framework whereby ‘ethically-good’ people resign themselves without trying to meddle. Suffice it to say that Habermas has been ‘open’ to Wellmer’s criticisms such that his account of the ‘ideal speech situation’ no longer plays a prominent role in his work.

situation in which an ‘openness to the Other’ is combined with the critical potential of the interpreting subject if it is not to be implausibly one-sided.

Music and the Problem of Fusing Horizons

The previous discussion of Varèse’s *Amériques* may appear to paint an idealised picture of the composer’s interpretation of New York City and the impact of that encounter on his own compositional norms. To a degree, Gadamer’s own account of what is at stake and what occurs when we seek to understand the Other suffers from a similar problem, mainly that it does not take account of the real issues facing attempts at mutual comprehensibility or reciprocal recognition. Gadamer, seemingly, falls into the trap of reifying the process of cultural engagement. His idea of what constitutes cross-cultural understanding fails to take account of what actually affects encounters with the Other in real life. This problem is not lost on Taylor, who claims that ‘the road to understanding others passes through the patient identification and undoing of those facets of our implicit understanding *that distort the reality of the other*’ [italics added] (Taylor 2002, 132). Elaborating, he suggests ‘that we need to understand how we move from our language at the time of encounter, which can only distort them [the Other], to a richer language that has place for them; from making the “best sense” in our initial terms, which will usually be an alien imposition, to making the best sense within a fused horizon’ (ibid., 138). The issue is that in order for live interlocutors ‘to talk undistortively of each’, ‘we have to maintain a kind of openness to the text, allow ourselves to be interpellated by it, take seriously the way its formulations differ from ours – *all things that a live interlocutor in a situation of equal power would force us to do*’ [italics added] (Taylor 2002, 134). It is precisely because situations in which real interlocutors seek to understand one another are not, in terms of power relations, equal, that both Gadamer’s interpretation and my reading of Varèse perhaps paint an overly metaphysical picture of aesthetic experience and mutual comprehension. As Wellmer explains in relation to the dialectical relationship between interpreter and the interpreted in concrete hermeneutic situations, ‘there is a particular risk of nonunderstanding attached to either case, to immanent as well as to external understanding. The internal perspective may lose any sense of distance, and thus the possibility of activating that which is to be understood within the horizon of one’s own language, and one’s own present... The external perspective may lose sight

of that specific element in a text or what a speaker is saying that is different, foreign, incapable of integration into one's own perspective' (Wellmer 1995, 147-148). In other words, in situations where the power relations between interpreter and text are not equal, there is a real danger that what Wellmer calls the 'correct mean between merely "internal" understanding and "external" understanding', between 'reception' and 'production' – a 'gesture' that 'can only ever be achieved partially' (ibid., 149-150) – will be distorted too far in either direction leading to 'nonunderstanding' [*Nicht-Verstehen*] (ibid., 146-147). As Wellmer observes, 'the inherent danger of immanent understanding is loss of critical distance; the inherent danger of external understanding is the dogmatism of an interpretation that is guided by prejudice' (ibid., 148). Both kinds of understanding may result in the transcendence of pre-established aesthetic norms, but how that happens is not through an act of mutual recognition based on the various interlocutors being 'open' to one another, but through either the imposition of the interpreter's own prejudices on that which is to be interpreted or the interpreter's uncritical acceptance of the Other's norms and convictions. Again, we can turn to musical praxis as a way of understanding how power structures get in the way of democratic, cross-cultural processes of interpretation and legitimisation.

Heile, in accounting for new music as a 'global phenomenon', discusses the case of *Weltmusik*, 'one of the most influential concepts among the European avant-garde from the late 1960s to the early '80s' (Heile 2009, 103). As he claims, 'many current arguments pro and contra forms of cross-cultural representation have already been foreshadowed during the *Weltmusik* debate' (ibid.). Focussing on the composition *Telemusik* (1966) by Stockhausen, Heile notes that 'in the piece he wanted to "get closer to realising an old and recurrent dream", namely "not to write "my" music, but the music of the whole earth, of all countries and races"' (ibid., 104). In terms of Stockhausen's grand hopes for a 'universal' music, Heile thematises the crucial ethical issue facing the composer, one that calls into question the innocent picture Stockhausen paints for this 'very open musical world' (Stockhausen 1978). As Heile illustrates, 'from an emphasis on "pluralist developments" and a "polyphony of styles, times and locales" in a "very open musical world" – however this can be achieved by the one person in control of the technology – Stockhausen has, within the same text but written at different times, shifted to emphasizing "higher unity" and "universality"' (Heile 2009, 105). Demonstrating the influence of Marshall

McLuhan's ideas of the incorporation of mankind through technology on Stockhausen's homogenising approach to the issue of different cultures, Heile emphasises the main problem facing the latter's project; McLuhan's 'mono-causal determinism makes him blind to the power relations, economic structures and other social and historical factors that drive technological change in the first place; consequently he never even asks who initiates, controls and benefits from technological developments' (ibid., 107). Turning to Stockhausen's 1973 article on *Weltmusik*, the composer lets us know on whose terms the 'museum of global culture', in which music will play an essential role, will come about (Stockhausen 1978). In Adorno's terms, the 'compulsion of identity', which he discussed in relation to Beethoven's musical critique of idealism, comes from the West, specifically Europe. As Stockhausen claims, 'the Europeans not only have the technology to produce something new, they also have the technology to conserve what has previously matured. Therefore, they have an obligation to do that as faithfully as possible' (ibid.).

Despite suggesting that 'the highest responsibility of our time is to preserve as many musical forms and styles as possible', Stockhausen claims that cultures are 'overripe and in that state of decay, destined to transform themselves into something new' (ibid.). Ultimately, the problem with this call for a 'rapid process of dissolution of individual cultures' is that the direction of the 'flow into one unified *world culture*' is, out of necessity, due to the position accorded technology in Stockhausen's plans for the harmonisation of cultures to the norms of one global culture, towards the European worldview. It also just so happens that this worldview is, according to Stockhausen, one of the two cultures – the other being Japan – whose musical traditions 'have become so strongly crystallised' displaying a 'relative uniformity of instrumentation and compositional technique' (ibid.). Ultimately, as Heile observes, Stockhausen 'does not see that the process of integration he describes is not necessarily fully self-generating and voluntary, but that it is driven by specific political and economic interests' (Heile 2009, 108). Indeed, with this in mind, it is telling, as Heile also notes, that Stockhausen states that his music, specifically *Telemusik*, *Hymnen*, *Kurzwellen*, *Spiral*, *Mantra* and *Stimmung*, gestures at what the 'universal' music might look like – 'in this sense, all local musics are to be understood as parts of that universal music and are accordingly incorporated in Stockhausen's music' (ibid.).

If Stockhausen can be considered to be blind to the power structures that ensure the ‘flow’ of cultural change is towards his distinctly Eurocentric, unified ‘world culture’, Lawrence Kramer is all too aware of the possibilities that exist for such structures to distort the fusion of horizons. As shall be explored, musical practice is one way by which we can become critically aware of the unjust ideas that continue to legitimise relations of domination. Indeed, as Bohlman claims, ‘music is the key to understanding and to the power that will turn initial encounter into prolonged dominance. To music, then, accrues the potential to articulate colonial power and chart empire’ (Bohlman 2012, 30). Kramer, for example, discusses the notion of ‘supremacism’, the late nineteenth-century separation of what was considered to be ‘higher’ and ‘lower’ in human nature and society, a *Fin-de-siècle*, northern-European cultural practice based on the ideas of Kantian autonomy and the discoveries in evolutionary science that allowed for the formation of dualistic and phobic contrasts between ‘cultural progress and cultural regression, evolution and degeneration’ (L. Kramer 2004, 191). Kramer suggests that ‘the origins of supremacist culture lie partly in the rise of economic and social stresses on the middle-class family central to the organisation of nineteenth-century life’, something, unfortunately, he does not discuss in any great detail, ‘and partly in the ideological impact of evolutionary science’. Consequently, drawing primarily upon Otto Weininger’s 1903 misogynist manifesto, *Sex and Character*, he illustrates how Richard Strauss’ *Elektra* (1909) discloses important themes in supremacist ideology in terms of the ‘primitive’ status of the female – a figure of degeneration and regression (L. Kramer 2004, 191).

In terms reminiscent of Varèse’s account of sound-masses, Kramer considers the ‘protagonist’ to be both ‘repellent and compelling’ (ibid., 193) – although, ultimately, more repulsive than she is alluring. The issue is, according to Kramer, that although the supremacist wishes to distance himself from the ‘phobic personification of womanhood as brute bodily energy’, that same character also attracts the civilised, normative human type, which makes her even more dangerous in supremacist terms through her desire to assimilate her life to that of men – the ultimate act of degeneration. Despite this dialectic of revulsion and penetration that Kramer suggests surrounds *Elektra*, it is clear that there is no fusion of her horizons with those of the supremacist in any democratic sense. The initial dialectic does not lead to mutual comprehension or reciprocal recognition between the supremacist and the atavistic

‘protagonist’ of Strauss’ work. Indeed, in terms of the supremacist narrative, Elektra’s desire to assimilate herself to the world of men is thwarted by panicky revulsion, which, ultimately, leads to her death – in a less obvious sense than in the case of Klytämnestra – as ‘a sacrificial victim’ (ibid., 218). Furthermore, in terms of the associative role of keys in Strauss’ music, there is no cathartic moment whereby Elektra’s bitonal musical characterisation – first heard in bar 15 (Ex. 2) – is resolved in favour of either tonality. There is no musical resolution of the contradiction between E major, what Bryan Gilliam (1991) associates with Dionysian, passionate and sensual themes in Strauss’ works as a whole, and D-flat major, famously associated with The Countess – authoritative yet sentimental muse, who, with tongue firmly in cheek, repels the advances of her male admirers – in *Capriccio*. Elektra’s death, in complimentary opposition to her ‘positive’ representation in D flat major/E major, takes place in yet another bitonal context based on the alternation of E-flat minor – tonic minor of the key associated with Chrysothemis, the supremacist poster girl who explicitly demands a ‘woman’s fate’ – and C minor, the latter with repetitions of the work’s opening motif evoking the death of the murdered Agamemnon (Ex. 3). Indeed, the fact that the deathblow comes on an E-flat minor chord, which Thethys Carpenter (1989) associates with rejection and its ultimate entwinement with death, thus affirms her alienation not just from the realm of women, the *Weiberschicksal*, but from the domain of the living in general. Elektra’s passing is affirmed by the C-minor, truncated ‘Agamemnon’ fanfares that follow. Ultimately, there is no vengeance for Elektra but condemnation for her retributive acts and scheming. Dramatically and tonally, Elektra is repellent to all the main characters in the drama, including her own self.



Example 2

Richard Strauss, *Elektra*, mm. 14-18

(Elektra stürzt zusammen.)
 (Elektra falls lifeless.)
 261a
 trem.
 *
 *
 (Chrysothemis hurries to her side.)
 (Chrysothemis zu ihr.)
 (d:92)
 ff
 (Elektra lies stiff)
 (Elektra liegt starr.)
 p
 ff
 Chrysothemis.
 262a allmählich brei
 (Chrysothemis läuft an die Tür des Hauses, schlägt daran.)
 (Chrysothemis rushes to the door of the house and batters it.)
 allargando a po
 O - rest!
 O - res - tes!
 (d:80)
 pp
 ff
 ff
 Chry.
 ter
 O - rest!
 O - res - - - tes!
 (Silence)
 ritard. molto
 (Stille)
 langsam
 Metr. ♩: 80
 (Vorhang) (Curtain)
 dim.
 p
 molto cresc. ff
 ff
 fff
 Ende.
 End.

Example 3

Richard Strauss, *Elektra*, Final bars after Elektra's death

Musically and dramatically, according to Kramer, Elektra ‘encapsulates the relationship of supremacist man to his larger-than-life mate antagonist’ (L. Kramer 2004, 194). Indeed, no better is the supremacist narrative evoked than in Elektra’s recognition monologue (‘Es rührt sich niemand’) following Orest’s return. In sight of her god-like brother, Elektra calls on Orest to abide with her (‘o bleib bei mir!’). Indeed, Orest almost succumbs to Elektra’s desire for assimilation. But Strauss does not let Orest embrace his sister. In response to her brother’s advance, Elektra, ashamed by her corpse-like appearance, urges him to keep his distance (‘Nein, du sollst mich nicht umarmen!’). We, simultaneously, witness an abrupt shift in tonality

with a move from A-flat major, which held unwaveringly during Elektra's lyrical episode, to a harmonically unstable final section of the Recognition Scene, which, with an assertion of C minor and the Agamemnon motif at Fig. 157a (Ex. 4), is gradually pulled further towards C major – albeit hardly ever in root position – for the rhetorical climax to the duet between Elektra and Orest at Fig. 177a. Following her lyrical monologue, Elektra goes on to recall her metamorphosis from princess to unclean, despairing, frenzied and cursing 'prophetess always of terror', an 'unkempt' and 'besmirch'd' 'horror' from hell:

Maiden shame e'en flung I far from me,
 The shame, that treasure that passeth all,
 Which like the silvery film, of moonlight,
 Unto every woman clinging,
 Doth from her body drive, and from her soul,
 All horror, all uncleanness. Hear'st thou, brother?
 All these thrills of sweetness did my father
 As expiation claim. Think'st thou not
 When in my beauty I rejoiced, his moans
 Resounded oft, his sighs resounded
 In my chamber? In very truth the dead
 Are jealous, and he sent to me from Hell
 Grim hate, hate hollow-eyed, my spouse to be.
 Thus was I made a prophetess always of terror,
 And nothing e'er came forth from me, but curses
 Without end, and fierce despair and frenzy

When it comes to understanding the power relations that are in play when an attempt at cross-cultural understanding is made, Kramer recognises that music performs a significant role in disclosing how worldviews 'flow' between one another. It is hard when we see Elektra bring described as a savage, an animal, an unclean and an amoral outcast not to be reminded of Honneth's (2008) book on reification whereby the concept of reification becomes entwined with social processes that would seek to deny 'human' status to different individuals and cultural groups. What the musical and dramatic representation of Elektra in Strauss' opera discloses is precisely 'the effect[s] of reifying stereotypes' whereby 'groups of individuals are retroactively deprived of the personal characteristics that have been accorded to them habitually and without question on the basis of antecedent social recognition' (Honneth 2008, 81). The point is, for Honneth, that 'it is impossible for us to perceive other people as "persons" once we have forgotten our antecedent recognition of them' (ibid., 64). Thus, Honneth argues that reification is a process whereby we lose sight of our 'antecedent recognition' of other human beings, which is a precondition for

understanding other human beings *as* human beings, rather than mere ‘things’ lacking ‘all human properties and capacities’ (ibid., 148). Nevertheless, Elektra demonstrates her ability to go against the grain of the supremacist narrative that would deny her recognition as a human. Elektra is, musically and dramatically, despite the supremacist interpretation of her, an agent with her own beliefs, desires, actions and relationships, and that is why, according to Kramer, Strauss’ opera has survived the supremacist culture and myths on which it rests. She is not merely dehumanised and, as a result, repelled from the outset but also, as a figure of tragedy, allowed to assert herself in order to threaten the divide between supremacist male and debased and dehumanised female. This Elektra does in her lyrical episode (‘Es rührt sich niemand’) in the key of A-flat major, which, for a brief moment in what Arnold Whittall suggests is an ‘an unreal atmosphere’ (Whittall 1989, 70), portrays the princess in her former glory. Indeed, it is this semblance of the past in musico-dramatic terms that tempts the god-like Orest into a possible incestuous union (Ex. 5). According to supremacist ideology, Elektra’s agency and allure make her all the more dangerous; a ‘contagious matter’ that would seek to identify herself with what Kramer calls the ‘higher ethical consciousness’ (L. Kramer 2004, 202). As he claims, the supremacist, like Orest, risks ‘being absorbed by her and reproducing her regressive character’ (ibid., 194). Kramer refers to Elektra as a ‘polymorph’, a figure of ‘unlimited plasticity’ whose indeterminacy threatens the determinacy of men (ibid., 198-199). Supremacist culture is, therefore, ‘a culture of panic, the ideological mandate of which is to police its boundaries at all times and at all costs’ for fear that atavistic groups and individuals should, with their ‘promiscuously transgressive energy’ and ‘degenerative allure’, attack – with hopes of overcoming – the boundaries of the normative human type and its culture (ibid., 200-201).

157a
Met. ♩ = 116

Elek. dir. Ich weiß nicht, wie du mich an - siehst. Ich bin nur mehr der
fore thee. How canst thou En-dure to see me? A corpse am I, that

poco calando **Etwas ruhiger und gehaltener**
un poco meno mosso e sostenuto

cresc. *pp*
espr.

Elek. Leichnam dei-ner Schwester, mein ar - mes Kind. Ich weiß,
erstwhile was thy sis - ter, A - las! poor child. I know,
breit *poco ritard.*
allargando

cresc. *dim.*

Example 4

Richard Strauss, *Elektra*, Immediately after Elektra's lyrical monologue ('Es rührt sich niemand')

Elek. **Mäßig bewegt. Metr. ♩ = 108** *moderato* **Es rührt sich niemand.**
espr. *dim.* *pp* *espr.*
No man - stir-reth!

Elek. 149a **sehr ausdrucksvoll** *con molto espressione* O, laß dei- ne Au - gen mich sehn, Traum -
O let mine eye gaze But on thee, Vi -

Elek. - bild, mir ge - schenk - tes Traum - bild, schö -
- sion, than which fat - rer From heav'n ne'er came

pp *cresc.*

Example 5

Richard Strauss, *Elektra*, The beginning of Elektra's monologue ('Es rührt sich niemand')

With the examples from Stockhausen and Strauss, we are able to see how certain structures of power, colonising Eurocentrism in the case of Stockhausen and dehumanising, misogynistic supremacism with *Elektra*, are able to appropriate musical practices on their own terms. In both cases, it is the notion of control that comes from the internalisation of culturally specific norms of recognition that undermines any democratic process of mutual comprehensibility, the likes of which Gadamer, Taylor and Wellmer see as the basis for a kind of ideal process of understanding. But that is not to say that the distortion of the hermeneutic situation needs to be thought of, in all cases, as a kind of moral misconduct because, as Honneth notes, in some cases ‘it lacks the element of subjective intent necessary to bring moral terminology into play’ (Honneth 2008, 25-26). As Honneth explains, what regulates ‘how subjects deal with each other legitimately in various social relationships’ are the internalised norms that embody specific values that prevail in a society (ibid., 153). In other words, violation of the principles of reciprocal recognition can initially represent a social fact, that is, by ‘a specific worldview or ideology’ – ‘a set of convictions’ that guides one’s actions – working with a ‘one-dimensional praxis’ that aims to instrumentalise or control the Other (ibid., 79-81). As Honneth explains with regards to his reconstruction of a social etiology of reification, ‘the social practices of distanced observation and the instrumental treatment of other individuals are thus sustained to the same extent that these practices find cognitive reinforcement in reifying stereotypes, just as these typifying descriptions conversely receive motivational nourishment by serving as a suitable interpretive framework for a given kind of one-dimensional praxis’ (ibid., 81). Elaborating, he observes that ‘all this ultimately results from an orientation – one which we have come to take for granted – towards principles that determine institutionally the (evaluative) senses in which we recognise one another in accordance with the relationship existing between us’ (ibid., 153). Therefore, although acts of control might violate the norms of reciprocal recognition and, as a result, be deemed to have breached the principles of moral conduct, that doesn’t take away from the fact, as Bowie observes, that the internalisation and habitualisation of the set of convictions of one’s society together with the production and adoption of its practice-based norms, what Honneth suggests are representative of a society’s ‘second nature’, might be down to ‘systemic social and economic pressures’ beyond

our control (Bowie 2013, 122), which ‘may be instilled in us in ways that involve unconscious compulsion’ (ibid., 118).

Whether or not the distortion of the hermeneutic situation in the cases of Stockhausen and Strauss constitute instances of moral misconduct, the fact that the principles of mutual comprehensibility and reciprocal recognition have been defied by the ‘dogmatism of an interpretation that is guided by prejudice’, both examples are seemingly illustrative of what Wellmer calls ‘nonunderstanding’ [*Nicht-Verstehen*]. In both cases, the ‘correct mean between merely “internal” understanding and “external” understanding’, the mean that would warrant a democratic ‘fusion of horizons’, has been distorted and pulled too far in the direction of what Wellmer considers to be ‘external’ understanding, one that relies on the interpreter’s own prejudices and convictions. At the same time, however, through the musical and dramatic representation of the character of Elektra, what can be observed is what Wellmer recognises as the ‘subversive potential’ of aesthetic understanding. Elektra, as we have seen, is considered to be a possible contagion, one that, in phobic terms at least, would call into question the normative framework of reifying supremacist ideology. Her ultimate repulsion in death is a distinctly phobic reaction, one that seeks to control the threat she poses to established social and cultural norms and convictions. Kramer also observes that a similar interpretation can be applied to the character of Klytämnestra. For Kramer, Klytämnestra ‘represents something incommensurate with the tonal and cultural order, a contaminated residue of otherness that can neither be contained nor banished’ (L. Kramer 2004, 204). He claims that this ‘otherness’ results from Klytämnestra’s *jouissance* as a mistress. It is this *jouissance* that, according to Kramer, bestows on Klytämnestra a ‘transgressive’ potential, which, once released, ‘can appear only as rancid and destructive, even to the mother herself’ (ibid.). For Kramer, therefore, *jouissance* is a degenerate feature of an, ultimately, unwanted Other, an Other which, precisely because of its *jouissance*, is able to call into question the norms and specific values of the dominant institutional order.

This double reading of the concept of *jouissance* finds its way into Scott Wilson’s interpretation of ‘amusia’, that is, ‘the occasion of music as the experience of a tormenting noise that causes subjective fragmentation, even heralding death’ (Wilson 2012, 27). Amusia is not so much silence but ‘the presence of noise where there ought to be music’ (ibid., 26). Citing the Parisian psychoanalyst Jacques-Alain

Miller, Wilson suggests that, under the guise of amusia, musical practices of other cultures become entwined with stereotyping narratives. The music of Miller's Islamic neighbours 'perfectly evokes for him the *jouissance* of the Other that lies at the "extimate" core of a racism that no rational understanding or liberalism can erase' (ibid., 27). Elaborating, 'music may be perceived as an unbearable noise when it is experienced as the expression of the Other's *jouissance*' (ibid.). In short, the presence of noise as evoking the *jouissance* of the Other is indicative of a possible cross-cultural relationship not derived from a fusion of horizons, but one that violates the norms of reciprocal recognition. As Varèse claimed, 'noise is any sound one doesn't like' (Varèse 1966, 18). As in the case of Elektra and Klytämnestra, the control that Miller exerts over the music of his Islamic neighbours leads to the suppression of the Other through an act of repulsion and reifying stereotyping. In other words, just as Elektra is, to a degree, repelled as something lacking in distinctly human characteristics, the Other's music is rejected out of hand as noise – as something lacking in aesthetic significance. At the same time, through the stereotyping narrative that Miller imposes on the music of his Islamic neighbours, and in stark contrast to Strauss' musical and dramatic representation of Elektra, the noise of the Other is not allowed to 'talk back'. The interpretation of the Other's music as noise can, therefore, be thought of as what Taylor calls a 'sham', an act that presupposes the control of what is to be understood. It is this question of noise's relationship to cross-cultural and trans-historical understanding that the final section of this chapter will seek to explore.

Noise, Power and the Problem of Fusing Horizons

As part of our everyday soundscape, noise, as Michael Goddard, Benjamin Halligan and Paul Hegarty (2012) note, is considered to be intrusive, an irritant, unwanted and unpleasant, something that, nevertheless, transgresses and subverts established norms – 'noise operates on the thresholds of normative social interaction as a potentially disruptive agency' (Goddard et al. 2012, 2). As Jacques Attali observes, 'long before it was given this theoretical expression, noise had always been experienced as destruction, disorder, dirt, pollution, an aggression against the code-structuring messages. In all cultures, it is associated with the idea of the weapon, blasphemy, plague' (Attali 1985, 27). Similarly, Marie Thompson suggests that noise 'threatens

“my” boundaries... the other’s breach of the peace. Noise is a force that dominates; it is beyond the grasp of my control’ (M. Thompson 2012, 208). The parallels between this double reading of noise and the supremacist interpretation of the character of Elektra can hardly be missed. Indeed, even outside the immediate context of planning, pollution and health, noise is thought to exist in a negative relation with music; ‘noise as a negative aesthetic judgment...which is other than the authentic, organic creation of music’ or ‘as the unwanted element for studio technicians, the evidence of the failings of technology, of dust on the tapehead, of the deterioration of reproductions, as denoting the technological limitations of yesteryear’ (Goddard et al. 2013, 4). Noise, by definition, Rob Gawthrop claims, ‘is unlikely to be recognised as music’ – ‘*noise is not intelligible* but sensible’ [italics added] (Gawthrop 2012, 172). Indeed, as Wilson demonstrates, the concept of amusia is grounded on the idea that there exist some ‘noisy’ sonic occurrences that are seemingly unintelligible *qua* music for certain listeners. It follows that in contrast to the implausibly one-sided characterisation of music as ‘organised sound’, which was criticised in chapters one and three, noise is thought to lack organisation, it is considered to be ‘ugly and destructive of meaning’, a ‘disturbance or interference of a meaningful sonic system’. However, not so much devoid of meaning as organised in such a way as to be understood as ‘alien to the norms of a specific system’ (Goddard et al. 2012, 2-3). So, according to Attali’s thesis, noise ‘destroys orders to structure new orders’ (Attali 1985, 20), that is, ‘a network can be destroyed by noises that attack and transform it, if the codes in place are unable to normalise or repress them...for despite the death it contains, noise carries order within itself; it carries new information’ (ibid., 33). Furthermore, due to its lack of normative sonic organisation, noise is also considered to be ‘the Other of information’; ‘a shadow of or resistance to a signal being passed between two points in a system’ (Goddard et al. 2012, 3), that is, something that ‘obstruct[s] and interfere[s] with an intended message’ (ibid., 5). As the anonymous GegenSichKollektiv claims, by ‘being too much, too complex, too dense and difficult to decode, or too chaotic to be measured...by making us aware of our inability to decipher it, noise alienates us’ (GegenSichKollektiv 2012, 194). Noise as the Other to the norms of social etiquette, language and music; something that pollutes our personal and social spaces; that transgresses the established aesthetic and stylistic conventions of music and that hinders the smooth running of systems of communication.

Like the character of Elektra according to supremacist interpretations, noise spoils attempts at mutual comprehension because, as an irritant, an intrusive, annoying and unwanted Other, it articulates the idea that there exist forms of life that appear to be radically different to our own. Indeed, bearing in mind Wilson's comments on amusia, the 'noise' of rock n' roll, punk, hip hop, rave, heavy metal, electronica, grime, jazz and avant-garde Western art music are all cultural Others that certain groups and individuals have at different times chosen to keep at a distance, to repel, thus affirming their characterisation as 'noise' as opposed to 'music' or 'art'. Indeed, it is in no sense arbitrary that the characterisation of such musics as 'noise' has also coincided with the repulsion of those forms of life that are 'thematized' by these 'noises'. The point to make, and it is one that is implied in Wellmer's discussion of the links between the socially oppressed and the emancipatory potential of art, is that the conception of noise as a negative phenomenon, as something that repels us as 'the "other" of music' or as the music of the Other (Goddard et al. 2013, 4), is closely bound up with the reification of the Other, an act that violates the norms of reciprocal recognition and that, according to Taylor and Gadamer, hinders cross-cultural understanding.

For example, writing on the history of reggae soundsystem culture in Britain since the 1950s, John Eden notes that, in the '50s and '60s, soundsystems – powerful speakers that ensured huge bass lines – 'became a symbol of righteous rebellion or abject nuisance depending on your proximity to them and your feeling about thumping basslines' (Eden 2011, 13). The phobic reaction to Jamaican soundsystem culture and its characterisation as 'noise' became an important part of the wider stereotyping and racist narratives that were to surround Jamaican culture in general. As Eden explains, 'the racist fears and stereotypes of the era revolved around Jamaican men playing loud music, smoking illegal substances, and dancing with white women' (ibid.). Indeed, as Lloyd Bradley notes, phobic reactions to Jamaican culture even extended to the law with the regional revival of the 'Sus Laws', which were affiliated with the 1824 Vagrancy Act, allowing police officers to search, interrogate and arrest 'suspected persons' (Bradley 2001). But, as Eden also observes, Jamaicans and Jamaican 'noise' were not always considered in the negative sense of unwanted others. Indeed, Eden is aware of the norm-transcending possibilities that emerge through cross-cultural interaction, claiming that the 'presence of these immigrants' 'provided some significant innovations to our culture along the way'

(Eden 2011, 12). Starting with the social mingling of ‘black and white kids’ during the early 1980s, Eden suggests that ‘true integration worked itself out at street level with young men and women coming to produce “mixed race” offspring’ (ibid, 14). In musical terms, cross-cultural interaction at both social and biological levels ‘would fuse together in the cultural crucible of rave’ and, subsequently, jungle, garage, grime and dubstep, thus calling into question ossified perceptions of ‘British music’ as well as the meaning of what is to be ‘British’ (ibid).

What Eden’s comments on the impact of Jamaican culture on British social and artistic life illustrate is that once ‘noise’ as the music of the Other or, indeed, the other of music has been appropriated into what Thompson calls normative ‘performative and aesthetic contexts’, the characterisation of such noise as a ‘negative affect; an unwanted or excess flow of vibrations that invade “my” world, drowning out other sounds in the auditory or informational plane’ (M. Thompson 2012, 209), can be both transcended and transcending. As we observed in chapter one with regards to Jon Savage’s discussions on punk, there is a ‘hidden positive’ to noise’s ‘much-flaunted negative’, especially when we consider noise as the other of music or, indeed, the music of the Other. Thompson claims, for example, that ‘while noise “proper” tends to be conceived of in terms of negative affect, as excess, the sonically abject or as impossible, incomprehensible chaos, noise music embraces this negativity as positive, productive and desirable; as a means of gaining new or alternative sensuous experiences’ (M. Thompson 2012, 210). Her idea is grounded on Attali’s thesis, specifically that ‘the presence of noise makes sense, makes meaning. It makes possible the creation of a new order on another level of organisation, of a new code in another network’ (Attali 1985, 33). As we saw in chapter one, something similar is claimed by Wellmer in relation to artworks in general, mainly that ‘art can be described as world-disclosing in so far as it opens new perceptual and experiential possibilities...allows in experiences of suffering, and anything excluded from established social discourses or not open to being thematised within it, lends a voice to those oppressed by society, in short: in so far as it articulates or thematises the socially negative, and thus at the same time articulates or evokes an impulse transcending this socially negative’ (Wellmer 2004, 126). Just as the supremacist ideology that leads to the reification of women in the early twentieth century can be called into question by the same ‘object’ it aims to control, so can the norms and conventions of musical praxis also be critiqued and potentially transcended as a result

of being ‘open’ to its other – noise. We see this, for example, when Schaeffer’s efforts at producing a *Musique Concrète* in the late 1940s and ‘50s called into question the ‘elementary definitions of music theory’ through a novel compositional aesthetic that relied on, in Schaeffer’s words, ‘sound fragments that exist in reality and that are considered as discrete and complete sound objects’ as opposed to the ‘preconceived sound abstractions’ of ‘traditional’ Western art music (Schaeffer 2012, 14).¹⁴ For Schaeffer, each stage in the development of *Musique Concrète*, with its aim of creating music from ‘concrete’ sounds, acted as a particular critique of the compositional, formal and stylistic norms of the day.

Following his early attempts at working with ‘concrete’ sounds and turntables as well as his efforts at transforming customary orchestral methods by concrete procedures, the next stage, as we see in *Symphonie pour un homme seul* (1949-50), composed with Pierre Henry, was to return to noise, ‘tearing sound material away from any context, dramatic or musical, before giving it form’ (ibid., 38). Unlike his earlier efforts in 1948, the key to Schaeffer’s new approach was, with ‘patience and, of course, mechanical resources’, to manipulate the sound fragments at a ‘more refined, microscopic or infinitesimal, level’; to put to one side fascinations with solely ‘transforming’ form in order to focus on ‘transmutations’ of the ‘concrete’ material (ibid., 41) – something that, Schaeffer admits, was limited in the *Symphonie*.¹⁵ Elaborating on the concept of ‘transmutation’ and its applicability to ‘concrete’ sounds, Schaeffer explained that ‘all analysis, followed by synthesis, which operates at this [atomic] level of division, has therefore every chance of acting on both matter and form, and in so radical a way that every original element will be unrecognisable. There will be neither noise nor musical sound, neither drama or symphony; there will be new materials for a new way of constructing sound’ (ibid., 42). Such ‘new way[s] of constructing sound’ can be conceived as what Attali calls a ‘subversion in musical production [that] opposes a new syntax to the existing syntax, from the point of view of which it is noise’ (Attali 1985, 34). Indeed, even though in Schaeffer’s case some of the ‘sound objects’ have their origin in the realm of noise

¹⁴ According to Schaeffer, ‘the adjective “abstract” is applied to ordinary music because it is initially conceived in the mind, then notated theoretically, and finally executed in an instrumental performance. As for “concrete” music, it is made up of preexisting elements, taken from any sound material, noise, or musical sound, then composed experimentally by direct montage, the result of a series of approximations, which finally gives form to the will to compose contained in rough drafts, without the help of an ordinary music notation, which becomes impossible’ (Schaeffer 2012, 25).

¹⁵ See Schaeffer 2012, 46-58.

proper, according to Attali, ‘transitions of this kind have been occurring in music since antiquity and have led to the creation of new codes within changing networks. Thus the transition from the Greek and medieval scales to the tempered and modern scales can be interpreted as aggression against the dominant code by noise destined to become a new dominant code’ (ibid.). In other words, ‘what is noise to the old order is harmony to the new: Monteverdi and Bach created noise for the polyphonic order. Webern for the tonal order. Lamont Young for the serial order’ (ibid., 35). Indeed, according to Varèse, ‘to stubbornly conditioned ears, anything new in music has always been called noise’ (Varèse 1966, 18). It is not surprising to see, therefore, as shall be discussed, that the ‘aestheticization’ of noise *proper* has had various ethical and political consequences. The challenge noise as music of the Other or the other of music presents to the normative framework of musical style and aesthetic experience in general has been key to understanding the attraction of noise for minority cultures that would seek to engage in critical practice in the wider socio-political sphere.

Noise Networks and the Problem of Autonomy

As opposed to noise *proper*, a reified phenomenon, which, as Thompson observes, tends to be considered in the negative sense as that which remains outside the various systems of socio-cultural etiquette, music and language, noise music, like punk, ‘relies on an exploitation of the grey area of contradiction; it lies on the fault line between music and non-music, wanted and unwanted, the pleasurable and the grotesque, and so on, pulling in various, conflicting directions’ (M. Thompson 2012, 215). For Thompson, noise music as potential ‘positive’ to noise-proper’s ‘much-flaunted negative’ is a means by which we can achieve new or different sensuous experiences. Like Wellmer, she sees in noise works the potential for norm-transcendence, for calling into question and possibly overcoming rigid and fossilised conventions, thus avoiding some of the pitfalls of reification that both Adorno and Honneth seek to discuss. For Thompson, the transcending power of noise music emerges from its relationship to the body: ‘noise music addresses me as matter, rendering the body porous. I can feel it in my lungs, my stomach, my throat; it can turn me inside out’ (ibid., 211). Recalling the supremacist reading of Strauss’ *Elektra* from earlier, Thompson confesses that in the presence of noise music her ‘boundaries are no longer stable’ – her body is a potential ‘vibrational mass’ (ibid., 213). She goes

on to suggest that ‘it is a dangerous eroticism; it can take (or at least, is imagined to take) “my” body, the bordered body, to its outer thresholds, its margins. I exist on my skin, at my innermost exteriority’ (ibid.). It follows that ‘the negativity of the sonic invasion that noise can encompass during its everyday existence thus becomes a positive dimension of noise music: take the force of torture and find a joyous, intensive existence in it’ (ibid.). What Thompson sees in noise music is, therefore, not so much a subversive potential but the means by which certain cultural conventions can be called in question and, as Gadamer suggests, potentially transcended as a result of a fusion of horizons between noise music and the ‘open’ interpreter. Thus, Thompson claims, ‘the aim of the game is not transgression, since transgressions reassert that which they seek to oppose, escape or overturn. What is needed, rather, is an exposure of the anomaly, the blurring of the binary, an entangling of the wires. Dealing with that which is at hand rather than seeking to step outside altogether’ (ibid., 217-218).

Of course, noise, like music, once appropriated into various performative and aesthetic contexts, is not free from what Honneth (2009) calls ‘social pathologies’. For all Luigi Russolo’s innovation with his famous *intonarumori*, the Italian Futurist community of which Russolo was a part proclaimed, as demonstrated by Filippo Tommaso Marinetti’s *The Founding and Manifesto of Futurism* of 1909, that ‘poetry must be conceived as violent attack on unknown forces, to reduce and prostrate them before man’; that it would ‘glorify war – the world’s only hygiene – militarism, patriotism, the destructive gesture of freedom-bringers, beautiful ideas worth dying for, and scorn for woman’; and that it would ‘destroy museums, libraries, academies of every kind...fight moralism, feminism, every opportunistic or utilitarian cowardice’. Even today reifying supremacist worldviews tarnish the noise subculture, leading one of its proponents, Elizabeth Veldon, whose works include *Would you please stop raping me? Parts 1 and 2*, *Kyrie Elision (Do Not Fear Death or Threats. The Lord Goes With You)* and *Mary Shelly’s Frankenstein as a Radical Puncturing of Male Idealism Part 2*, to produce, together with her supporters, two ‘NOISE IN OPPOSITION’ compilations in response to the attempted misogynist and fascist appropriation of the extreme electronics scene.¹⁶ As Veldon states, ‘NOISE IN OPPOSITION is intended as a firm “fuck off” to the moribund far-right idiots

¹⁶ See Veldon et al. 2013.

who've mistaken the international noise scene for some sandpit where they can freely abuse and intimidate others based on their race, gender or sexuality'. Indeed, the aestheticization of noise within today's so-called noise communities or networks is often bound up with some explicitly political agenda. In recent times, the noise scene, as exemplified by the latest contributions to the Berlin-based publication, *Datacide*, has concerned itself with disclosing structures of power and their affects on socio-cultural practices, including State censorship, the surveillance and repression of personal and social media, the rise of the American Right and the Tea Party movement, police brutality, the activities of extreme right wing groups in the UK and Russia and the demonization of minority forms of life by the media and the State.

How noise networks call into question the ideas of various power structures is, however, much debated. Bruce Russell, for example, hopes the 'noise underground', with its 'autonomous position in the field of restricted production', will be 'inherently antipathetic to dominant ideologies' (Russell 2012, 245). Citing the Situationist movement as an influence, Russell argues for an appropriation of outmoded technologies for potentially emancipatory ends, to create a new and autonomous form of life, 'one that "advances beyond", rather than follows behind, changes in objective social structures' (ibid., 255). With reference to the 'noise underground', Russell explains that 'entire cadres of artists exploit terminally defunct modes of sound production, vintage equipment (yesterday's junk) is fetishized and "inferior" modes of production such as the cassette are ubiquitous' (ibid., 249). The hope is to create 'a space "outside" the reified relations which surround technologies, [where] the possible shapes of other media are at least potentially open to contestation' (ibid., 252). Russell sets up the pop industry as his main opponent, whose 'retromania', a term coined by Simon Reynolds, is 'set to enmesh popular music in a perpetual past nostalgia, pastiche and repetition; enmeshing both those artists who accept the potential blandishments of mass-market consecration, and those entering the cul-de-sac of retro-hipsterism' (ibid., 255-256). Russell's Situationist hopes for the 'noise underground' places him in tension with Thompson's idea of using noise in order to work with and potentially transcend ossified musical, political, social and cultural norms rather than reject them out of hand. Therefore, rather than aim to transform musical conventions by critiquing already available stylistic and formative norms, Russell suggests that we 'reject all the rules of music' (ibid., 256). In contrast with a process by which the power structures surrounding music's production and

dissemination are challenged in a political sphere of mutual debate and intersubjective legitimacy, Russell demands that we ‘forgo the market support potentially on offer in the field of general production, and decline the poisoned chalice of digital audio production’ (ibid.). Ultimately, as Russell makes clear, the goal is to side-step ‘the mediatised *habitus* surrounding most popular and academic music’ (ibid.).

Certainly noise networks are concerned with fashioning forms of life that are somehow outside of dominant social, cultural and political discourses and practices. As Christoph Fringeli of *Datacide* recalls, ‘in the 1990s, we at *Datacide* and others tried to theorise the techno rave scene as a possible proletarian counter culture...much more than any “straight” political direction, we saw in it the possibilities of self-organisation, collectivity and pursuit of pleasure in the counter culture around sound systems, anonymous white label records and illegal parties’ (Fringeli 2011, 7). The key issue is that noise networks, perceived as self-managed, autonomous collectives by members of those networks, are, in certain quarters, created with the view to existing outside of dominant culture and its norms. The use of the term ‘network’ as a way of characterising communities oriented around noise music is also deliberate, as it stresses the samizdat, DIY, collaborative culture that many networks seek to sustain in direct opposition to what they see as commercial and academic institutions that have professionalised various forms of music making and appreciation. Effort is spent on mitigating production costs, on sharing material as opposed to generating profit, on creating a culture of contribution as opposed to pure consumption and on producing works that can be aesthetically contrasted with the ‘glossy’, ‘photo-shopped’ and ‘airbrushed’ products of the culture industry.

The focus on what could be perceived from the outside to be a distinctly amateur and antiquated approach to music making and appreciation is paralleled by the production and dissemination of material through outmoded means and in outdated forms that certain networkers are now calling ‘cassette communism’. Nigel Ayers, of lo-fi electronic/experimental/noise stalwarts, Nocturnal Emissions, has recently admitted his fondness for making records on cassette tape because the process is ‘quick, straightforward’ and allows him ‘control over the means of production and distribution’ (Eden and Ayers 2012, 3). Similarly, Libbe Matz Gang, creators of ‘primitive computer music’, recall that their wish to release a nine-track 7” EP in 2011 was thwarted by current production processes: ‘we had engineers telling

us, “you can’t press a 9-track, 33.3rpm EP, it’ll sound diabolical, we don’t want our business associated with this”. Or else, they’d “recommend” we cut it as a 12”, hoping they could take money off us. These are the supposed “expert sound technicians” (Eden and Libbe Matz Gang 2012, 7). It is perhaps telling that the Libbe Matz Gang’s EP was finally pressed by a German anarchist group. Ultimately, in a digital age of music production and dissemination, noise artists and audiences acknowledge that their penchant for antiquated reproductions is a form of critique, although such a critique is perhaps undermined when members of these noise networks use the internet and other digital media to disseminate material to a wider audience. This last point is vital to understanding the challenges that face a noise network which attempts to sustain itself as what Russell refers to as an autonomous, new *habitus* that ‘support[s] both new social structures within the practice of the community’ (Russell 2012, 257).

To set up what Alexis Wolton refers to as a ‘zone of autonomy’ that explicitly rejects the social, political and aesthetic norms of the dominant culture, what Bowie (2013) refers to as a form of ‘either/or thinking’, has been considered by Reynolds to be a ‘subversive fallacy’. According to Reynolds, conferring ‘the status of value on excess and extremism is to bring these things back within the pale of decency. So the rhetoricians of noise actually destroy the power they strive to celebrate; they are the very start of the process by which subversion is turned into contributions, which is absorbed as a renewal for the system’ (Reynolds 1990, 58). Although Reynolds’ pessimistic critique perhaps downplays the norm-transcending possibilities of both noise music and the socio-political organisation and ideas of its networks for those that are ‘open’ enough to let noise culture ‘talk back’ on equal terms, he does hint at the problems with Russell’s utopian dream of an autonomous ‘noise underground’. If we recall the discussions of punk music in chapter one, Reynolds claims that punk ‘proved a rejuvenating shot in the arm to the established record industry that the punks had hoped to overthrow’ (Reynolds 2005, xvii). The issue is that rather than taken seriously as a potential alternative to social pathologies, punk became domesticated as it, simultaneously, ‘opened’ itself up to the financial exploitation of its ‘street cred’ by the culture industry. Ultimately, punk’s assimilation into the dominant culture, notwithstanding its ‘positive affect’ of thematising, in Wellmer’s sense, those worldviews that had been excluded from established social discourses, served to support corporate power structures rather than topple them. The problem,

therefore, with Russell's dream of noise networks as protected 'zones of autonomy' is that, as Wolton observes, the tapping of 'unregulated zones' is necessary to the survival of the culture industry as a 'strategy of reinvigoration' (Wolton 2011, 16). These processes of cultural renewal that sustain the culture industry leads Wolton to the conclusion that 'zones of autonomy can appear to exist briefly, but what appears as autonomous development is in the end part of capital's process of setting and breaking limits' (ibid., 19). Punk was, at once, rejected or repelled by the State as a 'moral panic' – an unwanted Other – but, at the same time, it became normalised through its appropriation by corporate capitalism. The contradictions in punk's reception are, therefore, expressive of a truth about the workings of certain power structures, which can only emerge, so it seems, through such contradictions. The result? Reynolds goes on to suggest that 'by summer 1977, punk had become a parody of itself. Many of the movement's original participants felt that something open-ended and full of possibilities had degenerated into a commercial formula' (Reynolds 2005, xvii). Indeed, despite, post-punk's hippy-esque attempts to build a self-managed, 'anti-corporate micro-capitalism', which, as we shall see, continues, to a certain extent, to allow the contemporary noise scene to appear to exist as a counter-cultural movement, it, ultimately, failed to sidestep or sabotage what Reynolds calls 'rock's dream factory', a 'leisure industry that channelled youth's energy and idealism into a cultural cul-de-sac, while generating huge amounts of revenue for corporate capitalism' (ibid., xxvi).

Subcultural movements that aim to set themselves up as self-determining communities which reject out of hand pre-established norms of society are in constant danger of being (unconsciously) distorted by power structures that, like the culture industry, could potentially appropriate them for their own renewal.¹⁷ Indeed, just as the individual's actions can be conceived as meaningful only within the normative context of social and cultural practices, and just as those individual actions can be constrained by communal norms, so the mores and norms of the community can also be shaped and constrained (sometimes unconsciously such that individuals are unaware of the deceit) by larger trans-social and trans-cultural institutions and structures of power. As Bowie claims, 'the notion of autonomy is necessarily infected with some measure of heteronomy' (Bowie 2013, 110). Ultimately, in the hopes of

¹⁷ See, for example, GegenSichKollektiv 2012, Reynolds 2005, Thompson 2012, Wilson 2012 and Wolton 2011.

escaping what they consider to be an already reified world, attempts to conceptualise an autonomous form of life for subcultural practices end up reifying a new world by failing to take account of the mediated nature of cultural groups in terms of their situatedness within a world in which worldviews can ‘flow’ from one to another. Indeed, as Adorno was aware, to theorise about a new form of life that is somehow outside of dominant ways of doing and thinking is, in itself, a double-edged sword, because what may appear as a more appealing form of life for one community can also be what drives a form of what Bowie calls ‘systematic inhumanity’ (ibid., 99).

What is useful about both noise and the forms of life that sustain noise networks is not so much their aim to set themselves up as the self-determining Others to dominant practices but that which is expressed in their desire to conceptualise a new form of life outside of such practices, specifically, that the act of thinking about the creation of a new *habitus* itself discloses a critical stance towards dominant social, cultural and political norms. Taking into account Wellmer’s ideas concerning the emancipatory potential of aesthetic practice and the idea that we can become critically aware of relations of domination and what sustains them, the value of such movements lies in their ability to call into question and potentially transcend those concrete norms that continue to legitimise current relations of power within dominant social, political and historical discourses. In the case of soundsystem culture, once the phobic reaction to Jamaican culture in general had begun to ease, soundsystem ‘noise’ proved to be a valuable resource for the reinvigoration of aesthetic norms, leading to, as Eden observes, innovations in rave, jungle, garage, grime and dubstep. But the innovations were not confined to the realm of culture; through everyday interactions between Jamaican immigrants and native Britons since the 1940s and ‘50s, perceptions of what racial, cultural and social norms and values count as being distinctly ‘British’ have been set in motion. None of this is to say that social pathologies such as racism no longer exist. However, it is, arguably, the case that such paradigmatic instances of widespread cross-cultural interaction are what continue to ensure that racist convictions and worldviews cannot be justifiably legitimated without violating the norms of recognition that have been handed down through history.

In the case of noise, we have seen how Goddard, Halligan and Hegarty interpret this abject acoustic phenomenon as a challenge to the norms and conventions of social etiquette, public health, linguistic communication and musical

praxis. In the sphere of noise networks, the aestheticization of what has been considered in the negative sense to be the other of music has also coincided with subversive projects whereby minority cultures have taken up critical positions towards, for example, far-right politics, the culture industry and finance capitalism. Through the creation of networks that aim to develop a distinctly amateur culture of collaborative music-making and political action, one that stresses, for example, the value of shared practices based on antiquated technologies rather than monetary exchange or financial profit, the critical stance the noise scene (in certain quarters) adopts towards the culture industry and finance capitalism works itself out at the level of subcultural praxis. But, as has been observed, the critical positions that noise networks adopt in the face of corporate structures of power does not mean that the subculture is safe from appropriation by corporate capitalism. As Goddard, Halligan and Hegarty observes, ‘noise necessarily opens up specific technical or meaningful systems to outside interferences, to systems and durations other than our own’ (Goddard et al. 2012, 5). The contradiction here is that not only does the possibility exist for outsiders to transcend their own worldviews and practices by fusing their horizons with those of a different community but these ‘specific technical or meaningful systems’ also, at the same time, become open to exploitation, to distortion and to rejection at the hands of bigger social, cultural and political power structures. Artworks, as we have seen in this chapter, can be appropriated for a variety of different ethical ends. The issue is that the emancipatory potential of art and artworks is not as ethically transparent as it seems. For just as relations of power can be considered unjust in certain circumstances, that is not to say that these institutions could not be considered emancipatory under changed social, political and historical conditions. As Bowie emphasises, ‘the same freedom which enables forms of self-transcendence...can, in the wrong social, political, and economic conditions, lead to disaster’ (Bowie 2012, 128).

CONCLUSION

What is clear from the discussions in chapter five regarding those power structures that distort the ideal fusion of horizons between two cultures, what Wellmer calls the ‘correct mean between merely “internal” understanding and “external” understanding’, between ‘reception’ and ‘production’, is that what determines us – even possibly repressing or deceiving us – can itself lead to the possibility of overcoming the norms that continue to legitimise certain relations of domination. We can become critically aware of those power structures that have (unconsciously) determined our ways of being in the world. The example we have focussed on for the most part throughout the course of this study is the approach to ‘understanding’ music in analytic aesthetics. However, the forms of control that analytic aesthetics exerts over musical practices through detached contemplation are, as we saw in chapter five, overshadowed by wider social, cultural and political structures of power whose control of the Other brings about a violation of the norms of reciprocal recognition or mutual comprehension.

Honneth refers to those structures that bring about a distortion of the ‘correct mean’ in a hermeneutic situation as ‘social pathologies’. For Honneth, the ideal fusion of horizons is interpreted in the light of a ‘historically effective reason’, which can be found in Hegel’s practical philosophy. Thus, ‘reason unfolds in the historical process by re-creating universal “ethical” institutions at each new stage; by taking these institutions into account, individuals are able to design their lives according to socially acknowledged aims and thus to experience life as meaningful’ (Honneth 2009, 23). As we have seen, something like this idea and the normative framework it bestows upon the notions of meaning and truth is what gives rise to the normative basis of musical practices. The key point is that, for Honneth, norms are given to us by history, and, as a result, he sides with Pippin in suggesting that there seem to be ‘higher’ and ‘lower’ manifestations of rationality as a result of a certain amount of

ethical and moral progress that we see, for example, in the legitimisation of anti-racist, anti-homophobic and anti-sexist worldviews and convictions. It is this sort of institutional reason, that is, ‘the historically produced values present in social spheres of meaning’ (ibid., 33), which, according to Honneth, ensures ‘that each successful form of society is possible only through the maintenance of its most highly developed standard of rationality’ (ibid., 23). For Honneth, this idea of the ‘most highly developed standard of rationality’ is considered to be the nearest thing to a ‘rational universal’, which Wellmer argues can only ever be partially achieved, and it is the distortion of this rational universal that is linked to the distortions we see in those moments of cross-cultural understanding whereby, as Taylor suggests, we go from ‘making the best sense within a fused horizon’ to ‘making the “best sense” in our initial terms, which will usually be an alien imposition’. So, Honneth argues, ‘deviations from the ideal that would be achieved with the social actualisation of the rational universal can be described as social pathologies since they must accompany a regrettable loss of prospects for intersubjective self-actualisation’ (ibid., 25). But rather than leave it there, whereby any distortion of the ideal hermeneutic situation can be deemed to be a pathology of reason, Honneth goes on to claim that ‘any deviation from the ideal outlined here must lead to a social pathology insofar as subjects *are recognisably suffering from a loss of universal, communal ends*’ [italics added] (ibid., 24). Thus, social pathologies are considered to be ‘social form[s] of organisation in which practices and ways of thinking prevail that prevent the social utilisation of a rationality already made possible by history’ (ibid., 35). It is, in other words, a lack of social rationality that has been made available by historical processes that is characteristic of social pathologies. This has the effect, when it comes to the ideal of mutual comprehension or a fusion of horizons, of precluding ‘the possibility of orienting oneself in terms of a rational universal, the impetus to which could only come from a fully realised rationality’ (ibid.).

Reification, based on what Wellmer calls the ‘logic of identity’, that is, ‘a reason which plans, controls, objectifies, systematises and unifies – in short, it is a “totalising” reason’ (Wellmer 1985, 101), is key to understanding wider issues concerning social forms of control, which develop historically, make use of the ‘logic of identity’ and, as a result, bring about a deformation of the norms of reciprocal recognition. The detached contemplation that seeks to provide a unitary explanatory story for the nature of, for example, meaning and truth in certain quarters of

contemporary analytic philosophy is, ultimately, part of a broader cultural problem whereby prejudices imposed upon that which is to be understood, be it another individual, a culture or a form of musical practice, does not allow it to, as Taylor suggests, ‘talk back’ to an ‘open’ and respectful interpreter. For Wellmer, social phenomena that depend on this ‘logic of identity’ include, for example, ‘capitalist economy, modern bureaucracy, technical progress and finally those ways of “disciplining” the body which are analysed by Foucault’ (ibid.). The difficulty here, however, is that the forms of identity that make such phenomena possible, especially when we attempt to account, for example, for scientific knowledge and medical practice, are precisely what can improve the quality of life for a vast amount of the world’s population. Indeed, as observed in the first chapter, certain identifications and objectifications are necessary for the world to be comprehensible in the first place, to take part in communication and to create, perform or talk about music. That said, as Bowie observes, the same sort of identity-thinking that can make life more tolerable is also what, under different historical circumstances, can lead to a pathology of reason.¹ In this sense, the distortion of the rational universal or, as Wellmer puts it, the utilisation of one’s right ‘not to be fully rational’ can have both positive and negative social effects depending on the historical circumstances. So, according to Wellmer, under present circumstances in the West, ‘the practice of politics becomes reduced to the technique of retaining power, of manipulation and organisation; democracy becomes merely an efficient form of organising governmental control. Art, finally becomes absorbed into the culture industry of the capitalist economy, reduced to pseudo-autonomous pseudo-life’ (ibid.). We have seen how even those forms of musical practice that seek to challenge the norms and values of the State can be appropriated, on account of their exchange value, by the culture industry for its own renewal. Indeed, the ‘logic of identity’ that Wellmer sees as driving the growth of the culture industry has also become the means of controlling artistic practices by the largest funding body for the arts in the UK.

For Arts Council England, their ‘targets and performance indicators’, as set by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, are, for the main, based on the Council’s contribution to the government’s ‘Growth Agenda’ and the number of visitors to Arts Council and Arts-Council-funded events. In terms of what Wellmer

¹ See Bowie 2013, 96-134.

refers to as the ‘practice of politics’, it seems to be the case that the sort of – what Stefan Collini calls – ‘economistic philistinism’ of the various funding councils (Collini 2012, 90), which seemingly reduce the worth and usefulness of their investments to what they contribute to the economy, become part of a broader problem concerning the instrumentalisation and control of socio-cultural practices by populist governments in market democracies. Indeed, as we see with the current UK government, the prioritising of economic prosperity, sometimes above the basic needs of its citizens, takes place at the same time as stereotyping narratives bring about, for example, the demonization of the working-classes, the elderly, the disabled and other minority groups as well as what Collini calls a ‘hostile and instrumental disdain’ for Higher Education institutions and the National Health Service for what is seen as their failure to contribute adequately to the economy. The issue is, however, that despite the narrative of austerity economics being put forward as a single, unifying explanation for the instrumentalisation, bureaucratisation and privatisation of publically-funded institutions as well as the constraints placed on the most socially vulnerable, it is becoming increasingly apparent that there are separate agendas for these, arguably, distinct kinds of identification, with the demonization of the working-classes revealing long-standing prejudices accumulated during the history of neoliberal class politics. Whether we choose to see these as two different kinds of identification or not, both reifying stereotypes and the instrumental treatment of socio-cultural practices appeal to a distortion of the hermeneutic situation, the rational universal, through the imposition of prejudices on what should be understood.

For Honneth, who interprets ‘social pathologies’ as emerging from ‘restricted, “reifying” rationality’, reification, as that which violates the norms of ‘antecedent recognition’, can be thought of as, to a certain degree, distinct from those forms of control that solely violate the norms of reciprocal recognition without seeking to deny the human status of those groups and individuals to be controlled. For Honneth, the types of control that bring about a violation of the norms of reciprocal recognition on which, for him, the idea of a rational universal is based include, with reference to his forebears at the Institute for Social Research, ‘capitalist organisation of production’, ‘the social privileging of rationally purposeful, utilitarian attitudes in capitalism’ and the ‘mechanisms of systematic management’ (Honneth 2009, 34-35). Other specific types of practices that are disclosive of and contribute to the pathological deformation of reason include the ‘hollowing-out of the legal substance of labour contracts’, the

treatment of ‘children’s potential talents’ ‘as an issue of generic measurement and manipulation’ and ‘reifying stereotypes (of women, Jews, etc.)’ (Honneth 2008, 80-81). In the specific context of his discussions on reification, whereby reification occurs through a forgetfulness of ‘antecedent recognition’, the ‘elementary conditions that underlie all talk of morality’, the dehumanisation of individuals and groups that is characteristic of the concept can be found, for Honneth, in radical forms of racism, human-trafficking and slavery in general.

None of this is to say, however, that we cannot become critically aware of those pathological objective conditions that we come to internalise and, thereby, sustain. The issue is that this critical awareness can often lead us to be not ‘fully rational’ according to the norms of recognition that pervade a certain rationally-deformed society or culture at a given point in history. Indeed, as we have seen, music can play an important critical role when individuals and groups engage critically with those social pathologies that distort the fusion of horizons or the norms of reciprocal recognition. Firstly, music avoids being reified. As we have seen throughout this study, because our position in relation to particular works, styles, genres, forms, production processes and performative contexts is a transient one, music, its ontology, meaning and value, defies being subsumed under unifying explanatory theories through disengaged contemplation, that is, music offers a challenge to what Wellmer calls ‘a kind of unity which was only attainable at the price of suppressing and bracketing out anything that could not be integrated, anything that had been mentally repressed or otherwise excluded from general consciousness’ (Wellmer 1985, 103). For Wellmer, who considers the artwork to be an ‘internally negative’ ‘hidden totality’ that contradicts its supposedly objective existence, ‘no interpretation can do justice to this hidden totality by restricting the work of art as a meaningful whole to *one* meaning, one statement, one truth, by taking it as a symbolic whole which “shows” or “allows us to experience” something – in the same way that this hidden totality cannot be understood in terms of the intermittent moments of epiphany, of shock or intense experience’ (Wellmer 2004, 115). By looking at a variety of different forms of musical practice, including punk, Oi!, Wagner’s music dramas, Beethoven’s symphonies and string quartets, Strauss’ *Elektra*, soundsystem culture and noise, it is clear that the subject’s relationship to the object, whether that ‘subject’ is an individual or a specific community of interpreters, can be affected by changes to the relationship at different times, thus calling into

question the idea of what Wellmer refers to as a ‘definitive insight’ into or ‘definitive form of understanding’ of a particular aesthetic experience. Concrete situations where music is present illustrate how the notional line between subject and object is not a fixed one – it changes with historical developments. Indeed, as Wellmer illustrates with some help from Heidegger, musical practices show us that the scheme of subject and object is a derivative mode of access to the world, one which can only develop after a prior (aesthetic) non-objectifying, practical stance to do with our ‘being-in-the-world’ of socio-cultural and historically-developed norms. To see music as a world-disclosive phenomenon, that is, a phenomenon that articulates how societies and cultures make sense of the world, music and each other differently at different times, is to call into question the rigid subject-object divide that forms the basis for reifying approaches to music, which bracket out the endlessly adaptive and critical nature of the world. Furthermore, due to our transforming and transformed relationships to musical practice, music *qua* world disclosure opens up spaces of possibility by which we can encounter or read the world differently. We can use music, therefore, to make sense of our world as well as bring about new, norm-transcending ways of making sense. None of this new, and it is an argument that fuels the five previous chapters of this study.

We see throughout music’s history the critical act of musical composition or interpretation whereby manipulation of the stylistic, formative or interpretive norms generates new meaningful compositional, performative and interpretive contexts. As Wellmer claims:

Every new work of art – if it truly is one – stands in a reflexive and critical relationship to a given world of aesthetic norms. It does not only have – and relate to – an extra-aesthetic context...but simultaneously also the context of an existing art-world, which – in music through a relation to existing compositional problems, solutions and materials – it transgresses and thus changes (Wellmer 2004, 114).

The issue is that, when, as Bowie says, it really matters, established and popular musical practices and interpretations become transcended (but not completely rejected) in the name of something new that evokes a new kind of expression or sense. In other words, with regards to reification, to be fully receptive to what Adorno calls the non-identical in musical practice, that is, in Gadamer’s terms, to be ‘open to the other’ is to be open to exploring new sounds and sound-relationships. In chapter two, what was observed was how the norms of Wagner scholarship could be

transcended, with new interpretive ideas, subsequently, normalised. In chapter four we saw how the shared practices of the discipline of musicology have, in the past thirty years, changed as a result of a new and innovative ways of comporting ourselves towards musical praxis. Indeed, in chapter five, the music of Varèse, Strauss, Jamaican soundsystem culture, punk and noise was used to show how artistic and cultural practices seek to develop normative material in abnormal, musically significant ways.

After the end of reifying engagements with musical practice, Wellmer claims that we come to appreciate ‘that for modern art a more flexible and individualised mode of organisation becomes necessary in the same degree as it comes to incorporate what had previously been excluded as disparate, alien to the subject, and senseless’ (Wellmer 1985, 103). Read in two separate ways, Wellmer, firstly, suggests that the work of art, after the ‘traditional unity of the work of art’ is shown to be illusory, opens itself up to its ‘*recipients*’ for a plurality of interpretations and meanings. Secondly, from the point of view of ‘the *producers* of works’, the work of art brings about new senses through stylistic and formative means that perhaps would have been considered alien to the concept of art under reifying conditions. Thus, although deeply critical of certain aspects of postmodernity as we have seen, Wellmer suggests that what is justified about ‘postmodernism’s insistence on the end of the great meta-narratives...is the fact that the state of the material has been pluralised, and that aesthetic transgressions in *many* directions have become possible and indeed necessary’ (Wellmer 2004, 130). In other words, ‘art’s sting...lies in its breaking through clichés of perception and experience, or conspiring with them to question them playfully and change them, and in its opening of new perceptual and experiential possibilities’ (ibid., 125). What Wellmer calls ‘the subversive potential’ of aesthetic experience, therefore, is precisely this idea that with art and artworks, established aesthetic norms, as demonstrated throughout the history of Western music, can be called into question with new artistic materials subjected to investigation. ‘Artistic production does not occur in a normatively airtight space’ (ibid., 113). Instead, ‘a part of art’s independent logic’ is ‘the constant transgression of such rules and norms, of the respective established understanding of art, of the practices of its production, transmission and reception’ (ibid., 128).

At the same time, art is a world-disclosive phenomenon by which, as we observed in chapter one, it is ‘entangled in social processes in such a manner that

works of art derive their existential content and their meaningfulness from the articulation of this entanglement, and from their reflection upon it' (ibid., 124). With the world-disclosing aspects of art, the 'opening-up of the work of art' through 'the dissolution of its boundaries' (Wellmer 1985, 103) 'can open a dimension through which this [extra-musical] field of meanings appears in an entirely new light, and seems charged with new complexity' (Wellmer 2004, 82). The key here is 'that the critical potential of accomplished works of art with respect to a given art-world also implies a potential for *social* critique' (ibid., 125). If, in the sphere of musical composition, norm-transcendence is considered, in part, to be about bringing into play [*Spiel*] 'the diffuse and the disparate' (Wellmer 1985, 103), then 'the negativity of art lies at the same time in its articulation of the socially negative *as* something negative' (Wellmer 2004, 125). It is not surprising that in recent times, as a result of what Wellmer calls art's 'world-relation', those musical practices that seek to call into question established stylistic, formative, performative and interpretive norms are also part of those 'socially negative' forms of life that take up a critical stance to existing social pathologies. Music, in political contexts where dominant norms are being challenged, becomes, as a result of its world-relation, one of the means by which minority groups and subcultures 'talk back' to those worldviews that bring about a distortion of the norms of reciprocal recognition. What we have seen with the subcultural movements of punk, Oi!, Jamaican soundsystem and noise is that the developments of 'new' forms of music making – not just at the level of form or style but also in terms of sound production, performance contexts, marketing, distribution and technological appropriation – have emerged out of critical projects that have sought to challenge dominant social, cultural and political norms. In this sense, as a world-disclosive phenomenon, music 'holds a critical potential that affects frozen states of thinking, perceiving and experiencing with respect to both the self-relation of subjects and their social relations, and thus also...a socio-critical potential, not least in dark times' (ibid., 125). In the cases of punk, Oi!, Jamaican soundsystem culture and noise networks, the existence of social pathologies distorts the norms of reciprocal recognition or mutual understanding leading to the creation of unequal power relationships whereby these cultures and subcultures come to be viewed, according to Wellmer's terminology, as 'socially negative'. In the sense that these movements open up perceptual and experiential possibilities that go against the grain of dominant social and cultural practices, the music of these forms of life articulates

or thematises the socially negative to those that are willing to listen, and, thereby, discloses or evokes the possibility of transcending what Wellmer calls the 'ideological ossifications of the dominant discourses' (ibid., 127). Music is, therefore, world-disclosive and, at the same time, critical.

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