ADORNO'S PHILOSOPHY OF MODERN MUSIC

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by

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Dr. J. Malpas
Dean of Graduate Studies
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ABSTRACT

Adorno's **Philosophy of Modern Music** is examined, and its principal theme is presented: the historical demise of tonality as the basis for the valid practice of musical art. This theme prceeds from Adorno's dialectical view of reality, and from the consequences of the historical change that began with the ascendancy of the bourgeoisie. Tonal music constitutes the most characteristic art form of an age dominated by bourgeois ideology: in the illusion of its closed organically developing form, it is aesthetically experienced as miming the bourgeois view of the world as a rationally graspable totality. However, since the effect of the bourgeois ideal of enlightenment is a drive to the total rationalization of human reality, the human subject becomes alienated, reality becomes objectified, and the reified subject loses his understanding of reality as involving himself in the same way as other subjects. Therefore reality for him no longer includes the collective subjectivity which makes the convention of tonality possible. The illusion of the organicity of tonal works can no longer be sustained.

Responses to these circumstances by the principal composers of the period span a continuum: from authenticity, in acknowledgment of the end of musical art, achieved in the

objectifying constructions of Schoenberg's twelve-tone principles; to inauthenticity, in the pretence of Stravinsky's works to maintain a traditional tonality which is really dead. Inconsistency is noted in Adorno's understanding of what tonality is, and where it actually applies; this casts doubt upon the notion of totality from which its historical demise supposedly derives. Adorno's characterization of present historical trends is read as negative, and an interpretation of this apparently "essentialist" position is offered.

CONTENTS

PREFACE

This is a study of Adorno's **Philosophy of Modern Music** as it appears in English in the Blomster and Mitchell Translation of 1973. The scope of the investigation is confined to English-language literature by and about Adorno; a selection of what is available is documented in the bibliography.

Throughout this examination, I have endeavoured to present the discussion couched in terms directed to the general reader. Adorno himself, although he occasionally used musical technical terms, consistently strove in his works to emphasize the general philosophical significance of music for humanity. The true difficulties of his texts are other than those of a technical musical nature, and mystification by jargon was never one of his objectives. Accordingly, musical quotations and the use of the more unusual technical musical terms are avoided, in the conviction that verbal explanation will be sufficient for understanding.

I would like to record my heartfelt gratitude to my thesis supervisor, Dr. James Bradley, for his critical attention and consistent inspiration, which was instrumental throughout the writing of this study. I must also thank Dr. Gunars Tomsons for his very useful critical comments upon aesthetic and musical aspects of the thesis. Responsibility

for its content and imperfections is, for better or worse, my own. I acknowledge also the assistance of the Queen Elizabeth II Library of Memorial University in setting aside the professional development time and sabbatical leave which allowed me to complete the project. Thanks, too, to my mother, who gave me refuge from the world so I could write in peace, in aesthetic surroundings.

CD

St. John's, April 1992

INTRODUCTION

Theodor Wiesengrund Adorno (1903-1969) is an unusual figure in the history of modern philosophy, in that he divided his accomplishments evenly between philosophy and music. In philosophy, there is a growing consensus that he is one of the most important thinkers in the stream of contemporary German thought known as critical theory. In the field of music he is a distinguished and voluminous commentator on new music and, to some extent,[1] a composer. Music, of all the fields of study, is the one most usually seen as closed and self-sufficient in relation to other disciplines; yet, as we will see, this very closure is for Adorno a feature of the philosophical significance it holds for humanity. The fact that he never finally chose which subject to pursue over the other is a measure of the importance he attached to them both: the present study is an attempt to indicate the nature of the connection between them in his thought.

His elucidation of the philosophical importance of music (and of the musical importance of philosophy) found its fullest expression in **Philosophie der neuen Musik**, which was first published in 1949. He wrote numerous other works on music in German, and some have been translated into English. Despite the increasing interest in Adorno in the Anglophone world, however, the study of **Philosophy of Modern Music** in English must be undertaken warily, because of the chequered

history of the text. In its final shape, the book is an examination of philosophical and sociological tendencies that manifest themselves in the contemporary music of Adorno's time. It takes the form of a contrast, in separate chapters, between the works of Schoenberg and Stravinsky, which is favourable to the former, and unfavourable to the latter. However, the essay on Schoenberg was written considerably earlier, in 1941, and only converted into a book through the later addition of an introduction and the chapter on Stravinsky. While Adorno has been successful in unifying its content, there is still a marked disparity between the two principal sections of the book, which requires care in the understanding of comparisons made between the two composers.[2] Nevertheless, the effort to examine and try to clarify the central themes of the book is worthwhile, in view of the importance of aesthetics for Adorno, and of the importance of music for Adorno's aesthetics.

Adorno's philosophical positions in their salient aspects were for the most part held consistently throughout his life. His work consists of numerous approaches to the same problems from differing perspectives, which is appropriate to a view of reality which holds that particulars cannot be directly grasped by reason, but must be glimpsed "sidelong"[3] as they slip away. It is therefore necessary to look at a broad range

of Adorno's works to understand clearly the principal concepts underlying any one of them, since the individual occurrences of his ideas are likely to be incomplete.

Accordingly, in the first two chapters this study will proceed by drawing on other works of Adorno to establish the philosophical and aesthetic background of **Philosophy of Modern Music**. First, the key philosophical concepts which lie behind Adorno's aesthetics, namely the dialectical view of reality, totality and the historical nature of reality are examined. In the second chapter, the relevant features of Adorno's aesthetics are explained in terms of these basic concepts; namely the nature of art in a dialectical world, the historical character of modernism in art, the social dimension, and the history of the illusion which enables art to occur. The third chapter will deal with the content of **Philosophy of Modern Music** itself, exploring its main theme in the light of these concepts: the end of tonality as a valid basis for musical art, and the philosophical significance and relative authenticity of the contrasting responses of Schoenberg and Stravinsky to this historical event. The intent is to demonstrate the wider importance of music in Adorno's view of the world, and in particular the philosophical implications of the course that music has taken in the present century. The final chapter offers a brief

critical review of Adorno's conception of music's significance and historical character as it appears in **Philosophy of Modern Music.**

Chapter One

KEY CONCEPTS

Dialectic and Reality

I

The effort to understand any text of Adorno, including **Philosophy of Modern Music**, requires a grasp of certain concepts that are central to his thinking. The most fundamental and far-reaching of these is usually referred to as dialectical understanding. In the Anglophone world we are heirs to a tradition of thinking, and indeed a way of reading, from which dialectical thought in the manner of Adorno and other Marxists is a fundamental departure. It is important, therefore, in dealing with the specific issues surrounding his treatment of the philosophy of modern music, to remain aware of its dialectical character, so as not to be misled at the beginning by apparent contradictions and non-sequiturs.

Dialectics in a general sense is not especially new to philosophy; Adorno points out in the preface to **Negative Dialectics** that as a general philosophical practice it goes back to Plato.[1] The traditional understanding of dialectics is as a form of reasoning in which a positive result is obtained from the negation of a negative statement. In this context it is primarily the reconciliation of contradictions

as a means of producing a more satisfactory progress towards truth. For the Marxist tradition, however, it acquires more central significance as part and parcel of a fundamental break with the tradition of western philosophy.

This break, in its essence, consists in taking a different starting point for inquiry: instead of the rigorous effort to find certainty through the use of reason, which has its most explicit statement in the work of Descartes, the Marxist tradition begins with the individual human existence, and its realization in activity. The difference between this understanding and the Cartesian "I am" is not at first sight very great: both are grounded in the indisputable fact of self-awareness. Nevertheless there is a difference in approach which is subtle but in its ramifications very profound. The Cartesian "I am" is taken for a certainty and treated as an undeniable truth for reason to build upon; the goal is a body of propositional knowledge about reality. This treatment of "I am" tends to depart from any aspect of becoming, from time and change; the universality of truth about reality is implicit in the goal. The Marxist tradition, on the other hand, sees the existence of the individual human subject as realized in his acts. "I am" is therefore a matter of becoming, since activity must be sustained if existence is not to cease. It is also dependent on an objective nature,

since activity cannot occur without acting on, or in some sort of relation to, something. Activity, further, implies an effect on objective nature, and therefore, change. The result of such an approach is a distinctive understanding of the term "reality". When Adorno uses it, he is referring to the character of the interaction of the subject with objective nature, and quite explicitly denying the metaphysical implication that the term "reality" has in traditional philosophy. "Reality", for him, cannot lie beyond the realm of practical action, and is therefore neither universal nor unchanging.

The break with the philosophical tradition which is entailed by this understanding of dialectic assumes a twofold character. In the first place, thinking about reality becomes inevitably dialectical in that reality now must be seen to depend on the opposing poles of subject and object. It cannot consist only in the subject, since the subject must act to continue to exist, and action requires nature (something that is other than the subject) to act upon in order to be action. Conversely, there cannot be an action-constituted reality without a subject acting to create it. For the same reasons, subject and object cannot be collapsed into a single identity. The object is other, that which is not the subject, and, as we have said, is necessary to the

possibility of the action by which the subject exists. Since Adorno's reality requires both subject and object, and cannot be said to reside separately in either, and since neither subject nor object can be dispensed with nor can they be combined, this reality is understood as dialectical. Two opposing principles (subject and not-subject; other and non-other) are both necessarily inherent in the real, yet the opposition cannot be reconciled as it is in traditional dialectic in order to produce the positive result of a unity or identity. Further, a dialectical reality must be historical, in the sense that it continuously changes as the nature of both subject and object evolves through the consequences of action.

II

In the second place, one important consequence of beginning with action as constituting the realization of individual existence is to move the theatre of thought away from the usual subjects of traditional philosophy (understood as the effort to find certainty about reality through contemplative reason), towards seeing the practical arenas of political and economic action as primary. Marxist thinkers have frequently denounced traditional philosophy in the above sense as either idle or pernicious, because they consider it to be an aspect of ideology.[2] That is, it is ideological in

that, contrary to its pretence of dealing with matters of universal truth beyond the concerns of practical everyday life, it arises from and serves the interests of the dominant social classes.[3] It suits these social classes to perpetuate an understanding of "reality" as both transcending practical experience and susceptible of rational description, thereby maintaining the dominance they have gained in an historical epoch whose experience is shaped by that understanding. Traditional philosophy is thus more properly considered as a result of concrete circumstances -- that is, as arising from the Marxian "reality" of action and the historical conditions which are its current result -- than as an inquiry into a reality which is more fundamental than practical experience.

It might seem excessively narrow to define philosophy in terms of the rationalistic metaphysics of the Cartesian tradition, and indeed Adorno distinguishes at the outset of **Negative Dialectics**[4] between the "school concept" and the "world concept" of philosophy. The term "world concept" denotes the philosophy of reality considered from the most fundamental starting point, namely that of the existence of the individual. His claim is that modern philosophy has developed into a dead end, the "school concept", by which he means the pursuit of rationalistic metaphysics. It is therefore in a spirit of bringing philosophy to the world

concept that Adorno undertakes the work of **Negative Dialectics.** His philosophy of "negative dialectics" is negative because, in contrast to what he implies to be the traditional understanding of dialectics, no synthesis can be made of the opposing components inherent in reality, of subject with object. We must in fact live in this untranscended opposition between subject and object at the heart of existence, and understand it "dialectically".

The philosophical effort of Adorno is founded on a perception of the impasses at which traditional philosophy has arrived in its search for certainty, together with the practical emphasis of Marxist thought.[5] In his view, rational thought is compelled to make the assumption of identity: that the concept coincides with the thing conceived ("To think is to identify"[6]). This is because reason is conceptualization -- generalization -- unless it is trivial. To form conceptions of objects is to reduce them to the same currency, in a sense to make commodities of them by eliminating their particularity. However, in dialectical reality, which is created by the actions of humans, the difficulty with the assumption of identity is that the objective side of this world is revealed as a matter of particulars, of historical variables which are unique and not pre-determinable. No concept can be identical with its object: that is a

consequence of the generalizing nature of concepts. "The name of dialectics says no more ... than that objects do not go into their concepts without leaving a remainder, that they come to contradict the traditional norm of adequacy."[7]

Adorno is at pains throughout to show that the negative dialectic is not a standpoint for philosophy, but rather a necessary condition of thought which applies to any individual thinker in his acts of thought.[8] To ignore this condition and withdraw into the abstraction of "pure reason" is to pretend that there is identity between objects and their concepts, and that propositional reason does describe reality: that is, to practice ideology. Yet reason cannot be abandoned either, since that would be to deny the subjective side of the activity which constitutes human reality. Humanness is in its essence social; thinking, reasoning, generalizing, is the characteristic act of subjectivity in a reality which includes other subjects as part of the objective nature against which the act takes place. We must continue to think in order to continue our existence as human beings, otherwise we end up as animals. "Dialectics is the consistent sense of nonidentity", Adorno says,[9] and in reading his writings we must be consistently aware of the dialectical character of his thought -- specifically, the claim that particulars[10] are not

identical with their concepts -- in order to understand the nature of his claims in aesthetics.

Totality

I

The notion of totality is central to the dialectical thought which forms the background to Adorno's work in aesthetics, because for him it characterizes the primary feature of experience in contemporary society. The consequences of the totalization of society which are significant for this discussion manifest themselves in the character of philosophical thought, and subsequently in the culture within which the individual subject has his existence.

Since human reality is constituted in its activity, and since the collective interest of the bourgeoisie lies in a world view that allows complete rational certainty, the history of philosophical activity in the modern period has been a developing effort to subsume all reality under the rule of reason. The goal is the state of affairs that Adorno[11] characterizes as totality: a condition of the human world in which all reality is subject to description in terms of a calculating rationality based on certainty. In such a totalized world, human reality is to be understood in a completely objective way, in the sense that even subjects are

treated in terms of objects, describable through generalized concepts. The effect of this totalizing impulse is to prevent the subject from understanding his own dialectical or action-constituted reality as reality. The consequence of totality, in other words, is to alienate the subject in a profound way from his means of self-realization, which must take place in the context of action, in relation to an object. The philosophy which describes, or seeks to describe, the world in propositional terms amounts to ideology; that is, it is part of the complex of ideas, norms, and other intellectual apparatus which provides organizing principles and justification for the effort to totally rationalize the world. Such a totality is registered in the epistemological sphere by the triumph of reason as the authoritative description of reality.

II

Considered in relation to the social sphere, Adorno's vision of totality presents the paradox that the ideology of totality no longer so much serves the interests of a particular class as the perpetuation in general of the "administered society."[12] In alienating the individual from his own reality, the rational ideal places him in a position of submission to an external "reality", which is manifest as a compulsion to serve objective requirements and to conform to

the necessities originating in the objective world -- a condition which applies equally to the bourgeoisie, whose class interest is served by the rational ideal, as it does to the proletariat. Totality is the condition of a society in which alienation of this kind is completely pervasive, affecting all individuals within it. Historically, although the ideology may originate with a dominant class, its consistent application in human activity takes the organization of society beyond the interests of that class to the requirement of the completely rationally organized society. In other words, the idea of a totalized world entails that when alienation is complete in society, the domination of the individual is no longer by a class of other individuals, but by an abstract, objective society. The domination is still a feature of dialectical reality, in that it is grounded in the individual's understanding of his actions as occurring in subject-object contact, but it nevertheless arises from a denial of the dialectical character of reality in those acts. Because of its philosophical and aesthetic impact, this understanding of totality leads Adorno, in the social sphere, to be concerned more with criticism of the "culture industry"[13] than with analysis of social phenomena for their own sake.[14] Nevertheless, for him the central notion of an oppressive, totalized world still has its roots in his Marxist starting-point.

Reality understood dialectically has a social dimension, and evolves through the interactions of subjects, which are driven by the individual subject's need to act. Such evolution inevitably leads to tension between the needs of the society created by this activity and those of the individuals who did the creating. This tension has resulted in the ascendancy of the central economic manifestation of administrative rationality, namely commodity fetishism.[15] The use-value of the products of labour has been converted into the arbitrary exchange-value brought by the division of labour as society became more complex. Objects, including one's own body, have become ever more distant from the labouring subject, as they assume the fluctuating value of market prices; they thus become matters of mystery, their reality lying in their exchange-value, rather than in the immediate particularity of the subject's contact with them. Social interactions are governed by the rational relationships of these exchange-values, and since the individual subject's survival depends upon the exchange-values of objects, reality comes to reside in objects -- that is, they become fetishes. The totalizing drive in the social sphere is toward the subsumption of all social phenomena under the rationalizing rule of market economics.

III

In the totality that Adorno calls "administered society" -- namely, our consumer society -- everything is valued by market standards, and the philosophy of reason is enlisted to serve as ideology: its function is to help justify and maintain the commodity character of the society. The result is overwhelming pressure on the individual to conform to the demands of the market, as it extends its reach to an ever more complete domination of all of the values and activities of the individual in society. Since the human aspect of the individual's reality is social in that it consists in his relations with other individual subjects, this constitutes an oppressive dehumanisation of the individual's existence by a system that ignores that aspect of individual reality (the particularity of the subject-object interaction) which does not go into universalizing concepts. The lot of the individual subject is to suffer in the conflict between, on the one hand, the nature of his own reality in which existence is in the context of subject-object interaction, and on the other the demand of the society for his conformity with the rationalistic ideals of the totalized world: that is, for the denial of the reality of his own existence, except as a detached object and non-particular instance of a category. The individual is alienated alike from his own reality and

from the contact with other subjects that constitutes the basis of his humanity.

For Adorno the central point here is that the totality of administered society transcends the issue of class structure studied by the Marxists. He is not concerned with ideology as serving the special interests of any social class, but rather its drive to "rationalize" society as a whole. Although he would allow that the rational ideal was originated by the bourgeoisie to serve their particular class needs, Adorno sees it as having in a sense escaped, its very success as ideology having resulted in the creation of the totally administered society which has, so to speak, taken on a life of its own. To the extent that the needs of this society to maintain its integrity and control are fulfilled over the needs of individual subjects to act in creating their own existence, the society represses those individual subjects; and the more total the penetration of the market economic organization into the society, the more repressive it is.

Adorno's view of the totalizing character of contemporary society is absolutely central to his conception of both the nature and function of art. Indeed, it would not be an exaggeration to say that in some ways it is an underlying foundation or motor of all of his philosophical work. Yet at

the same time, it is not so much a description of society as of the role of society in the reality experienced by the individual and in the nature of art.[16] More specifically, his work is a description of the impact of universally applied market economics on the nature of art and on the philosophical underpinnings of human values. The word "culture", which often occurs in Adorno's writings, is probably a more accurate name for what interests him than "society" as such. A distinction has to be made and borne in mind when studying his work, between society in its own right as a collection of individuals, and culture, as the totality of practices and values in that society; it is really the latter that Adorno has in mind when he writes of society.

History

I

In many repects, Adorno's thought is an essentially historical account of the evolution of the relationship of culture, and especially art, to human reality. Adorno is explaining the current situation, the character of philosophical inquiry and the nature of art, as a development of what has gone before. We noted at the outset, in discussing dialectic, that a "reality" which is constituted in contact between subject and object in activity must necessarily be constantly becoming. Since activity must have

an objective effect if it is to be activity, it follows that the objective world is constantly being altered by activity, and reality, which is constituted in the interaction of subject and object, is essentially historical in nature. In the epistemological realm, this is manifest in the history of the central issues of traditional philosophy. For Adorno[17] this history has taken the form of an evolution towards the complete description of the world as objective, in terms of concepts related by reason. As we have seen, however, because of the negative dialectic inherent in the conditions of thought, such a description of the world as a totality fails to satisfy the "traditional norms of adequacy" of reason. The striving toward the realization of this totality entails an ever more intense polarization of subject and object, with the latter becoming increasingly remote from and fetishized by the reified consciousness of the former. Historical movement is driven by the dialectical tension between, on the one hand, the totalizing need of rationality to rule nature, and on the other, the resistance of the individual object as a particular to being subsumed in the universalizing system of concepts.

II

With regard to the future evolution of this tension, Adorno parts company with Lukács[18] and the Marxist tradition, whose vision foresees a great historical change taking place, a revolution which will manifest itself in the epistemological sphere by the reconciliation of subject and object in human consciousness through the self-realization of the proletariat. Adorno, in contrast, sees only the continuing need of a humanity, impaled on the horns of an inherently dialectical reality, to suffer and strive for understanding in an increasingly totalized world whose future cannot be predicted. From the perspectives of both Lukács and Adorno, however, the pressure on philosophy to function as ideology is created by the drive to a totalized world. The effect of this pressure is illustrated by the ahistorical character of the traditional approach: the efforts of reason are always directed toward a reality that is eternal. In a dialectical account of the world, however, if authenticity is to be achieved, it must relate to the process of subject-object interaction, and therein to a reality which is constantly changing. For Adorno, the present reality in all its dimensions is to be understood as deriving from the past activity of humanity, and the present context of action, and understanding, as having been created by that past activity.

The present context of action is social in that the individual subject's humanity resides in his relations with other individual subjects; Adorno is principally concerned with the looming presence of totalizing society as the agent driving historical change in the cultural and aesthetic fields that affect (and reflect) the individual's social fate.[19] He thus holds the present phase of history to have begun with the triumph of the ideals of the bourgeois revolution, and the reshaping of society and its ideology in accordance with the needs of the bourgeoisie as ruling class. This reshaping has resulted in the totalizing impulse which has driven the subsequent changes in culture towards that of today's consumerism-oriented mass "administered" society, and beyond the interests of any individuals or class of individuals. The alienation and rationalism that have been described under the heading of totality are, in other words, the characteristic social features of the objective side of reality for the contemporary individual subject. They affect the character of that reality in the subject-object interaction; equally, they are the product of objective historical changes. These are the conditions under which an authentic dialectical understanding of the current, though constantly changing, reality must be achieved; the history of art, and especially music, is for Adorno the history of the developing impact of

alienation and rationalization on the basic character of aesthetic practice, an activity which has special significance in current reality.

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Chapter Two

AESTHETIC CONTEXT

Nature of Art Works

I

Bearing in mind the dialectical nature of Adorno's basic outlook, and his conception of history as a movement toward the totalization of human life, we can now proceed to the field of aesthetics, which is of central importance as much for his understanding of the world as for the philosophy of modern music which he elaborates out of that understanding.

The concerns of Adorno in aesthetics resolve themselves for our purposes into three interrelated areas, which are best discussed in sequence. They are: first, the nature of art works, considered in a negative-dialectical world; second, the authenticity of art works; and third, their relationship to society. All three of these areas of concern relate to the philosophy of art of the present time, as an historical phenomenon rather than as an unchanging metaphysical issue, and a grasp of all three is necessary to understand Adorno's conception of the history of illusion in musical art. It is the historical loss of the tenability of the illusion of tonality in music which forms the central theme in **Philosophy of Modern Music.**

The question of the nature of art works is for Adorno intimately connected with the negative dialectic which renders identity thinking problematic. Like the concept of the ordinary empirical object, "the concept of art balks at being defined,"[1] because individual art works cannot be completely subsumed under a concept. Moreover, the concept of art is itself problematic, because art works do not have the same kind of existence that empirical objects have, as parts of nature over against which human activity takes place.

For Adorno, in a totalizing society, the objectivity of objects, one can say, becomes extreme; they take on an appearance of independence, in the sense of having a nature which does not depend on the subjective component of the subject-object interaction. This is the objective aspect of their fetishization by the alienated subject. Further, for the alienated subject the particularity of objects also disappears, because in their fetish character they are subsumed under their rational concepts as commodities, rather than having individual reality in the immediate subject-object interaction. The nature of art works, however, is such that they cannot be separated from the subject in this way.

In the first place -- and one reason why art and aesthetics constitute such an important feature of experience

for Adorno -- the reality of art lies in the dialectical relationship between subject and object, rather than with either component separately. Art in its essential character is not a mere object, but has significance, that is:

> Actually, art works, notably those of the highest calibre, are waiting to be interpreted. If one accepted the assertion that there is nothing to interpret in art and that art merely has being, one would expunge the line of demarcation that separates art from non-art.[2]

Art is taken by Adorno to be a matter of interpretation: the line of demarcation that separates art from non-art lies in art's waiting to be interpreted. Art, that is, is art only in so far as it is interpreted.[3] The immediate presence of the subject in the subject-object interaction is therefore a necessary aspect of the event of an apprehension of a work of art. In a dialectical account of the world, it should be remembered, this event constitutes the only reality of an art work; it depends on the circumstances surrounding it whether the subject is the artist or the listener (in the case of music), or both. In the second place, the activity of interpretation is also an infusion of subjectivity, of characteristics which can only have immediate reality for the subject as deriving from the side of the subject, in a way that the mere production of a commodity cannot be. The assembly of elements, the "system of thought" of an art work, is the contribution of subjectivity.

II

To insist on the subjective as a constitutive aspect of art, however, is not to deny the objectivity of art works. The nature of art works for Adorno is perhaps best conveyed by the metaphor of a constellation,[4] or a rebus.[5] As an object, an art work is an assemblage of disparate elements whose significance cannot be seen as objectively constituted by, or deriving objectively from, the significances of its individual parts. The separate meanings of the elements are fused in the understanding of the whole, even though they are necessary to constitute the meaning of the whole in the first place.[6] A rebus, for example, is a puzzle consisting of an arrangement of pictures and other clues that suggest syllables or letters of its solution, which is something completely unrelated to the separate contexts of the original pictures and clues. Similarly, a constellation (of stars) has being only as the interpreted shape, as for instance with the Great Bear. The separate constituent stars do not bear any relation to one another beyond the interpreted one, even though, as interpreted, the shape is objectively there. Art works are said to be mediated by the subject because they have their being through the act of interpretation; as unmediated objects, they are mere assemblages.[7] Subjectivity thereby becomes integral to the art work, in that the art work, even

though it is an objective phenomenon, is interpretable only through the subject.

Throughout these considerations a distinction is implicit between concrete realities, which are those conceived by the subject as objective and immediate in the subject-object interaction, and the reality of art works which, although they have the reality of an object, require conscious interpretation by the subject in their apprehension. For Adorno the meaningfulness of the constellation of elements of which an art-work is constituted lies partly in its relationship to a concrete reality, which he characterizes as its "other."[8] This relationship is art's mimetic aspect, the way in which it gestures towards concrete, existing conditions and their "restraints, contradictions and potentialities."[9] The analogy Adorno uses is from a high-school physics experiment, the relationship between a magnet and a scattering of iron filings on a piece of paper over the magnet. The filings produce an outline of the magnetic field on the paper, illuminating, or miming, an aspect of the reality of the magnet.[10] Similarly, the constellation of Ursa Major mimes a great bear. Adorno would wish to insist that the concept of mimesis is not to be understood as a simple representation in the sense of an image, as in a photograph or representational painting.[11] This would be to add objective meaning to the

work which is not inherent in its own structure. Mimesis must be interpreted as inherent in an object, as a "gesture" which results from its structure; an art work is understood as a real object that contains that "moment of unreality" as an aspect of its objective character. The "moment of unreality" is Adorno's term for that characteristic of art which does not partake in the concrete reality of artworks, yet is the necessary component of their aesthetic nature.[12] Art, then, is seen by Adorno as dialectical in this mimetic aspect: while mimesis can only be understood as an objective feature, yet it is inevitably a result of subjective mediation, and requires the subject for its realization.

Under current conditions, however, the collective aspect of the reality that used to reside in the subject-object interaction disappears, because it is no longer possible for the subject to participate in that reality as a part of it, and thus as part of a reality including other subjects. The world of objects from which the individual subject is alienated, and which appears under conditions of totality to be exclusively real, also includes all other humans. Interpretation, which used to be an aspect of the collective reality when that reality was experienced as including the subject, now loses the shared character it had, and becomes a function of the individual, alienated subject.[13] Since the

collective is no longer immediate in the current reality experienced by the subject, it no longer confers what was an objective character on the act of interpretation. Because the subject apprehending art is unavoidably singular in a world where to be a subject is to be alienated, the process of the constitution of the art work as a constellation of objective elements is mediated by the singular subject, rather than through the more objective character of the collective.[14]

III

If, in terms of the subject-object polarity, mimesis in its dialectical nature represents the dialectic of art in respect of its objective aspects, the subjective side is on the other hand represented by expression. The expressive aspect of art is the way in which it is the sedimentation in objectivity of the subjective side of experience. While mimesis depends on an objective concrete reality, its "other", to which it is assimilated in interpretation, expression in art is the objectification of the subjective side of reality, that is, of the non-objective.[15] With respect to expression, art is subject to a separate dialectic, between the object which it is and the subject which it is the expression of:

> ...the objectification of expression, which coincides with art, cannot do without a subject that produces expression and thereby, to use a bourgeois phrase, gainfully employs his mimetic impulses. Art is expressive when a subjectively

> mediated, objective quality raises its voice to speak: sadness, strength, yearning.[16]

This at first might suggest that expression is a matter of subjective feelings, such as sadness, strength, or yearning, in the way that an imagined naive subjectivist would understand art. However, Adorno would not wish to accept that formulation, since if it were correct, it would not allow for the objective existence of art works. As he puts it, "If expression were merely a duplicate of subjective feelings, it would not amount to anything." That is, the objective character of art works would be diminished, and therefore would not be capable of being discussed. Instead, expression should be understood "in terms of ordinary things and situations in which historical processes and functions have been sedimented, endowing them with the potential to speak"[17] The subjective side of reality is not so much a set of feelings as the aggregate of the singular subject's conditions of existence in the current world, as they manifest themselves in the reality of his experience. This is what Adorno means when he refers to the "historical processes and functions" which have been sedimented in expression. "Ordinary things and situations" are objects; they are the objectification of the non-objective, and they are expressive in the potential to speak with which they have been endowed. The latter characterization preserves the objectivity of art works, which

is necessary if they are to be understood as real phenomena. There is a dialectic in the nature of art works: between mimesis, which places the character of art works in the objective world, and which is a necessary aspect of them; and expression, which represents their necessarily subjective character.

A further dialectical tension is seen by Adorno to characterize the relationship of the subject to the nature of the art work. This exists between expression on the one hand and the need, on the other, for constructive activity to assemble the elements of the constellation which is the art work. Construction is an inherently rational activity, because it must employ concepts, which are the hallmark of the use of reason, and which inherently imply a general application. The labour of producing a structure (that is, construction), requires planning, which in turn needs to have a project framed in the abstract, that is, in concepts. The particularity of an art work, like that of any object, only occurs with its realization in the subject-object interaction. There can be no art work, no interpretable mimetic constellation, without construction; yet subjective mediation, also a necessary part of the constitution of an art work, is inherently a result of the non-rational, of the subject's singularity that cannot be avoided when reality includes

interpretation. This particular dialectical tension, as we will see, becomes significant for Adorno in his explanation of Schoenberg's importance to the history of music.

In the contemporary situation, the fundamental tensions in the nature of art, between its objective character as constellation and its subjective interpretability on the one hand, and between the rationalizing tendency of construction and the singularity of expression on the other, interacting with the more general historical development of human affairs, place the future possibility of art in doubt for Adorno. As society becomes more commodity-oriented, and human consciousness more reified, the delicate balances which these tensions sustain are placed under great strain. The totalizing dynamic of society creates great pressure for art works to be understood as simple objects, in the same way as objects which are not art works -- that is, to have a distant, mysterious existence independent of the subject. However, the aspects of interpretation and expression, which we saw to be essential features of art works, cannot be completely subsumed under the concepts of a rationalized and administered world, because of their unavoidably particular nature. Art insists on a reality which is particular because it requires the subjective side of subject-object interaction in order to exist. To the extent that art continues to happen at all, it

is in resistance to the domination of human existence by reifying consciousness, because of its essential inclusion of the non-rational (that is, particular). However, given the practice of art, the pressure placed on it by totalization pushes it towards the objectifying tendencies of construction, and away from the individual subjectivity which expression represents. It is the way that art is practised in response to these pressures that interests Adorno, and provides him with a measure of its integrity when older standards have been rendered invalid by the progress of history.

Authenticity and Modernity

I

The notion of authenticity is intimately connected in Adorno's aesthetics with that of modernity. The word "modern" in this context is applied to art in which the new, understood in terms of the dislocatingly unfamiliar, is an essential feature. For Adorno modernity is now the defining criterion of artistic authenticity.

The reason for art's concern with the new is the change in the nature of the reality which art must mime, namely the progressive alienation of the subject from the object by the rationalization of the world: the reality no longer exists in which subject and object are both understood to be present in

a context of interaction. The essential feature of newness is that it is unknown: in the presence of the new, there is an element of distance between the subject and an object because the subject does not fully grasp the object. The new is mysterious to the subject. The subject is thereby alienated in the presence of the new. This is what Adorno is getting at when he writes, "The new is necessarily abstract. You do not know what it is ....".[18]

Now, in contemporary society, mimesis itself has been placed under different conditions. For in a totalized world the subjective aspect which we saw was necessary to the possibility of mimesis has been removed from the reality to which mimesis should belong, that of objects. So what is mimed is in a way un-mimeable, since it is a reality which does not include interpretability, the subjective component of mimesis. Art, in its necessary moment of mimetic behaviour, therefore finds itself compelled to seek the new. This is the only way of creating objectivity with the necessary immanent subjectivity (in the form of interpretability) on the one hand, and is also the only way of miming an alienated reality, the true current reality, on the other. Correlatively, to emphasize continuity with tradition is for Adorno precisely to deny the mimetic success of a work of art. For in a reality of reified consciousness, the experience of reality which is

to be mimed is that of the alienation of the subject. Therefore, what Adorno takes to be the most valid mimetic behaviour is to negate the connection between subject and object implied in the concept of participation in a tradition: "The concept of modernism is privative, indicating firmly that something ought to be negated, and what it is that ought to be negated; modernism is not a positive slogan."[19]

It follows that conservatism, which in terms of the practical pursuit of art is adherence to previous standards of composition and to norms laid down by tradition, becomes in its refusal of the new an essential denial of the nature of reality, of art's "other." Therefore it defeats the mimetic impulse and the essentially interpreted nature of art. The preference for "traditional" works, and the exclusive acceptance of the standards of the art of the past, are for Adorno a pretence which betrays the reification of the consciousness of art; art works are regarded simply as objects like any other, with their own fetishized existence independent of the viewing subject. Art works are there to be consumed, or regarded with wonder, just like any other objects.[20] Art as behaviour -- that is, with an immanent subjective component to its objectivity -- disappears, since the subjective component of these works is in the past, together with the reality which they reflect. Since the

advent of the totalizing drive of commodity fetishism, of the "administered society", true, authentic, art has only been possible as "modern" art.

II

However, for Adorno modernism carries with it the seeds of its own destruction. At one level, one might see art which is defined as modern threatened by the popularly conceived conundrum of originality: as more and more techniques are used and become no longer new, they are denied to artists who need the new if they are to keep their integrity. Art would progressively become more circumscribed, eventually running out of new things to do. However, this is not the complete extent of the crisis that Adorno sees for modern art, for there is not for him any necessary limit on the originality of human activity. Rather, the commodification of society and consciousness drives art through its mimetic necessity towards a denial of its essence, that is, toward a denial of interpretability and the subjective component. The demand on art is to produce fetishes, objects which have the same remoteness from the subject as ordinary concrete objects in current reality. Now this is indeed accomplished through modernism. But the more successful the mimesis of current reality, the more art works become objects, and thus extinguish their character as art. At the same time, however,

the practice of art, and the very nature of art works represent for Adorno a protest against, and a negation of, the reality which is mimed, since art is behaviour in which subjectivity and objectivity are reconciled and inextricably intertwined, even though in the reality which is mimed they are not. By existing, that is, art works deny the rationality of the totalized world, and with it the authenticity of that which they mime, and from which, in miming it, they draw their essential nature as art. In order to be art, art works are caught in a situation where they must both deny current reality and mime it.

A further aspect of the threat to the future of art, attendant on present historical conditions, is manifest in a sharpening of the tension between the essential moments of construction and expression in art. The progressing rationalization of the reality mimed by art, requires ever greater control of elements by the artist, in order to master the particularity of the work, that is, to produce a greater insinuation of reasoned form into the work so that it becomes more of an ordinary concrete object whose reality is subsumable under concepts. Modern works are often marked by a degree of integration and complexity not seen previously; construction has become more important. Conversely, control by the artist is also a mark of the necessity of expression,

the insertion of the subject into the object, which as we saw is both a protest at, and a negation of, the reality which drives the dynamic of construction.

The way in which the conflict between construction and expression threatens the future of art is linked by Adorno with the control of the work by the artist, and with the notion of modernism. The new, to be new, needs to be as yet unknown. The greater the degree of control by the artist, the more the reasoned integration of his materials, the less the work is a surprise. The distance between the subject and the objective art work, which mimes alienated reality, and which newness creates, is diminished by the greater predictability that this control brings about. Yet not to attempt to control the work is to abandon the task of expression, that is, to imbue the work with the immanent subjective moment which gives it the reality of a work of art. The effort to be authentic, in other words, leads to the loss of authenticity; the drive to greater artistic integration and control leads to the result that the element of truth in art, the new, is negated, because such control removes its unknownness. Art appears to be headed for a vanishing point. Ever-increasing accomplishments occur in the integration and control of works, in response to the need for expression in opposition to the objectification of the world; yet those very accomplishments

of rationality tend to vitiate the possibility of the new upon which the possibility of art depends. The vanishing point is totality: the point at which the subject is completely abolished from all aspects of reality, including art which thus could no longer occur.

III

To describe, in this or any other fashion, how art works are authentic is to imply that they can be inauthentic, and certainly for Adorno the latter is true: **Philosophy of Modern Music** is about trends of authenticity and inauthenticity in musical art. We described (page 35 &ff.) Adorno's understanding of the falseness of conservatism as consisting in the pretence that by following the rules and prescriptions of previous times, the reality of the present can be genuinely mimed, and that such works constitute art at the present time. However, it is important to distinguish works that are of the past, preserved by technical means beyond the time of their actual reality as art,[21] from contemporary works which are created in opposition to newness, and which attempt to achieve success in conformity with the standards of the past.[22] Both are prized by the reified consciousness, which sees them as pleasurable objects to be consumed, or used. In both cases such consciousness is incapable of the subjective interpretation of a constellation of elements which would be

indicative of genuinely aesthetic behaviour, because it cannot understand itself and its subjectivity as part of the reality of the work. The insistence on the works of the past as the exclusive models of art is symptomatic of the assumption that reality is objective and unchanging, and that those works conform to the concepts of that reality.[23]

However, the difference between these two cases is that while, to be sure, the works of the past may well once have been authentic in miming the reality of the past, in today's world of a rational totality, they no longer are. Because we do not live in the past, but in the present, authentic artistic activity is now modernist, its moment of truth residing in the new; and works of the past have become mere objects in so far as they endure at all. That is, they can be appreciated only as art objects by a consciousness that is alienated and understands reality as being independently objective and enduring, and as including no aspect of the subjective and particular. However, the reality that is mimed in works of the past no longer occurs. As part of an effort to understand the art in those works, as it were vicariously, that past reality might be partially imagined as a historical exercise, but such artworks cannot reflect current reality. The only way in which they could is under the assumption that reality does not change: that is, under the assumption made by

reified consciousness. That is why insisting that such works constitute art for the present day is symptomatic of that state of reification.

The case is different for contemporary works which oppose modernity. They carry into reality an immanent falseness, since in refusing the essential alienation of newness, they pretend to be mere objects and conspire, as Adorno might put it, in the elimination of the subject from reality altogether. In this way these contemporary works deny their nature as art, in refusing to acknowledge the interpretive character, the subjective aspect, of the constellation of elements which would constitute the work as art. Instead of miming the alienated reality in which the modern subject finds itself, such works pretend to be objects themselves. Truth in art, as we saw, lies in its mimetic relation to present reality, and art which refuses to recognize the character of that reality refuses its fundamental nature and task. The distinction between such work and modern art is clear-cut:

> The modernity of art lies in its mimetic relation to a petrified and alienated reality. This, and not the denial of that mute reality, is what makes art speak. One consequence of this is that modern art does not tolerate anything that smacks of innocuous compromise.[24]

Present reality is petrified and alienated; truth in art therefore lies in modernism, and any suggestion of compromise

is immediately to deny the nature of present reality and by doing so to cease to be modern.

It will be noted that both the authentic and the inauthentic in art indicate the likelihood that in the future art may no longer be possible. In either case the point of impossibility is that of totality where all of human existence has been rationalised, and the alienation of subject from object is complete. Action in the human sense is no longer possible in a completely totalized world, because such action consists in interaction between subject and object. The subject, whose social existence can no longer be realized in activity, must suffer on in a condition of complete alienation, denied its means of being human. Similarly, in art, the opportunity for activity in the form of the interpretation of works of art is denied at the point of totality. The contact with reality in the form of subject-object interaction can no longer be mimed. On the one hand, integration and control of the elements of art will have reached the limit of complete objectification, and rendered expression (and with it the immanent subjective moment in art and their own driving force) impossible. On the other, in the refusal of the attempt to mime reality, by pretending to be an object, art will have become no longer art, but triviality.

Art, Society and Modernity

I

The threatened condition in which art finds itself clearly has a social dimension for Adorno. The reality to which art bears its mimetic relation cannot avoid being a social one, because the experience of reality is of subject and others. Subjective experience without others, with its objective features shorn away, is reduced to a "point", which has no capability of the interaction with objects that constitutes its reality. That is, by itself, the subject does not have reality -- reality is constituted in the interaction of subject and object -- the subject is only a necessary and not a sufficient aspect of reality. The alienation which is the dominating feature of contemporary society has a similar effect: as objects are seen to be the only things that are real, so the subject loses all of the objective dimensions of its own possible reality, which is to say the social ones. Social reality takes the form of what Adorno calls convention. To the extent that that reality is constituted for the subject in interaction with the other, it is understood as shared with other subjects, as being the same as for other subjects, and as proceeding from a collective subjectivity that shares an experience of reality. However, convention loses its real character and becomes instrument of control as totalization proceeds and the subject becomes alienated from the objective

aspects of his existence. In a totalizing world what were previously expressions of a collective subjectivity become metamorphosed into purportedly objective laws, fulfilling an ideological function for what Adorno calls the "culture industry."[25]

The dilemma forced on art takes on a further social aspect in light of the requirement for modernity. As we have seen, in order to mime the alienated reality of the subject, art is forced towards abstraction in the form of the uncompromisingly new, and so towards purging itself of the not new; which amounts to purging itself of the objective in the form of conventions (conditions laid down by the other, that is, society). The alternative, to avoid a disappearance into triviality, is to retain convention, and compromise modernity. An extreme instance of the denial of the objective and social side of reality is illustrated in the path taken by the expressionists. Adorno explains the fate of expressionism as an artistic movement:

> ...expressionism...completely curtailed the domain of the accessible; it represented a total refusal and finally terminated in something utterly trivial, like the screams or helpless gestures of Dada fame. The activists of the movement were...admitting to the impossibility of those artistic objectifications, which are postulated willy-nilly by every artistic expression.[26]

Expressionism carried radical modernity to its extreme, and extinguished itself as art when the objective in its art was removed, because there was no convention left in it, and thereby no "other" against which to constitute a reality, the experience of which could be mimed. Art can only survive as long as there is a residue of convention in the social dimension of experience which is genuinely real; as long, that is, as totality and the separation of subject and object is not yet complete.

II

Even if art cannot avoid its own nature as a social product, it is nevertheless under threat from another direction for the very reason that it is a social product. Art works have their potential being as art works by virtue of their waiting to be interpreted, and they thereby assume an audience, which Adorno implicitly views as an audience of more than one. Art in its very nature is a function of the collective subjectivity, because the subjectivity which is expressed in its form assumes a subjectivity which will interpret it. Conversely, the expression of subjectivity is assumed in the act of interpretation. Because an art work assumes an audience of many, the idea of the reproduction of itself is also, as he puts it, "inherent in art from its very

beginning."[27] Art in its objective character represents the use of technique to achieve such reproduction.

Technology, in Adorno as in traditional Marxist analysis, is a force of production: it is a thoroughly social phenomenon, representing the effect of the collective subjectivity on nature in the activity of producing. "The concept of productive forces...at the deepest level of technological processes is the subject itself. Technology is congealed subjectivity."[28] Productive forces are by their nature forces for changing reality; they represent the acting force behind the action in which reality is constituted, in the subject-object interaction. Technology, because it is the constantly evolving way in which activity manifests itself, represents a force in that it drives the production of new forms of reality. Art, too, is production; and as such it is also manifested in technological means.

However, for Adorno the aesthetic use of technological means has special consequences.[29] At the present stage in history, technology in art, by representing an ever-increasing mediation by "congealed" collective subjectivity, and through its concentration on rationally organized means, creates a tendency to separate the subject from its experience of the reality of art, that is to say, to objectify that reality. In

a commodified society, technology, in art as in industry, produces objects: which is to say that it works to dissolve the collective subjectivity in which it has its origin. This objectifying tendency of technology is the manifestation in the social sphere of the rationalizing tendency produced by the subject's efforts toward greater control of the materials of art. That rationalizing tendency effects the alienation of the subject from social (conventional) reality through its employment of technology. Art assumes the characteristics of an object because of the separation of collective subjectivity, as an aspect of the reality mimed, from the experience of the individual subject in the apprehension of the work. This has the further consequence that novelty in technique is a necessary aspect of modernity, since it is the manifestation of the drive for the alienating new which modernity represents.

Adorno takes technology in general to be a productive force which originates in subjectivity. In its social character as representing the effect of collective subjectivity, however, he sees it as constricted in the present age of total rationalization. The separation of the individual subject from the objective side in his experience of reality has the consequence that collective subjectivity, which was made possible by the immediate interaction of

subject and object, disappears, and with it the full potential of technological change. This is the inevitable consequence of the current relations of production, namely the rationalized organization of society for the production of commodities that are purely objective, quantifiable and divested of particularity. These relations of production, because they dissolve the collective subjectivity which would enable the realization of technology's full potential, ensure that technology achieves only what the alienated individual subject can do on his own, in response to the demands of the mysterious and omnipotent laws of economics. The experience of the individual subject is an experience of powerlessness in the face of the objective, which is understood as unchanging and beyond his grasp. This powerlessness of the individual subject through the loss of participation in the collective subjectivity represents what Adorno calls the confinement of the material forces of production,[30] by which he refers to technology's unrealized potential. Under such conditions the particular, the concrete that is realized in the interaction of subject and object, is to serve only as a representative of the universal; it has purpose as an instance of a commodity. The harnessing of technology in production serves the needs of industry to produce commodities, of values for exchange.

III

From the perspective of individual experience the need for modernism in art is driven, as we saw earlier, by the standard of authenticity, and by the need of the subject to act in order to continue to exist. The broader social dimension of the need for modernism in art arises from the nature of the society, namely in modernism's opposition to the relations of production in the form of commodity capitalism. The opposition does not derive from any consideration related to the conscious motivations of the artist, but from the mere fact of the activity of art. This activity is, as we saw before, one in which the objective side of the interaction has its inherently inescapable subjective component, because of art's mimetic character. The activity of art is constituted in the interpretation of a constellation of elements which does not have any reality except in the interpretation. One cannot have art that is merely an object, dwelling in a realm beyond the reach of the subject. Yet it is the experience of social modernity, in the alienation of the individual, that must be taken on and mimed in the activity of modern art. Thus, in its very modernism, art opposes: the truer the mimesis, the more the principle of the particular in the concrete reality of subject-object interaction is fulfilled, in opposition to the totalizing process of which it stores the experience.

Art, however, is threatened by the very nature of modernity, in that it tends, through the development of its technical means, to objectify itself, to present itself as having the same reality as other objects, as it becomes ever more rational and complex in its construction, devoid of convention, and foreign to interpretability. To the extent that authenticity is possible, art must oppose the totalization of society and the untruth of identity thinking, because the experience of the individual subject, which art mimes, must be real, in the sense of being constituted in subject-object interaction. To the extent that art fails to be authentic, it is because it conforms to the rationalizing ideology of the commodified society, reinforcing identity thinking and the separation of objects, as constituents of reality, from the subject, and presents itself as an object. In presenting itself as an object, it becomes a product of the culture industry:[31] that set of interests in totalized society which produces "art" (which is no longer art, but entertainment) according to strict rules of conformity which allow for uniform mass production: art as commodity. The culture industry manifests the end of art and the completion of totalization: its products are measured by their success as commodities, in the market; to that end they are as uniform as possible, and designed to sell as widely as possible. The rules that ensure that they do are the old conventions: what

was a means of maintaining a collective subjectivity has instead become, in the absence of a reality understood in the immediate interaction of subject and object, merely an objective quality of a commodity. The conventions become a means: on the one hand, to enhance the attractiveness of the commodity with the fossilized remnant of collective subjectivity; and on the other, an ideological tool to ensure the continued demand for that commodity.

History of Illusion

I

In **Philosophy of Modern Music** Adorno's central concern is to explain the historical change that has come over music in "the last thirty years."[32] To a large extent, however, that change reflects a more general historical development affecting all the arts: an alteration in the nature of human experience occurring in the course of the evolution from early to late bourgeois society. This change has taken place in the fundamental aspects of subject-object relationships which constitute human reality, and particularly the human reality which consists in the interaction between the subject and other subjects. The culmination of the trend is the present totalizing society; its roots, however, lie in the distinctive nature of the original bourgeois ideal.

For Adorno the distinguishing feature of the bourgeois age is the ascendancy of administrative reason as the exclusive means of comprehending reality, and with it the ideology which asserts that reality can be totally comprehended rationally. Some of the consequences of this ideology have been indicated above: identity thinking; alienation of the individual; and a threat to the possibility of art, because the proper practice of art tends to create circumstances which negate its existence. These are all aspects of the fundamental effect of universal rationalization, which is to separate the object from the subject, and to deny the reality of the subject in ascribing it to the object.

What Adorno takes to be the transition between the early and late bourgeois periods is marked by the expansion of the rationalizing tendency into more aspects of human life and society.[33] Human experience in the early period is characterized by the coexistence of a rationalistic understanding of reality -- as constituted in a rational (and separately metaphysical) objectivity -- with social relationships in which action by the subject is still possible. This is the character of the negative dialectic of the "heroic age" of the bourgeoisie: the ideal of an existence which is rationally guided (enlightenment) is to be striven

for through human actions, in order to conquer nature and alleviate human suffering, yet its ultimate thrust is to reduce all reality to quantity (that is, commodities), and to reduce the particular to an instance of the universal. Action is directed by beliefs that will ultimately render action impossible, because subject will be alienated from object, and the nature which surrounds the subject will no longer be human, but will have become commodified.

In Adorno's view, the early period of the bourgeois age is that in which the alienation which is an implicit consequence of rationalization is not complete. The Enlightenment is truly named, because it offers new ways in which human activity can master nature and provide more effectively than ever before for human needs. It is a period in which the forces of production are set free. Yet humanity in the Enlightenment ultimately depends on an illusion: namely, that the reality of the world is a metaphysical unity which can be completely comprehended rationally. It depends, in other words, on the identity thinking which understands the reality of objects as completely subsumable to their concepts, even while the individual subject continues to act as though he were part of a unified human reality containing others. Reality for the subject in this period has the illusory quality of being organic: everything, including others, is

united in an organized whole, yet it grows and evolves under the impact of individual actions which are fully real for the subject in the context of contact with objects. Reality is understood as both totally interconnected and dynamic.

The experience of humanity in this time is reflected mimetically in its art. The illusion of organicity -- of the consistent and unified relationships of dynamic and autonomous elements in reality -- is mimed by the concept of the art work: the art work is individual and autonomous, and at the same time gives the impression of being whole through the organized relationship of its material elements. In so far as those elements are chosen so that their purpose is relative to their place in the whole, they become subordinated, lose their particularity, and tend to disappear into the fabric of the work. The art work is constituted as a constellation, but with the critical qualification that, in this case, what is being mimed by the constellation is a whole of subjective expression that is rationally integrated. Elements in such an art must be chosen to allow this illusion to be sustained for subjectivity which understands its existence in social terms, in other words through conventions. The nature of these elements is therefore usually such that their distinctiveness is subordinate to the conventions which prescribe their place in the whole. Ideally, the elements of an art work disappear;

their importance is only as means to the maintenance of the consistency of the whole.

II

In contrast, the effect of materials which depart from conventional prescriptions is to assert their individual distinctiveness, and so to work against the illusion of an organic whole. Modernism, the requirement for the new, seeks precisely this effect, and is therefore in fundamental opposition to the ideal of the organic in bourgeois art. We saw that modernism is made necessary in art as a consequence of the alienation of the subject for whom art is made, and whose contribution is necessary to the event of the appreciation of a work of art. Hence, to the extent that alienation of subjects in society has progressed, and to the extent that reality has become commodified, the authenticity of art depends on its modernity.

This is not to say, however, that the art works produced during Adorno's "heroic age" lack authenticity because they are not modernistic. The best of them, on the contrary, constitute the most authentic mimesis of the reality experienced in their age. During that period, the alienation which is an implicit consequence of identity thinking has yet to set in: the reality experienced in that time is a striving

for integrity in the relationship between subject and object through rational guidance of action. Yet that very thrust, in its identity thinking, carries with it a conflict, between the particularity of the subjective existence in action, and the universality and stasis of a totally rationalized reality, which the identity thinking implies. The reality of the heroic age thereby implicitly carries with it the seeds of the forces which will change its character towards modernity. What Adorno would characterize as illusion is not the experience of the reality of that age, which is faithfully and authentically mimed in the best of its art. The illusion is instead the ideal of the unity of reality in a rational, that is, organic, whole; the social character of the actions it informs obscures the consequences of identity thinking which are to come. As Adorno puts it, art works of this period mime this reality in the illusion of their claim to being wholes.[34]

The essence of the historical change which takes place in art between the heroic age of the Bourgeoisie and the present totalizing world lies in the loss of the tenability of illusion. The change coincides with the alienation of subject from object, which is the reason for it. This is because the alienation of subject from object also entails alienation of subject from other subjects, which would "normally" (that is,

in a reconciled world where the subject's activity would truly be his) form part of the objective side of the interactions which constitute his reality. Alienation, in other words, also destroys the collective (human) aspects of reality, and in so doing, the possibility of participation which allows the illusion of an organic whole. For the alienated subject, reality can no longer be organic in Adorno's sense, because he is separated from the objects to which reality is now ascribed. Art too loses its collective character, since the reality which it mimes no longer has a collective aspect. With the advent of reified thinking, the illusion of the organic structure of art works is impossible to maintain, because the subject cannot interpret organic structure as miming reality in any way. The reality of the alienated subject does not include any collective aspect in which he participates, and therefore lacks the unity which could be mimed as organic. Art to him is an object like any other, an instance of the general type, to be used like any other commodity to satisfy a need. This is why for Adorno the appreciation of the art works of the past has also changed its character: they have assumed the status of commodities instead of the meaningfulness they once had. The alienated contemporary audience concentrates on the sensory character of fragments, such as passages of melody in music, because that is all that matters to it in its own isolated existence; it

cannot grasp the collective (human) significance of the work in its entirety. It is the fragments, sold in quantity, which compete for acceptance in the present-day music market:

> There is a sociological collective tendency which has burned out of the consciousness and unconsciousness of men that humanity which once lay at the foundations of today's residue of commercial music supply.[35]

While Adorno applies the foregoing analysis to all the arts, music is his specialty, and music is the exemplar of the arts which always lies behind his characterizations. Typically, the signposts of the historical change which is at the centre of Adorno's concerns in contemporary aesthetics are those of the history of Western music, in which Beethoven's career for him marks the turning point.[36] Adorno considered music to be the most characteristic art form of the bourgeois age,[37] and it is to music, and to its most basic convention, tonality, that we now turn, in order to approach the subject of this study, **Philosophy of Modern Music.**

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Chapter Three

PHILOSOPHY OF MODERN MUSIC

Status of Tonality (I)

I

In contrasting the compositional procedures of Schoenberg and Stravinsky, Adorno in **Philosophy of Modern Music** appeals to his dialectical acount of the conditions of reality in the modern world, in order to establish the basis for his comparison of the authenticity of the two composers' work. This basis lies for him in the relationship of musical tonality to the contemporary experience of reality; the theme of the demise of tonality as an authentic principle of musical art is the heart of the book. We shall therefore begin by examining his characterization of this relationship, before going on to examine its application to the works of first Schoenberg and then Stravinsky. Having once understood what Adorno takes to be the nature of tonality, we will then be able to grasp his view of its contemporary significance through its treatment at the hands of these two composers.

In the field of music Adorno sees the system of tonality as the central means by which the illusion of organicity is created. The term "tonality" refers to the various means of relating all of the tones in a musical art work to the key

note, a tone which forms the basis on which the rest of the structure of the work rests. For Adorno the essential feature of this system is that within it concrete elements have meaningfulness only in so far as their character implies relationships to other elements; in the apprehension of tonal musical works, that is, the distinctiveness proper to individual elements tends to disappear into a perception of the whole work:

> In great music such as Beethoven's, ..., the so-called primal elements unearthed by analysis are often eminently trifling. In fact, it is only when these elements approximate nothing that they, as pure becoming, congeal into a whole.[1]

A chord conforming to tonal rules, for instance, tends to appear (that is, to be heard) as a unity, rather than as a collection of simultaneously sounded notes, and any individual note within it tends to disappear into that unity. The chord itself, moreover, when properly employed, depends for its character on the context in which it is heard: a "progression" of chords is understood as a unity. Adorno, in contrasting the authenticity of tonality used in music of the "heroic age" with its inauthenticity in later periods, gives the example of a diminished seventh chord. The chord is correct and fully expressive when heard at the at the beginning of a particular Beethoven sonata, because it "defines the application of Beethoven's technique to that work"; its character disappears into that of the work. In the context of a tonal work, the

chord's significance lies in its implication of what is to come after. The same chord, employed for its separate sensuous appeal in a different context where its harmonic function is removed, sounds superfluous and thereby false when it occurs in later "salon music,"[2] because its tonal implications are not fulfilled. The rules of tonality function in order to define and preserve a sense of relationship between the elements of sound in music.

Tonal music, because it has the character of making its elements disappear into a seeming organic whole based on a single tone, presents an image of a completely rational objective reality. It is for this reason that the greatest music, in which ever more complete levels of organization and integration of individual elements are achieved, is for Adorno the art form most characteristic of the bourgeois age.[3] Music is uniquely abstract, in the sense that its understanding does not depend on external particulars in the manner of literature or representational painting, and at the same time attains its significance in being completely organized; the elements of which it is composed turn out to be trifling[4] when examined in themselves, and only become meaningful in the context of a constant code by which they are related. Tonal music mimes the ideal of enlightenment that the heroic bourgeois age strove for: an organic reality, rationally graspable, in which

the individual significance of the concrete particular disappears in favour of its relationship to the larger scheme of things.

The generalizing nature of rationalism was noted above, in the first chapter: the use of concepts to understand the world implies that everything is subsumable under them. Further, the generality of a "true" proposition implies for Adorno that the reality to which the proposition refers cannot change. Because the tonal system expresses in its conventions the bourgeois experience of striving for enlightenment, that is, for complete rational understanding of reality, it is subject to the consequence characteristic of all universal systems, namely that it be immutable. If music mimes this experience in its perceived necessity then music must also be understood to have an immutable essence, and this will lie in the aspect that enables music to mime the organicity of the bourgeois experience of reality, namely tonality.

Tonality is thereby taken by Adorno to be essential to music as it is understood by the bourgeois age. Its rules take the form of a derivation from the natural phenomenon of the overtone series, a set of tones bearing physical relationships, which are perceptible to the ear, to any chosen fundamental tone. Structural implications of any sound

element are measured by its distance from the fundamental tone compared to that of the overtones. The concepts of harmony and dissonance are also defined in terms of this comparison: a given element is dissonant in a tonal context by virtue of its corresponding to a high overtone in the series -- one which is distant from the fundamental. This is the equivalent of saying that such an element does not fit in; it draws attention to itself, rather than effacing itself in implying a relation to the fundamental. This derivation, taking the form of reasoned relationships between concepts, provides justification of the tonal system's claim to immutability.[5]

II

It is thus in the nature of the tonal system of musical organization that it consists of a set of rules, and that departures from these rules are regarded as dissonances: which is to say, occurrences that are inherently wrong or false. This is not to say that dissonances do not have a place in the traditional system of tonality, and indeed the tension they create is the source of much of the dynamic sense of movement in works of the period Adorno is describing. Their legitimacy, however, depends on their being "resolved," in the sense of the neutralization of their disruptive effect on the whole. However, it is in the character of the new that it stands forth as a departure from its surroundings, that its

disruptive effect is not neutralized. Hence modernity's requirement for the new, which is the consequence of the alienation of the subject, stands for Adorno in direct opposition to the most fundamental basis of tonality. The new is unknown by virtue of the fact that it does not serve a structural function in the whole and thereby disrupts the expectation of continuity. In the technical context of music this is to say that distant elements are not brought into relation with the lower overtones which are close to the tonic (the fundamental keynote of a tonal work), and thereby draw attention to themselves as unexpected, at the expense of the continuity of the whole. The appearance of the new is therefore that of unresolved dissonance. The new is an expression of singularity, of the concrete individuality of the single element, and resists participating in the unity of the work. In this way it opposes the tonal system, whose tendency is to reduce elements to insignificance as instances of the universal.

Now, Adorno uses terms like "illusion" and "convention" to describe tonality and its relationships; yet he also describes it as having been the valid reflection of the experience of the bourgeois age. This paradox points to the larger one in the condition of society of that time: even though the prevailing ideology assumed a reality which was

metaphysical and inhered in objects, which as we have seen leads to the alienation of the subject from his objects, and thus from other subjects, nevertheless this process was not complete. In fact society did function as a collective subjectivity, with a reality of social relationships which were based on a common understanding of conventions. The meaningfulness of tonal music depends on the interpreting subject's experience including that of other subjects. Tonality is social; it is both a convention and an expression of social experience. Because it is a convention, it can only be properly understood in the context of the social relationship, the common experience from which it arose. Once alienation has set in, it can no longer have that meaningfulness, no matter how fiercely the subject clings to the convention. Tonal music in the present age of alienation is no longer what it was, no matter how much it may seem the same. The illusion of an organic whole upon which such music depends for its meaningfulness does not have a shared basis of experience when the subject is alone. Instead it assumes the character of an independent commodified object.

Viewed in this way, tonality is seen by Adorno to carry within it the seeds of its own demise. The aspiration to enlightenment, which is expressed by the image of organicity that tonal works present, is the driving force of alienation

in society, and concurrently the organicity of such works drives them towards reification, as they more and more successfully seem to assume an independent existence that does not depend on the interpretive presence of the subject. However, because tonality is a convention, its continued use no longer reflects the common human experience which is its basis as a convention, and it loses its authenticity. The reality of the subject is now solitary alienation, and art purporting to mime collective subjectivity through the use of convention can no longer be authentic. Concurrent with its progressive loss of authenticity, the tonal system is undermined by the imperative of modernism which is brought about by the alienation of the subject. Seeking an authentic mimesis of the reality of the alienated subject, modernism, in its constant requirement for the new, makes departure from the convention inevitable, and so undermines the conformity to the rules of tonality on which the appearance of organicity must rest. Modern alienation is an inherent consequence of the aspiration to enlightenment which is expressed in the organic illusion of tonal musical works; modernism is the outcome of the evolution of that organic illusion as the works congeal into objects in response to the demands of reifying society, and concurrently attempt to maintain authenticity in reflecting the increasing separation of subject from object.

Total Development and the End of Musical Art

I

With the alienation of the individual subject comes the end of its participation in the collective subjectivity, and thereby the disappearance of the organizing function of the conventions constituting tonality. Without tonality, in the field of music the concept of the art work itself becomes problematic. The concept of an art work is based on the ability of the labouring subject to act in a social context to produce it, and on the principle of unity by which it mimes the organic unity of the reality in which the labouring subject exists. The subject, however, becomes autonomous, in Adorno's word,[6] when he becomes alienated: his labour is no longer performed in a social context, but rather as the outcome of autonomous aesthetic subjectivity. This means that the collective aspect of subjectivity which would have been expressed in the work as the organizing principle, tonality, no longer informs or limits the interaction of the subject with his materials. The consequence is that the organization of materials proceeds directly and completely from subjectivity, as construction. While construction objectifies art works, under these circumstances it also loses the aspect of completion by which it would mime an organic reality of subject - object interactions, because it lacks the principle of unity and closure, namely, tonality. Such a reality is now

in the past; the experience which is mimed by modern artistic activity is that of unsupported individuality separated from its objects. Artistic activity therefore becomes an effort to reconcile subject with object by creating objects out of itself which can be interpreted in light of the reality of alienation, as the expression of alienated subjectivity.

Adorno calls the result of such an effort expressionism, and because it opposes the tonal system in favour of autonomous aesthetic activity, for him its products are typically antithetical to the notion of an art work. The products of expressionism are modernistic; they aim for the individual and the distinctive. Their basic principle is of contrast rather than continuity, because contrast alone can mime the alienation which characterizes the subject's experience, while continuity is an illusion of shared experience. The work is an entity which depends on the appearance of continuity -- it aspires to be an organic whole in which all elements are important only in their relation to the whole, so that they flow into one another in constituting the whole. For the alienated subject, this can no longer be "real", because the appearance of continuity depends on the illusion of shared experience, and the reality of an alienated subject is precisely such that shared experience is impossible. The utterances of expressionism instead aspire to

contrast, emphasizing individual elements and breaking up the appearance of continuity.

However, the effort of the autonomous subject to organize music freely from within itself also requires that it impose its own control on the material. Therefore Adorno also takes the history of the gradual alienation of the subject to be reflected in the history of development, taking that word in the musicological sense which is used in analysis of the techniques of composition.[7] The term refers to the treatment of an originally presented theme, usually by varying it, which takes place in the middle section of a sonata-form movement. Adorno understands the musical development of a theme as subjective reflection (variation) on it, brought out in response to its implications in its original form (remembering that these "implications" depend on the convention of tonality for a context in which implication is a meaningful notion). The notion of thematic development contains both a principle of identity, because the theme does not disappear, and a principle of change, of evolution in time as the theme reappears in the course of being developed. These principles are in tension with each other, since the principle of identity is such as to tend to resist change, and change tends to erase identity. The historical increase in the extent of the occurrence of thematic development as an organizational

principle in works of music matches the movement of society toward alienation and totality: the producing subject's need to exercise overt control, and to impose his own rational organization on aesthetic objects, grows with his alienation and his inability to participate in a collective reality out of which tonally organized musical art previously sprang.

II

The history of thematic development as a focus of attention in musical form begins for Adorno with Beethoven. In his music, thematic development is confined to the middle section of sonata-form movements, in that the reprise on the whole maintains the identity of the originally stated theme. Nevertheless, the reprise is conceived and occurs as a consequence of the process of thematic development in the middle section. For the first time in the history of Western music, the unity and organicity of his works depends on the growth and metamorphosis of themes in the development sections of his sonata-form movements: that is, on the overtly subjective character of thematic development or variation.[8] In the compositions of previous ages what is now called the development section of the sonata-form piece had a more modest function, serving to experiment on the theme after its exposition in the initial section, and before its subsequent reprise.[9] The growth and metamorphosis of a theme in the

development section that began with Beethoven represents for Adorno the objectification of a unique and individual act of a subject; yet from Beethoven onward, such growth and development is the foundation of the unity of the work.

The illusion of universal rationality in the mimetic character of the unified musical art work thus depends on the intrusion of individual subjectivity in the form of thematic development. This relationship is for Adorno a paradox that drives the subsequent evolution of musical technique; the undermining of universality by the striking individuality of thematic developments spurs the effort to impose rationality and integration to recover the image of that universality. At a later stage, the effort towards greater subjective control led to continuous development of themes from the beginning, as in the work of Brahms,[10] which in turn accelerated the drive to novelty, individuality and modernism in music. The significance of the subjective character of thematic development is clear to Adorno: its increasing prominence in musical composition is symptomatic of the growing autonomy and alienation of the individual subject. The growth of thematic development is the historical change which represents the effort to compensate aesthetically for that alienation: as we shall see, both alienation and the growth of thematic

development reach their final and most complete stage in totality.

Ultimately, the exercise of such subjective control must tend to eliminate principles of organization that do not originate with the subject; as the alienation of the subject becomes complete, so also does the scope of its efforts to control the object of its aesthetic activity. It is for this reason that Adorno characterizes the culmination of musical history as "total development,"[11] which he sees realized in the twelve-tone music of Schoenberg. This music is a culmination of musical history not because thematic development can go no further, but because it reaches the point of discarding convention (tonality) completely. It thereby finally also discards the last vestige of the collective understanding of music, thus bringing it to an end as an art form capable of collective interpretation.

III

The twelve-tone music of Schoenberg can be characterized in its essentials as conforming to a system of compositional rules which are designed to avoid the appearance of continuity which is the aim of tonal music. The most important of these rules is that the basis of composition should be what is termed the tone row: a sequence in which all of the twelve

degrees of the western tempered scale are to be sounded, without the repetition of any one of them (except immediately without any other note in between, which counts as one occurrence). The row can also be sounded inverted, backwards, or backwards and inverted.[12] The two important features of this rule for our purposes are: first, that there is no repetition of notes; and second, that all of the twelve tones make up the row. Between them, these two characteristics ensure that the row does not function in the same way as a tonal melody or theme, because there is no centre around which a key (and thus an identity as a whole) can be perceived. Every sound, in a sense, is a surprise, and bears no relationship other than simple juxtaposition, to any other. Because all of the notes are contained in the row, no particular sound can carry with its occurrence an implication of another to follow. The row has no identity upon which this tonal expectation can be founded.

Music composed under twelve-tone rules brings together all of the tendencies that Adorno's account sees evolving through the recent history of music. It represents the final rejection of tonality through its systematic avoidance of the repetition of a given tone until all the rest of the twelve notes are sounded, since the too-frequent occurrence of one tone might begin to suggest a key, and thus a tonal basis for

the structure of the music. It represents a total degree of thematic development, in that it completes control of the materials of music by autonomous aesthetic subjectivity, as opposed to the conventions of the collective: everything now depends on the order of the row, which overtly originates with the will of the composer, indeed is "arbitrarily designated" by him.[13]

Prior to his elaboration of the twelve-tone system, Schoenberg had been composing in a style, loosely called "expressionism", that instinctively attempted to eliminate tonality, and to give objective form to individual, alienated, subjective states. One such piece, **Erwartung**, exemplifies Adorno's understanding of this penultimate period. It "develops the eternity of the second in four hundred bars,"[14] taking, so Adorno maintains, "the seismographic registration of traumatic shock"[15] as the technical structural law of music. That is to say (elaborating Adorno's metaphor), instead of taking the ideal of organic unity which is typical of tonality as a technical structural law, it attempts an open-ended succession of unconnected events in the manner of a seismographic chart, specifically avoiding implications between musical elements which might cause the trace to take on a pictorial quality, in which it might represent, say, a horse, or some other unity. The systematic nature of

Schoenberg's twelve-tone music takes it a historical step further than the anti-tonal expressionism of his earlier period, because it represents a total rationalization of the principle of contrast, and thereby achieves the greater degree of objectification. In twelve-tone music the illusion of organicity is finally dispelled, because there is no subordination of elements to one or other; all are equal and all are distinct. It is total musical organization without the illusion of a whole.

Through these qualities, Schoenberg's music represents the final position of musical art. The end of tonality means also the end of the convention which allowed the collective interpretation of musical art. In this situation, because subjectivity is reduced to singularity, there cannot be a collective basis for the interpretation of art by an audience, and musical art "as we know it", which is to say, in collective experience, is thus at its end. This is reflected, of course, in the incomprehension with which twelve-tone music is for the most part received. With the twelve-tone system music has arrived at the final stage of the process which alienation of the subject necessitates for art: the faithful practice of art, in miming the experience of reality of the human subject, creates conditions, in miming alienation, that render art in its interpretative character contradictory.

This is music without the collective illusion (tonality) which renders music interpretable.

IV

The lamentable situation we have described is the measure of the aesthetic authenticity of Schoenberg's compositions, and therefore of his artistic integrity. Integrity is understood by Adorno as the willingness to face up straightforwardly to the conditions necessary to producing authentic art. The art of integrity acknowledges, by miming it, the nature of reality for the interpreting subject and at the same time strives to maintain the autonomy of the subject by taking a critical stance toward that reality. Twelve-tone music has brought to their conclusion the tendencies of total development and modernism, in finally shunning tonality, which can no longer serve to mime current reality, and in its protest through modernism against the commodification of music into objects. It thereby represents the only possible authentic response of artistic integrity to the alienation inherent in today's totalizing society, and to the conditions of aesthetic activity which that has brought about.

Schoenberg's music is authentic for the specific reason that it embodies the mimetic aims of true aesthetic activity: it functions in being interpreted, and is to be understood as

being interpreted. Art, it is to be remembered, has its being for Adorno in subject-object interaction. The substance of this interpretation is a mimesis, of the condition of the subject in the present historical period: namely, the condition of alienation from the objects in action with which the subject's reality would normally be constituted. The most important point about this is that the aim is to mime and objectify (for interpretation) the subjective experience of reality, rather than to abdicate the aesthetic enterprise and submit to the demands of the totality (the postulate that all reality is an integrated, rationally comprehensible whole) by pretending to be an object, and therefore a commodity, in the whole, identifiable only as an instance of the general. Twelve-tone music is authentic on this account simply because it straightforwardly attempts to achieve these aesthetic aims. It is because of the nature of society at the present time that such aims can only be striven for through modernity, total integration, expression, and the ultimate rejection of the tonal illusion.

Further, the authenticity of twelve-tone music lies in the fact that it successfully embodies the conditions which doom great music as an art form. It represents the ultimate degree of subjective control over the elements of music, combined with the complete autonomy of those elements. Each

element is alien to the others: dissonance, in the sense of departure from a harmonious organic whole, has disappeared, since the whole, the illusion of which is maintained by tonal organization, has also disappeared. This is as far as modernism can go in music; to go beyond it is necessarily to fall back into procedures that are contrary to the imperative of modernism which follows from the alienated condition of modern reality. All of the notes in the scale are already used; to eliminate some would be to produce the impression of an implicit key, by giving the retained notes priority over those not used, and so to go back to tonality.

At the same time, subjective control by the composer has reached its maximum, because all elements and relationships are determined by him without the aid of conventions which are assumed to have an origin in some kind of natural necessity. That such a necessity has an objective basis is, for the dialectical understanding, an illusion; and such an illusion cannot be sustained as a valid part of a subject's reality when there is no social component to that reality. This is the case in the totally commodified and administered society of today, in which the subject is alienated from all his objects, including the basic human experience of other subjects. In its dialectic of total newness of every element against the mastering demand of complete integration of all

elements, twelve-tone music presents the image of the subjective condition, wherein all objects are distant, mysterious and surprising, but are nevertheless contained in the objective unity which is assumed to be the totality of existence. In contrast to the organic identities of tonal music, this is a unity which does not purport to include the subject, or any human relationships.

On the social level, twelve-tone music also represents the authentic artistic response to present-day conditions, because of its refusal to moderate its difficulty for the listener by returning to the use of conventions that would make it more marketable. The alienated listener in a commodified society no longer finds his reality in action; music therefore no longer has an aesthetic function in the sense we have been describing. Instead it becomes a purely objective commodity: it has no identity of its own, being merely an instance of the general; it functions as a commodity to satisfy a need while remaining essentially mysterious, rather than being the object of an aesthetic experience in which a reality is created through interpretation. Schoenberg's music, because of its difficulty which demands interpretation, cannot function in this way as a commodity, except for people who wish to give the appearance of musical sophistication for completely non-aesthetic reasons, and the

market for it is correspondingly small. In this way too, as the only possible authentically artistic music, these compositions mark the end of the history of great music as an art. The true practice of art dies out, as alienation, and the subsequent use of music only as a commodity, spreads through society.

Pseudo-tonality and Commodification

I

Implicit in Adorno's view of Schoenberg's work as the culminating instance of musical art is the premise that the only true and authentic music is that which generates its expressive qualities out of its own internal dynamics. For him, as we saw, it is the application of subjective reflection to the implications of the musical materials (as in thematic development) which generates meaningfulness in music; and this is why, with the onset of alienation in society, music can go no further, because tonality can no longer be sustained. Twelve-tone music is the vanishing cry of musical art precisely because it is the last historical point at which musical material can be assumed to have the implications upon which the meaningfulness of composition rests. In twelve-tone music the basis for that assumption disappears. The completion of subjective control over the material of the composition coincides with the completion of the alienation of

the subject and the extinction of the social basis (the convention of tonality) upon which the implications of musical elements are founded. This is, by the same token, the end of what Adorno calls dynamism in musical compositions; the simultaneous evolution (change over time) and maintenance of identity which for him constitutes the dynamism of an organic whole is also dependent on tonality.

"Expressive - Dynamic" music is one of two types of music ("modes of listening"), the other being "Rhythmic - Spatial", which Adorno identifies in **Philosophy of Modern Music.**[16] The distinction which he makes between them, in terms of their relationship to experienced time, has its significance in its bearing on the subject - object relationship in aesthetic experience. "Expressive - Dynamic" music

> has its origin in singing; it is directed towards the fulfilling domination of time and, in its highest manifestations, transforms the heterogeneous course of time into the force of the musical process.[17]

The domination of time is in fact the creation of the illusion of organicity in a musical composition: because the work both retains its identity and appears to evolve as the aesthetic subject apprehends it, the passage of time must appear to proceed from the structure of the music as it is experienced by the subject. For Adorno, this is what it is to organize musical materials. It is in the domination of time in musical

structure that the subjective aspect of the experience of musical art must reside if the work is to have musical meaning.[18] Time passes as the subject apprehends the continuity of musical structure, but for it to have continuity, time must be experienced as being regulated by that structure.

The second, "Rhythmic - Spatial", mode of listening is characterized in this way:

> The latter obeys the beat of the drum. It is intent upon the articulation of time through the division into equal measures which time virtually abrogates and spatializes.[19]

This is the type of musical experience in which the objective aspect is the source of the time consciousness in the apprehension of the music. It is the opposite pole of the "expressive - dynamic" type in that the course of the music is experienced as being regulated by measures dependent on the passage of time external to the music. The music, in other words, is understood only in its relationship to an invariant pulse which forms the skeleton of the musical structure.

In the terms of Adorno's aesthetics, "Rhythmic - Spatial" listening is the mode in which the subject abandons the domination of time, and with it the consciousness of its own input into the interpretation which constitutes the aesthetic

experience. The control of the aesthetic experience of this music passes to what is perceived as belonging to the objective realm, such as the physical movement of time, and the physiological requirements of the dance. Several consequences of this kind of musical understanding can be distinguished. One is that in this case tonality, as a series of organizing principles by which elements are related to one another, is superfluous. This is because here it is not the series of relationships of elements to one another in the apprehension of an organic whole which is interpreted as the musical experience. Rather, the succession of their separate positions in relation to the rhythmic pulse, and in juxtaposition to one another, is the object of interpretation. The unity of such a musical experience depends solely on the proximity of its moments in objective time. The disparate elements of such music could just as well be apprehended separately, like those of a painting, at separate times. The reality of their relationships appears to the listener to be independent and objective, because it does not seem to depend for its apprehension on subjective input; that is, on being interpreted. This is not to say that this music becomes totally unaesthetic (Adorno characterizes this dissociation as spatialization, in comparison with the art of painting); rather, it is the genuinely musical aspect which is lost. This succession of sounds becomes unaesthetic as music,

through lack of a unified aesthetic entity in time which can be interpreted as such subjectively.

II

The categories of expressive-dynamic and rhythmic-spatial music are viewed in their separateness by Adorno as primitive components, originating in song and dance respectively. It is his contention that great music actually was a synthesis of the two types:

> The unity of discipline [rhythmic-spatial] and freedom [expressive-dynamic] was conceived in the sonata. From the dance it received its integral regularity, and the intention regarding the entirety; from the Lied it received that opposing and negative impulse which, out of its own consequences, again produces the entirety. In so doing, the sonata fulfils the form which preserves its identity as a matter of principle - even if not in the sense of a literal beat, or tempo. It does this ... such ... that ... pseudo-spatial time ... coincides with the psychological time of experience in the happy balance of the moment. This conception of a musical subject was forcibly extracted from the realistic dissociation of subject and object.[20]

The sonata form is based both on tonal relationships and on the principle of juxtaposition. Part of the prescription of this form is that its two themes be in a specific key relationship to one another (in technical terms, "tonic" and "dominant"); but at the same time the subjectively reflective "development" section (again, in the musical technical sense), the middle section which for Adorno is of central importance

to the form, is required to depend at least in part on the implications of the contrast between the same two themes. It is the tension between the subjective input of thematic development and the intersubjective understanding of tonality on the one hand, and, on the other, the objectivizing demand of the given-ness of the contrast between the two themes, which is experienced as aesthetic in great music.

Despite the appearance of balance, however, it can be seen that the possibility of the genuine aesthetic experience of great music still depends most particularly on the validity of tonality, that is, upon the intersubjective sharing of the convention. Without tonality, the sonata is impossible. And in the present historical age, as we have seen, tonality is impossible, because the individual subject is alienated by the historical force of collective rationalization. Reality is no longer experienced as subject-object contact, but believed to reside mysteriously and externally in objects. Tonality has become the appearance of an object, rather than a principle of meaning shared between subjects. Therefore, for Adorno, the two modes of musical experience which were brought together in the sonata can no longer be experienced together:

> The two types are separated by force of that social alienation which separates subject and object. Musically, everything subjective is threatened by coincidence; everything which appears as collective

> objectivity is under the threat of externalization, of the repressive hardness of mere existence.[21]

By "coincidence" is meant the loss of the individual identity of objects (including aesthetic objects and other subjects) which belongs with the inherence of their reality in the process of subject-object contact. Objects become only instances of the universal in alienated society; their individual reality is a coincidence. The collective objectivity (tonality in music) which is founded on contact between subjects also disappears, because the reality of objects is withdrawn from contact and becomes external under the conditions of alienation. The means of bringing together the subjectively originating expressive-dynamic mode with the objective rhythmic-spatial mode is removed along with the collective objectivity, the reality of other subjects. Musical unity disappears as elements become merely existing objects.

III

We have examined what Adorno takes to be the consequences, under these circumstances, of the attempt to retain the subjective aspect of the aesthetic experience in modern music, in the twelve-tone music of Schoenberg and his school. The miming of the subjective experience of reality while attempting to increase subjective control of the

material results ultimately in a complete dissociation of elements in a context of "total development". This is the end result of following the dictates of, or rather, practising, the expressive-dynamic side of music. It represents the response of artistic integrity to these historical forces, because it retains the goal of a truly aesthetic experience in subject-object interaction. In it, the subject attempts to retain its true reality.

At the present stage of history, however, it is also possible to follow the path of the rhythmic-spatial mode of listening to music. Rather than attempt to retain the subjective aspect of the aesthetic experience through ever-greater control of materials in thematic development, music can respond instead by denying the subjective aspect of experience, and present itself as an object having its own existence independent of the subject. This is the effect of the rhythmic-spatial mode of listening, as we saw above (page 82 &ff.), and it represents the opposite pole of response from that of total development. In contrast to the progressive character of attempting to respond to the forces of history by further activity (expressionism, the active effort to control musical materials), this response is regressive, in that it attempts to avoid historical reality by going back to a more primitive form. Indeed, it avoids any historical

understanding of reality in its presentation of an unchanging and remote objective world. The experience of this kind of music is such that the subject is compelled to follow and conform to an external reality,[22] rather than contributing to the mimetic interpretation in subject-object interaction which constitutes true aesthetic experience.

The falsehood of accepting rhythmic-spatial music as musical art lies in the fact that listening in this way constitutes an aesthetic experience that denies itself. The objectivity of this music is still a matter of how it is interpreted by the subject; but the subject must interpret it by denying its own reality of subject-object interaction, despite the fact that it is in this context that the interpretation occurs. Because the social basis (tonality) of subjective input into music is lost, this denial and immolation of the subject in the pretence of objectivity is seen by Adorno as the alternative to the Schoenbergian solution, namely, the extreme of subjective expression and the disappearance of the work in total development. In neither case can the illusion of an organically dynamic entity, developing subjectively out of its own implications, be maintained.

IV

For Adorno, the histcrical movement toward regression to the rhythmic-spatial mode of listening has its roots in part in the French tradition, and in Wagner's influence upon the French tradition; it reaches its polar extreme in the music of Stravinsky. In contrast to the unified technical description[23] which can be given of the essentials of Schoenberg's twelve-tone system (see page 72 &ff.), the philosophical essence of Stravinsky's music, for our purposes, can only be described in terms of a series of specific characteristics, consistent in their effect, which obtain throughout his corpus. This in itself illustrates the point, that his music tends against thematic development, to the dissolution of all means by which the illusion which constitutes musical art can be sustained.

Among many distinguishing features of Stravinsky's music, one that most listeners will immediately recall is its rhythmic aspect. Consistent with Adorno's type of the rhythmic-spatial mode, there is nearly always a strong regular pulse in this music. Complex rhythmic melodic patterns which would tend to obscure the pulse, and to take over the sense of psychological passage of time (that is, subjectivize it in the unity of a melody) are avoided. If the composer's word were not enough[24], the music tends in itself to discourage

departures (of the kind euphemistically known as "interpretation") from a strict keeping of time in performance. In contrast to the complex and delicate rhythmic character of the twelve-tone music of Schoenberg, Stravinsky's music has a clock or machine-like regularity. Works as diverse as **The Rite of Spring**, **The Wedding**, or the **Serenade in A** for piano would not be recognizable without this aspect. Because it is governed by this regularity, the music appears as an external, immutable object when apprehended; the beat which forms the backbone of the music's coherence comes from the objective, metaphysical world, to which the subject has no necessary connection. The subject does not understand itself as having contributed any aspect of interpretation to its essential nature. The experience of the music does not present itself as aesthetic, but rather as the same sort as the experience of an object.

Syncopation, the misplacing of the principal beat of the measure (typically, by emphasizing the beat which follows the one on which emphasis would normally fall), is a device employed to the utmost possible degree in works such as **The Rite of Spring**. It fulfils two objectivizing functions. Even though it works against the regularity of the tempo of the music, it nevertheless does the opposite of dominating the external time process. Rather than create a consciousness of

psychological time proceeding from the structure of the music, by avoiding a sense of pulse through complex rhythmic figures, syncopated music actually emphasizes the objective pulse in missing it, by showing where the main beat should have been. The syncopated notes still fall upon the regular pulse, only with asymmetrical accents. The consciousness of the steady, "objective" measured passage of time is thereby emphasized, rather than the subject being given freedom to interpret time as proceeding from the structure of the music.

While reinforcing the consciousness of external time, syncopations also have a disruptive effect on any sense of continuity arising during the experience of the music. Because they surprise, they are experienced as blows ("shocks" in Adorno's terms) coming from outside. The objective world in its separate mysterious existence intervenes, and prevents the possibility of the growth of a sense of continuity resulting from the logic of the music's own dynamism. The subject cannot exert the control of interpreting the music in an aesthetic experience, because the external world keeps breaking the continuity. The music is presented as an object obeying the laws of external reality, rather than an aesthetic phenomenon whose reality consists in the interpretative interaction between subject and object.

V

The breaking-apart (and thereby spatializing) of the elements of music by the devices of regular pulse and syncopation is reinforced by the harmonic characteristics of Stravinsky's music. Chords function as entities on their own, for their sensuous value, rather than for their transitional implications; they are related only by juxtaposition, like colours in a picture.[25] They are not linked, in other words, by the traditional rules of harmony. In this, Stravinsky follows the principle first enunciated by Debussy: in composing, one does not ask of a chord or harmonic complex where it leads, but rather how long it can be maintained.[26]

The dissociation of harmonic elements is congruent with the general characteristics that we have seen in modern music, in that it interrupts the continuity, and the illusion of organicity, that is implicit in traditional tonal harmony. Stravinsky's is truly modern music. However, in the music of Stravinsky, the case is different from that of Schoenberg, not only because the individual elements of the composition do not arise from the developing internal logic of the materials, but also because these chords in fact individually consist of tonal combinations, drawn, more or less, from notes which would all belong in a certain key. They nevertheless do not "go anywhere" - their implications are not followed up. As

Adorno puts it, "Stravinsky's harmony always remains in a state of suspension, thus evading the gravitation of the step-by-step progression of chords."[27] The music, for him, pretends to preserve the illusion of tonality, even though it fundamentally disrupts that illusion. It is "music about music:"[28] music which presents an image of harmony, rather than actually embodying it in its progression. This is Stravinsky's response, from the point of view of harmony, to the change in the act of listening which has come about because of the alienation of the subject in society.

Adorno sees the dissociation of harmonic elements in Stravinsky's music as functioning in two ways to present the music as objective. It is on the one hand thoroughly modern, in that it functions through the juxtaposition of elements in time, denying organic connections between them (which is the same effect produced by the rhythmic regularity described above). The subject is removed from any considerations of the reality of the music; these harmonic colours are to be seen as objects with independent existence, and the subject has no role through his interpretation in any connection they may have. On the other hand, the subject is actively invited to treat the music as commodity rather than art, by the music's pandering to conservative taste through the appearance of tonal harmonies. Both ways, the subject is brought to treat

an aesthetic experience as though it is not aesthetic (and thereby make it not); he interprets the experience of music as that of an object to whose reality he has no relevance.

Another technical characteristic can be briefly mentioned as contributing to the objectifying effect of Stravinsky's music. Melodic elements, in the same way as harmonic, break the continuity of tonal implication that they might have had, while maintaining the appearance of being tonal:

> The melodic particles out of which any particular section of **Sacre** is constructed are for the most part diatonic in nature, their accent is folkloristic.... These particles are never "atonal" - never a fully free succession of intervals without reference to a previously established scale.[29]

The melodic elements, in other words, are short motifs from which, in traditional music, a theme might be constructed (or "developed"). The term "diatonic" refers to the fact that the motifs are derived from the notes of one or other of the two scales, Major and Minor, that are the basis of traditional tonal music. The implications that these elements might have, however, are not pursued in Stravinsky's music; instead of being presented again in the varied form that would result from subjective reflection upon them, they are simply repeated, or changed in a mechanical fashion through the superimposition of overlapping rhythmic patterns. What Adorno takes to be the effect of such procedures is to "thwart"

thematic development in the sense of subjective contribution to the aesthetic appearance of organic growth. Instead, the impression of an object is reinforced by such changes as there are in the melodic elements seeming to proceed from a "game of chance;"[30] the essence of these elements has nothing to do with subjective input, and comes entirely from outside.

VI

In the field of music as elsewhere, conservatism -- listening which rejects the modern -- betrays the loss of the subjective component in the aesthetic experience. The alienated listener in Adorno's commodified society can no longer find his reality in action; music therefore no longer has an aesthetic function in the sense we have been describing. The historical subject through whose experience of collective subjectivity tonal music was understood as meaningful no longer exists; that experience is in the past. To insist on listening only to music which consists of tonal harmonic and melodic relationships is for Adorno to treat music as a commodity, as an object to satisfy a need, because the subjective aspect which made the experience aesthetic has vanished. The experience of meaning that goes with listening to tonal music, with its presumption of the experience of other subjects, is no longer possible.

In the end, according to Adorno, Stravinsky's response to the present historical situation is to give the listener a commodity[31] which will seem to satisfy his desires, rather than to soldier on trying to meet the impossible conditions of aesthetic experience. New music which has the appearance of being tonal, without actually functioning in the same way, will do just as well as tonal music, because the meaningfulness of truly tonal music can no longer be experienced as a living art form anyway. Hence the market value of the individual sounds of tonality -- because they seem to preserve the lost possibility of musical aesthetic experience. By working to present itself in every possible way as an object by preventing the participation of the subject in interpretation, and at the same time functioning to make the object attractive and understandable as such, the music constitutes itself as a successful commodity. Stravinsky's compositions work completely against the aesthetic aspect of musical experience, in order to function in this way as commodities. In their opposition to Schoenberg and the goal of authentically artistic music, these works also mark the end of the history of great music as an art. Again, for Adorno, the true practice of the musical art is dying out,

as alienation, and the subsequent use of music only as a commodity, spreads throughout society.

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Chapter Four

CRITICAL REFLECTIONS

Status of Tonality (II)

I

The foregoing has attempted to clarify the two central claims that Adorno makes in **Philosophy of Modern Music**. The first is that the era of great music is probably over; that musical art was a form that was only possible under certain historical conditions that now no longer obtain. The second is that there is a continuum of responses by composers to this historical change, a continuum that is defined by the compositional procedures possible under present conditions, and measured in terms of the aesthetic authenticity of these procedures. The two poles of this continuum are represented in the music of Schoenberg (the most authentic response) and Stravinsky (the most inauthentic). These claims raise many issues, but we will in this chapter examine a question regarding the precision of his notion of tonality, and try to indicate the consequences of this question for his views, on the fate of musical art and on the general condition of humanity in society.

The central idea underlying Adorno's view of the present state of the musical art is his concept of tonality, and in

particular his concept of its position in the aesthetics of music. His contention seems to be that musical art is no longer possible because the historical conditions of the time no longer permit the illusion of organicity, or connectedness of musical elements, upon which truly musical art is founded. The authenticity of the response depends on the degree to which the goals and functioning of composition are truly aesthetic: that is, the degree to which compositions aim to be truly musical art. Since tonality is the means of producing the illusion of organicity, it appears also to be the measure both of the possibility of musical art, and of the authenticity of composers' efforts in present historical circumstances. It is appropriate to consider, therefore, what Adorno in fact understands by tonality, and examine its place in relation to his musical aesthetics.

A clue to the tension in Adorno's treatment of tonality lies in his attitude to the work of Béla Bartók. Undoubtedly he would place Bartók's music somewhere towards the Schoenbergian pole on the continuum, and Bartók is consistently mentioned with approbation in the book.[1]

Nevertheless, Adorno's very considerable musical erudition does not permit him to completely pass over the fact that Bartók's music, however radical in its superficial appearance, is tonal in the sense that it always is related to a keynote.

The following passage from a footnote is quite striking in view of the general outlook expressed in **Philosophy of Modern Music:**

> In cases where the developmental tendency of Occidental music has not been purely developed - as in many agrarian regions in south-east Europe - the use of tonal material has been permitted down to the most recent past. .... Janáček and Bartók come to mind. Janáček's art is extra-territorial, but nonetheless magnificent.... Many of Bartók's compositions, in spite of his folkloristic inclinations, are nonetheless among the most progressive in European musical art. The legitimation of such music on the periphery lies foremost in its ability to formulate a technical canon which is in itself both correct and selective. ... truly extra-territorial music (the material of which, even though it is familiar, is organized in a totally different way from that in the Occident) has a power of alienation which places it in the company of the avant-garde....[2]

When he says that it is "permitted", Adorno means, of course, that it is possible to authentically use tonal material; "the most recent past" is directly contemporary with the period of Schoenberg's first twelve-tone compositions. He would seem here to wish to argue, both that tonal music is no longer valid (or authentic) in Occidental music, and that it is legitimate in the music of Bartók and Janáček (instances of European musical art). As the quotation makes clear, the tonal element in the latter two cases is not an impurity, an element of inauthenticity in music that would otherwise be as authentic as that of Schoenberg. Rather, this music's legitimacy lies in its ability to formulate a (tonal)

technical canon (by which Adorno means a system of technical means for construction: rules, in the same sense as Schoenberg's twelve-tone system) that is in itself correct, because it consistently embodies and develops the musical material. That is, its legitimacy seems for Adorno to stem directly from its tonal element.

Adorno's defense of the latter claim hinges on the fact that these two composers represent traditions outside of the mainstream of Occidental music (from Hungary and Czechoslovakia respectively); they are "extra-territorial." The difference in construction (from Western music) that is inherent in these traditions allows the composition of tonal music that is consistent and develops from implications inherent in the musical material itself, even though tonal music can no longer be valid within the Western tradition. For all its foreignness, however, this music is the property of the western tradition as much as that of Beethoven or Schoenberg. No matter what its origin, for Adorno it is implicitly to be heard from the perspective of the Western European listener. He makes this clear when he refers to Bartók's music, both here and elsewhere,[3] as "the most progressive in European musical art".

II

The geographic focus is a critical issue. If Adorno is referring to a general notion of western music when he wishes to assert that great music can no longer be composed, then he must account for the success that he allows as having been achieved by Bartók,[4] expressly within the confines of that tradition. Otherwise, he may only be describing an historical misfortune which has befallen the music of a particular segment of Europe, namely that of the German-Austrian tradition. If the latter is the case, the claim that the argument applies to the possibility of any great music becomes doubtful. The question hinges on what Adorno is referring to when he discusses the implications of the demise of tonality, that is, the demise of those conventions which alone allow the illusion of organic growth. Bartók's music is very "progressive", according to Adorno, but that achievement takes place in a tonal context. The illusion of organic growth would seem to be successfully maintained, even though the progression that Adorno has been describing is precisely away from the conventions of past great art -- and its accompanying illusion -- towards the end-point of total development, total independence of musical elements, and the end of musical art.

The reason that Adorno considers tonality no longer to be legitimately aesthetic is that the human experience which is

mimed by tonal music presupposes a collective subjectivity: an experience of other subjects as part of the reality that inheres in the interaction of subject and object. In the present historical conditions, the rationalization of reality has meant that it is no longer experienced in this moment, but is understood to reside in an immutable world of relationships between objects. The subject under these conditions loses the possibility of direct experience of the objective world, including experience of other subjects. Aesthetic experience is of a particular subject-object interaction, and of interpretation supplied by the subject in that interaction. Mimesis, and meaningfulness, in art is a matter of the interpretation applied by the subject out of his experience of reality; if that reality cannot include experience of other subjects, then it cannot include conventions that depend on such experience for their validity. If tonality is a convention that creates the illusion of organic continuity in music, then that illusion can only be sustained if the convention can. The convention depends on the experience of shared understanding that is only possible with the experience of other subjects. To employ the convention under conditions in which the experience of other subjects is not possible is to pretend a mimesis of an impossible experience: an interpretation which the subject cannot make.

If, then, Adorno is referring to tonality in Bartók's music, is he referring to such a convention? It is a different convention, of course, from that of Western Europe; but could it be meaningful to western listeners? If the experience of collective subjectivity is understood as that of the peoples of the periphery, and not that of the German-Austrian centre, then it is entirely possible to accept that the alienation of the subject might not have yet completely spread to these peoples at the present stage of history, and that great music might still be possible for them. However, Adorno's claim would appear to be that great music was a unique feature of the bourgeois society that is now being described as having become alienated, and as having lost its capability of truly aesthetic music. Perhaps musical art in the periphery is doomed when the commodification of these societies is complete, but the point is still that it is a different, internally consistent technical canon that is to suffer this fate. To argue that Bartók's music is anachronistic, representing an earlier stage in the demise of tonality, is still to allow that tonality used aesthetically may take a different form from that of the German-Austrian tradition, particularly when this music is accorded the highest level of quality and legitimacy, by a listener judging from the point of view of that German-Austrian tradition. This is inconsistent with the claim that to attempt tonal

music in the present age is a symptom of aesthetic decline because it does not and cannot conform with the conventions of that tradition. The diminished seventh chord[5] we mentioned earlier is false when employed in salon music, because it cannot have the correctness, when used for the sake of effect (that is, in a different functional context), that it has at the beginning of a Beethoven sonata. Surely, however, a similar chord, if it occurred in a Bartók piece, would be likely to be understood, in its different functional context, as correct. Adorno's answer would probably be that in the first instance the chord was no longer in a functional context, but being paraded for its *own* sake, and that in functioning this way, as non-aesthetic objectivity, it did not have the truly aesthetic mimetic power of alienation. Nevertheless, the fact remains that Bartók's music, in its tonality, and by virtue of its tonality, is claimed to have aesthetic legitimacy.

III

To assert that the power of alienation of extra-territorial music places such music in the avant-garde, even though tonal materials are permitted, is to encounter the same problem from a different perspective. If one sets aside the fact that to argue that this music is in the avant-garde might vitiate the contention that it is anachronistic, one is still

left with the question, for whom does the music have the power of alienation? As was discussed in the context of modernity in general, art must seek the new, in order to mime the experience of alienation. The essence of the new is that it is unknown; as we saw, this is completely contrary to the meaningfulness supplied by convention, and the effort to reconcile these opposites has driven the progressively greater integration of musical materials referred to as total development. The implication might be that "extra-territorial" music fulfils its function of miming alienation simply by virtue of its foreignness: regardless of its origin, or regardless of the meaningfulness that it may have for its native audience, this music's meaningfulness for an alienated Western European consciousness lies in its being unknown.

This, however, would be to misrepresent Adorno by oversimplification. In listening to Schoenberg, it is not the initial experience of total incomprehension which constitutes the legitimation of the musical endeavour. Rather, a complete understanding of the technical aspects of a piece, and how it separates and makes equal all of its elements, is a necessary component of the aesthetic experience of Schoenberg's music. The alienation of complete incomprehension is not a part of aesthetic experience, but rather a simple case of a mystifying object that is not understood. The aesthetic experience of

Schoenberg's music is of alienation, mimed in the independence of individual elements within a coherent structure of total development, and understood in the interpretive contribution of the subject to the aesthetic moment. It represents the probable end of musical art for three reasons: total development can go no further, if it is total; the breakdown of relationships between elements can go no further, if all are completely independent; and no further interpretations beyond alienation can be contributed by the subject, if it is totally alienated. The audience in the sense of those who can share a truly aesthetic common interpretation of a work has become vanishingly small, because all subjects are alienated; at the same time, the illusion of organicity that would have been the substance of that common interpretation reaches its final dissolution in the complete independence of elements.

It is almost certainly the case that Adorno would apply a similar analysis to the music of Bartók. The characteristics of this music include an extremely tightly controlled developmental organization, and a use of elements that gives them a great deal of independence. This is music that requires, as does Schoenberg's, a great deal of effort of understanding, and which is quite radical in its treatment of European tonal conventions. By virtue of the latter aspect, it can be considered to have considerable power of alienation,

in Adorno's phrase, by which he means the ability to convey an aesthetic experience of alienation. Nevertheless, it is tonal, and it is legitimate by virtue of its formulation of a technical canon both correct and selective. The course of the music (in other words) arises from the implications of the materials, and, since these are tonal, it must thereby be interpretable as an organic whole. This would seem to imply either that there is some degree of common understanding between subjects (some sustainable convention), or that some kind of truly aesthetic experience of tonal music is possible for the alienated subject. Bartók's music certainly maintains tonality through "unconventional" means: for instance, folkloristic melodic materials, exotic scales and incessant hammering repetition of key notes.[6] Nevertheless, there would probably be no disagreement from Adorno that Bartók's compositions constitute genuine developments of the internal implications of tonal materials, and genuinely interpretable works of art.[7]

In summary, Adorno seems to be working with two different conceptions of tonality: one, the "closure" referred to by Schoenberg,[8] defined through its maintenance by means of a set of conventions derived from the German-Austrian tradition, which constitute the only means by which music can be understood and interpreted by a collective subjectivity; and

the other, relationships to a key note which can be maintained through a broader range of means, and whose audience may be able to interpret it aesthetically, even though afflicted by the general alienation of its society.

IV

The problem of geographic focus and the nature of tonality also surfaces in Adorno's treatment of the recent French tradition. The suggestion of ethnocentricity which we noted in connection with Bartók's music is more distinct in his discussion of Debussy; the procedures of the latter composer are portrayed as representing a stage of decadence in musical art which Stravinsky built upon and brought to its conclusion in the final denial of that art. The nature of the decadence is of central importance to Adorno's argument: the suspension of musical time-consciousness in favour of the separate and independent presentation of musical elements as colours. Yet at the same time we see in the presentation of the argument a strong sense of the foreignness of Debussy's music:

> Anyone who has been schooled in German and Austrian music and who has listened to Debussy will be familiar with the experience of frustrated expectation. Throughout any one of his compositions, the naive ear listens tensely, asking whether "it is coming"; everything appears to be a prelude, the overture to musical fulfilment, to the organic resolution of the Abgesang - which, however, never arrives. The ear must be re-

> educated if it is to understand Debussy correctly, seeking not a process of obstruction and release, but perceiving a juxtaposition of colours and surfaces such as are to be found in a painting. The succession simply expounds what is simultaneous for sensory perception: this is the way the eye wanders over the canvas.[9]

It is striking that the "naive ear" should belong to the person schooled in German and Austrian music: as though musical expectations were by definition those derived from the German-Austrian tradition. It is precisely in the "undynamic nature"[10] of French music that Adorno maintains that the roots of Stravinsky's dissociation of time are to be found. Further, it is the very goals and accomplishments of Debussy's music that are characterized as decadent. The ear must be re-educated, but not to the extent of a different understanding of what music is. The development of a spatial perspective in music (imagery and colourism of separated elements without organic connection) is "testimony of a pseudomorphism of painting": a "victory of genius in painting over genius in music", submitting to the positivistic trend of the entire age.[11] For Adorno, this development of a spatial perspective in music is, at its innermost core, the abdication of music.[12]

The most important point about this attitude to Debussy is what it reveals about Adorno's view of the essence of music in relation to tonality. For him, the essence of greatness in

music lies in its domination of the subjective consciousness of time. Music which creates and sustains the collective illusion of organic progress in time demands interpretation as creating and dictating its own time. "All music purports a becoming."[13] For Adorno, to understand music aesthetically is to understand it as independent of any objective measurement of the passage of time. This is the aesthetic experience of the expressive-dynamic mode of listening, as opposed to the rhythmic-spatial mode, in which objective time obtrudes itself, breaking up the sense of the unity of the work deriving from the moment of subjective interpretation. It is to be noted that tonality is not a precondition of the rhythmic-spatial understanding of music: dance is perfectly possible to the beat of drums, in which no relationships of pitch need exist. The production of subjective time-relationships from within the musical materials is the essential province of the expressive-dynamic mode; and all possible means for the production of these time-relationships coincide with all artistic musical means: "transition, intensification, the distinction between the field of tension and the field of release, further of exposition and continuation, and of question and answer".[14] This list of all artistic musical means is also a list of the technical desiderata of tonal composition in the German-Austrian tradition; the music of Debussy is impoverished (as music)

because it consists of perpetual suspension. It would seem that the conventions of tonality define what is essentially musical in Adorno's view, and that tonality here is taken in the narrower sense of the rules originating in the German-Austrian tradition.

The Condition of Musical Art

I

If Adorno's description is found to be ethnocentric, this is not to say that it is also inconsistent or incorrect. The view that the only great music is that of the German bourgeois tradition described by Adorno is not unique to him, or to Germans, for that matter. But this is not just a question of competing subjective judgments. Rather, the issue revolves around the validity of the characterization of truly musical aesthetic experience as that made possible only by the conventions of tonal relations which are in turn only possible in collective subjectivity, and which comes to an end with the end of collective subjectivity in alienated society.

Several features of the discussion to this point should be noted. One is that there do seem to be exceptions that Adorno will allow to the rule: Bartók's music, while being tonal, seems to be able to achieve a truly musically aesthetic status in Adorno's view, as miming the alienation of the

modern listener. Another is that the aesthetic character of rhythmic-spatial music, which reaches its extreme in Stravinsky, is not denied. If certain music is a pseudomorphism of painting, it is still allowed the aesthetic character of painting; it is only as music that it is false aesthetically. The subject, even though his connection to the experience of the work might be denied in interpretation, still has an interpretative interaction with it.

The question of the end of musical art thus rests, again, on whether the tonality of western (German-Austrian) convention is the only means by which music can be truly aesthetic as music. And this in turn rests on the contention that the subjugation of time in the experience of tonal musical organization is what constitutes the essence of music. It is reasonable that any characterization of the essence of music should involve time-relationships of some kind; sound can only be heard as a progression in time. Nevertheless, there does not seem to be any intrinsic force in the claim that relationships of the kind that Adorno describes as obtaining in the music of Stravinsky should be understood as non-musical, or anti-musical, simply because they can no longer reflect the collective subjectivity that went into the tonal understanding of the bourgeois age. If music of this sort presents itself as objective, still it is in the subject-

object interaction that this is understood. There is still a distinction between the relationship between subject and a simple object, and that between the subject and a work of art presenting itself as an object. The work of art still must be interpreted as such, even though the understanding of it is ultimately as an object.

If this perspective is adopted, it seems entirely possible to accept that the kind of musical art represented by the classical German tradition is at an end, and that it was only possible during the "heroic age of the Bourgeoisie", before the onset of the total commodification of (Western European) society, without drawing the conclusion that this is the case for all musical art. In the end, even if one accepts that Stravinsky's music does function in the way that Adorno describes, then to characterize it as sterile, or infantile, is still to add the perspective of the ear schooled in the German and Austrian tradition. For all the elaborateness of his historical explanation, Adorno's judgement is still founded on that schooling.

An alternative judgement is possible given the same set of explanations: namely that the rhythmic-spatial mode of musical listening has become dominant in the totalized society of the alienated subject. Music functions as a commodity, and

its availability is determined, like other commodities, by the market. Nevertheless, it can still be interpreted with understanding as a work of art, although only in a way appropriate to the alienated subject; namely as object, and as a mimesis of the relationship of alienated subject to object. Certainly, Stravinsky's music might be accurately characterized as music about music:[15] it could be said to "represent" other music, to refer to other music, or to present an image of it or harmonic structure in general. Nevertheless, that does not foreclose Stravinsky's greatness in a newer context of judgement (that of an alienated, totalized society), nor does it foreclose the potential of great music to develop into yet newer and more different forms. Adorno, while asserting that the dialectical confrontation with time is the essence of great music, at the same time continues to refer to Stravinsky's work as music. He would seem to want to assert that Stravinsky's work is less musical, by showing that it is less of the expressive-dynamic type.

This is not necessarily an inconsistency, if one accepts Adorno's framework of judgement, namely that it is the expressive-dynamic mode of listening which is the basis of musicality. The problem arises when he allows that music may exist in other forms (Stravinsky's work is understood to be

music throughout the book), yet lays exclusive claim to greatness for music of the one type he describes as typical of the period which has ended. Greatness is a term that carries a claim to universality with it; to use it in the way that Adorno does is to insist that there will be no music that can be called great ever again, because for the rest of history any music that is made will be inferior. This is to assert a primacy for the standards of the Germanic music of the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries that cannot possibly be guaranteed in a world in which everything without exception evolves in response to historical forces. It is with this in mind, no doubt, that Adorno is consistently tentative in his judgement that great music may no longer be possible, even though he is clearly convinced it has come to an end.

This difficulty is illustrative of a general feature of the Marxist analysis, namely the place of valuation in judgments made under that analysis. One of the most basic aspects of the Marxist view we have described is that "reality", the nature of existence as it is realized in the subject's action upon nature and objects, is historical: it changes as a result of action. There is, in other words, no unchanging metaphysical reality, even if that is what the subject believes. This applies equally to judgments of value, including aesthetic value. What constitutes greatness in art

must evolve with the character of human existence, and judgments of it only reflect the standards of the historical time. Thus, even though they must nearly always purport to be grounded in essential truths (in other words, they fulfil an ideological function in their context), judgments of value cannot have an absolute basis of any kind. To assert a judgment is merely to assert a particular historical standard, and as such, really to make an assertion of fact. As was suggested, Adorno in this light can be seen to be applying a standard based on the very German-Austrian tradition whose demise he is describing. Current developments will very naturally be negative from that point of view; despite his contempt for the conservatives who reject any departure from the rules, he is in the most subtly fundamental way in their company. That is, Adorno, while he berates such listeners for pretending that the world is such that it can be represented in art which follows the norms of the old German-Austrian tradition, when it really is not, nevertheless simultaneously adopts those same standards (and presumptions of exclusively objective reality) in making the judgment that great art is no longer possible. The German-Austrian tradition is for him, as for them, the only possible source of great musical art; however Adorno, the most sorrowful and uncompromising of conservatives, insists that it is now defunct. Despite the pessimism[16] which this book articulates, it seems likely that

greatness in music will be seen again (perhaps already has been), and in forms which Adorno might recognize, although one suspects he would not easily acknowledge them as great.

II

The composition of music has carried on, of course, since the immediate postwar period of **Philosophy of Modern Music**. Most of the developments since then can be reconciled to what might be called the "factual" aspects of Adorno's descriptions, although in many cases they have taken surprising directions. The total development of Schoenberg has turned out to be less total than Adorno surmised: in addition to creating series of the twelve notes of the western tempered scale, new-generation serial composers such as Messiaen, Boulez, and Stockhausen have broadened the method to other musical "parameters", such as note duration, volume, and timbre. These same composers, who might have been seen as the heirs of the New Viennese School, have also introduced new elements to their work, such as more exotic materials and actual spatial distribution of sound sources;[17] new methods of organization of a more mathematical cast have been adopted, such as holding certain parameters constant,[18] while composing with others, or the introduction of randomness into the prescriptions for performance. The products of these compositional procedures for the most part have an audience as

small as that of Schoenberg's music. Most of Adorno's comments regarding the expressive character of total development and the mimesis of alienation in the independence of musical elements would seem to hold for this body of work.[19]

The French tradition has carried on with its version of rhythmic-spatial pseudomorphism of painting, particularly in the music of Messiaen, which represents a new synthesis of serial methods in some pieces with exotic scales and colouristic procedures. Chords, melodic fragments, and instrumental timbres derived from East Indian and other unabashedly foreign sources, and from the imitation of bird songs, are juxtaposed in highly sectional, non-developmental fashion. In all cases, the emphasis is colouristic; Messiaen even claims a synaesthetic relationship of chords and sonorities with visual colours.[20] Serially constructed fragments are used for their colouristic value, as simple elements among others. Again, it is difficult to imagine Adorno accepting the authenticity of this music; but it does represent a highly imaginative development of precisely the colouristic spatial impulse that he describes in Debussy, combined with a radical rejection of sweet-sounding traditional tonal fragments. Most interestingly, even though it has been characterized as romantic by a small audience of

aficionados, Messiaen's music remains quite inaccessible to the general consumer audience, and is widely resisted as avant-garde, like that of Schoenberg and Bartók. This is not at all characteristic of the role in society that Adorno saw as the primary objective of such pseudospatial music; as with the music of Bartók, one might suspect here a "power of alienation" by other means.

The American "minimalist" school of composers represents a further curious evolution of the rhythmic-spatial mode in musical composition. In a number of ways, their music embodies a dramatically more extreme development of the objectifying trends that Adorno described in Stravinsky's music. With their constant driving invariant pulse, seemingly infinite numbers of repetitions, and strictly limited tonal combinations of pitches, the works of Reich, Riley and Glass are supreme examples of music functioning on the level of effect; they seem to assume more the role of drugs than of works of art. Certainly they have attracted a wider audience than any other contemporary "serious" music since the time of Schoenberg and Stravinsky. Yet the conclusion that would be expected, that they represent the ultimate commodification of music, and the ultimate domination of the subject by totalizing society, is belied. Because these works are developed, and exhibit a form of organic growth through very

subtle variation of repeated motifs, together with tightly interlocking contrapuntal treatment of these same motifs,[21] they demand attention, that is, interpretation on the part of the subject. In the absence of such attention, the repetitiousness of the music is likely to become repellent, despite its surface glamour. It is almost as though Adorno's Stravinsky had been turned on his head, and an aesthetic experience had been presented in the guise of a commodity. The impression is strengthened in the music of John Adams, a more recent American composer: his works are unabashedly tonal, with a strong sense of organic development. Despite their deliberate references to classical rules, both in their compositional procedures and in such titles as **Harmonielehre** and **Variations for Winds, Strings and Keyboards**, these composers do not follow the conventions in the old way: tonality, as in the music of Bartók, is achieved by other means.

The pattern of surprises is completed by the further progress of Stravinsky himself. At about the time that **Philosophy of Modern Music** was completed, in the late 1940s, Stravinsky's style was undergoing a further change, as the composer experimented with serial techniques in his music. From the early 1950s until the end of his life in 1972, Stravinsky produced music that conformed to the rules of

composition that Schoenberg had laid down for twelve-tone music. Although musicologists may find departures in detail and typical "Stravinskyisms",[22] this music nevertheless retains the stylistic aspect and compositional procedures of the Viennese originals. Adorno, despite having had the opportunity,[23] does not seem to have commented on this change in any of the writings available in English. One might speculate that had he done so, he might have seen Stravinsky's later work as a further instance of "music about music", and as a destructive objectification of the last authentic works of musical art: a matter of style[24] adopted in a vain effort to regain the authenticity of musical art. Certainly its three decades' displacement in time from the pioneering twelve-tone compositions of Schoenberg would suggest yet another Stravinskian borrowing. Nevertheless, this development can be seen in two ways: as against the characterization of its being the ultimate struggle with complete musical impoverishment, it could also be interpreted in the light of the fact that, like Messiaen's music, it appears to adopt a detached and objectified musical mode (through its apparent radicalism) without the aspect of pandering to consumer society that is supposedly inherent in the appearance of tonality. As such, it more likely represents a search for avenues opened up by the acceptance of

the new conditions of composition in the rhythmic-spatial mode which is appropriate to modern, alienated consumer society.

Concluding Comments

In the end, it seems clear that Adorno has offered a philosophical explanation of the aesthetic evolution of modern music which allows a consistent historical interpretation of both the critical period of change in the early twentieth century, and the disparate array of subsequent developments. However, the consistency of this historical explanation requires that the valuation based on the perspective of the eighteenth and nineteenth century classical Germanic tradition in music be jettisoned. In other words, it risks refutation from contemporary or future perspectives to insist that great music can no longer be composed, or that the essence of great music lies in the workings of a particular mode, or in the music of a particular configuration of society.[25] The high praise which Adorno allows to the music of Bartók points the way to this inconsistency, that of making a judgement which is absolute in its claims, based on reasoning which is historical. It would seem, in fact, that it is only music based on the collective subjectivity of the heroic age of the bourgeoisie, which manifested its authenticity in the tonal conventions of the Germanic tradition of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, which can no longer be composed.

As was suggested, this is not to deny the correctness of Adorno's account of the current state of music, so much as the valuational pessimism that accompanies it. It can be accepted that a distinctive historical phenomenon has indeed died out, and that it is no longer possible to compose legitimate musical art according to the old rules, and aiming at the old goals. But the conservatism that denies the quality of anything else is bankrupt and symptomatic of the end of the domination of an artistic ideology, as Adorno indeed recognized. His limitation would seem to lie in his nostalgia for a time in which the illusions of collective subjectivity could be maintained with the authenticity of the standards of that time.

The problems we have identified in Adorno's presentation lie in two areas. The first can be broadly referred to as that of ethnocentricity: not, however, the simple accusation that he saw things from the perspective of his own country's standards (that in itself would not be inconsistent on his own grounds); rather, the difficulty stems from confusion over the field of application of those standards. When it is examined closely, the musical canon he accepts is that of the German-Austrian tradition. On the other hand, when more general statements are made about the condition of musical art, they are understood to apply to the entire Occidental culture. The

divergence creates inconsistencies which become clear in Adorno's treatment of individual cases, such as the music of Bartók. This in part reflects the historical dominance in Western culture of Germanic music and its ideals. One might well say that in this area Adorno himself was promulgating an ideology of domination; certainly the practice of musical art in the France of Debussy was consciously seen as an effort to escape from the dominance of German aesthetics.[26]

The second problem is related to the first: namely, the attempt to present a judgment that makes a universal claim based on an explanation which is historical. The judgement, of course, is that great music is no longer possible, because the tonality that was the basis of the musical art of the bourgeois age no longer has meaning. If we set aside for a moment the problem inherent in taking the status of tonality as a basis for that judgement, the difficulty referred to here manifests itself in the application of the universal term greatness to what is clearly a historically restricted phenomenon, namely the tonal German music of the Eighteenth and Nineteenth centuries. Other ages and other cultures will have equal claim to judge greatness in other forms of music, under Adorno's terms.

These two problems have the effect of throwing doubt on Adorno's account of the totalization of contemporary society, because the inconsistency undermines the unity which totality implies. The account hinges on the generalizing tendency of reason: since reason demands that all particulars can be reduced to concepts, then a reality structured according to reason will have one truth. In other words, it must in the end be consistent. As we have seen, Adorno would hold that this view of the world is false, because identity thinking fails to take account of the particularity of the processes of reality (understood dialectically). The dialectic between the falseness of identity thinking and the necessity for using reason is what drives the historical movement towards totality. If in fact, the world is being driven towards totality, one would expect, as Adorno says, an understanding of reality that is closed, and without contradiction. This understanding would require conformity to reason by the subject, who is inevitably alienated in the necessity of seeing himself and others as objects subsumable under concepts. Adorno's understanding of the demise of the traditional system of tonality is founded on this alienation, and the loss of collective understanding which it entails.

However, as we have also seen, the notion of tonality is not altogether consistent, in that it is applied to different

populations of subjects, depending on what point Adorno wishes to make. Under some of his accounts, tonality would still appear to be a valid form of musical art for some people: perhaps because they are not alienated yet; perhaps because they are understanding music in a "rhythmic-spatial" manner, as a whole from that point of view; or perhaps simply because it indeed is meaningful to them as a miming of their experience of reality. Schoenberg himself felt that the traditional means of organization in music, as well as his own, were secondary to the understanding of music.[27] Adorno indeed, if asked, would instantly agree,[28] yet he does tie his account of musical meaning to the technical aspects of construction, both in the case of Beethoven and in that of Schoenberg. This would seem to indicate a tacit, inconsistent acceptance by Adorno, both that some people can have a valid aesthetic experience of tonal music, and still more importantly, that there is therefore still a collective basis for musical understanding that is not at all anachronistic.

If the totalizing drive to a rationalized world does not lead to the extinction of musical art (in the form of tonal works) which is expected, on the assumption that traditionally conceived tonality is no longer aesthetically valid, then this fact can be construed in two ways: either totalizing reason does not inevitably dictate that validly aesthetic experience

of music must take the form it did in the evolution of the German-Austrian tradition from Beethoven to Schoenberg; or if it does, then rationalization is not the exclusive influence driving the evolution of our understanding of the world. In either case, totality is somewhat less than it seems. As he implicitly admits in his condemnation of identity thinking, Adorno's conception of reason does not entail a unity of truth, and therefore makes the notion of totality doubtful. Even if commodification and the ideology of reason extend into completely unheard of aspects of human life (as, on arrival, Adorno probably felt they did in the United States), it would seem not to be an inevitable consequence that they cover it all.

Lest we finish with an unnecessarily negative view of Adorno's contribution, as that of one who has failed to reconcile himself to a world not centred on bourgeois Germany, one further point needs to be made. This relates once again to the consequences of a negative dialectical understanding of reality. The method which is appropriate to an understanding of reality as dialectical is that of immanent critique; that is, the examination and understanding of reality cannot achieve a transcendental standpoint,[29] and must proceed within the reality that is being examined, namely within the confines of a subject-object interaction, and using the only

tool available, which is reason. Critique, rather than postulation, is required because to postulate is already to make the reifying assumption of identity and objective metaphysics.[30] This, according to Gillian Rose,[31] places Adorno with Nietzsche in the tradition of irony, rather than that of the construction of philosophical systems. In other words, it may be a mistake to attempt to derive, for the purposes of criticism, a consistent system or world view which Adorno would want to defend. His attention is given to criticising reality as he finds it, without inconsistently attempting to presuppose a positive standpoint from which to do so. Thus we may find problems with what we take to be his positive account, as we have in relation to totality, tonality and history. But what he would prefer, and insist is more appropriate, is that we look at reality with his critical eye, in order to see the faults in it and in the way we look at it. His message[32] is that of the satirist, bidding us look at ourselves.

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REFERENCES

Introduction.

1.Susan Buck-Morss lists Adorno's compositions as including "... several cycles of songs, a women's chorus, and some short orchestral pieces. In the 1930s he worked on an opera for the text of Mark Twain's **Tom Sawyer**. Only one of his partiturs was published ..." (**The Origin of Negative Dialectics** (New York: Free Press, 1977. p.203, note 147).

2.The matter is further complicated by the problems of translation; some scholars have felt that this one is more than usually inadequate. See, for instance, Robert Hullot-Kentor in **Telos** 77:79-84, Fall 1988, p.80: "...[**Philosophy of New Music**] is -- in spite of the effort put into it and many excellent passages -- so faulty that it can hardly be studied without one being irretrievably misled;" or Gillian Rose in **The Melancholy Science** (London: Macmillan, 1978), p.195: "This translation is atrocious." Both agree that the title should be rendered as **Philosophy of New Music**.

3.Terry Eagleton describes Adorno's style this way: "[Adorno's] dialectical thought digs the object loose from its illusory self-identity .... [it is] a style of philosophizing which frames the object conceptually but manages by some cerebral acrobatics to glance sideways at what gives such generalized identity the slip." (**The Ideology of the Aesthetic**. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990. p.341-342).

Chapter 1.

1.Adorno, T.W. **Negative Dialectics**, tr. E.B. Ashton. New York: Continuum, 1973. p.xix.

2.Cf., for instance, Marx himself in "Thesis on Feuerbach" no. XI: "The philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways; the point, however, is to change it." (**The Marx-Engels Reader**, 2nd ed., ed by Robert C. Tucker. New York: Norton, 1978. p.145).

3."Ideology" is understood here to denote a system of ideas or beliefs which functions to serve a demand which arises out of concrete circumstances, and whose ostensible content and objectives do not necessarily reflect its actual function in reality. Typically in Marxist analyses, ideology is seen as serving to maintain the rule of a dominant social class.

4.Adorno, **Negative Dialectics**, p.4

5.In this he owes much to the work of Lukács, who first brought the two together in the concept of reification propounded in **History and Class Consciousness** (tr. Rodney Livingstone. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1971). In the central essay of the book, "Reification and the consciousness of the proletariat" (pp.83-222), Lukács extends Marx's analysis of commodification and commodity fetishism from the sccial and economic sphere to the analysis of the subjects of traditional philosophy. Not only is the worker separated from the creations of his labour, which becomes a commodity alienated from his control. Beyond this, consciousness itself becomes reified by being irretrievably separated from its objects, regarding them as something magical, distant and untouchable, to be known only by thought. If the character of reality is reified , because the subject understands the context of all his actions in that way, then he loses his dialectical sense of the immediacy of the meeting of subject and object in action, and thus loses his means of self-realization. The subject in such a situation comes to regard itself as a special kind of object, upon which a propositional system of certainty can be based. Such reification of consciousness is held to be the inevitable historical consequence of the rationalist enterprise, which coincides with the rise of the bourgeoisie. In affirming that all existence is rationally calculable, traditional philosophy performs an ideological function. The class interest of the bourgeoisie is served by it, because the social dominance of that class is based upon the remodelling of society according to the laws of economics. Under these "laws" everything is to be gauged by "rational self-interest," and through a calculus of the exchange-values of objects. It is quantities rather than particulars which are fundamental to this calculus; objects are commodities. The reification of consciousness ensures that individuals conform to the demands of that remodelling of society. If in a reified consciousness, the individual understands his own reality as being that of an object, then he readily submits to being treated as a commodity, and can be fit into the compass of the laws of economics.

6.Adorno, **Negative Dialectics**, p.5.

7.ibid., p.5.

8.James Bradley discusses this aspect of Adorno's negative dialectics in a review of Adorno's **Against Epistemology**: "..the thesis of the polarity of subject and object does not constitute a positive assertion about being.... The very nature of the Subject-object polarity means that no general

philosophical account of it is possible other than that which shows any such general account to be impossible."(**Ideas and Production** no. 2:95-101, 1984. p.98).

9.Adorno, **Negative Dialectics**, p.5.

10.See also Lukács in **History and Class Consciousness** (p.110 & ff.), for whom this was one of the sources of the "antinomies of bourgeois thought".

11.And the early Lukács: see again "Reification and the Consciousness of the Proletariat" in **History and Class Consciousness**, for instance, on p.112: "...The methods of mathematical physics become the guide and touchstone of philosophy, the knowledge of the world as a totality." Julian Roberts' chapter on Lukács in **German Philosophy: an introduction** (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press International, 1988) is a valuable guide to Lukács' contributions to the ideas of totality and history. See particularly pp.244-247.

12.Adorno's term (e.g. in **Negative Dialectics**, p.41). cf. **From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology** (tr., ed. and with an introduction by H.H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1948. p.66): "High capitalism absorbs other institutions into its own image.... This direction is towards the rationalization of all spheres of life."

13.This term is first extensively used in Horkheimer and Adorno, **Dialectic of Enlightenment** (originally published in German in 1944), in the essay by that title.

14.As Tom Bottomore (**The Frankfurt School**. London: Ellis Horwood, 1984. p.18) complains, "... his philosophy never included a theory of political action .... Adorno seems never to have given any serious attention to Marx's economic analysis or his theory of class and he rejected entirely the idea of a theory of history...."14.

15.The idea of "commodity fetishism" originates with Marx (**Capital**, vol. I, in **The Marx-Engels Reader**, 2nd edition. Edited by Robert C. Tucker. New York: Norton, 1978. pp.319-329), and is extended by Adorno as the background for his description of the totalized, "administered" society.

16.This is what gives rise to Bottomore's attack on philosophers in general and Adorno in particular, as lacking both detail and foundation in empirical studies. **The Frankfurt School** is one of a series of introductory monographs

on the major sociologists, and the objection must be understood as coming from the perspective of sociology as a scientific discipline.

17.And, again, the early Lukács of "Reification and the Consciousness of the Proletariat" in **History and Class Consciousness**. See Roberts, **German Philosophy**, pp.244-247.

18.Roberts, **German Philosophy**, p.274: "Adorno refuted any suggestion that history might have a rationally recoverable goal." For an outline of the philosophical relationship between Adorno and Lukács, see Roberts' chapter on Adorno, especially pp. 270-4.

19.Raymond Williams ("Base and Superstructure". **New Left Review** 82:3-16 November-December 1973. esp. p.7) has pointed out difficulties that understanding society as a totality creates for a more traditionally Marxist approach. Without the concept of a class interest, there can be no intention (Williams' word) behind the driving forces of history, and no basis therefore for a coherent theory of history. That is, crudely, if nobody wants a particular state of affairs, then nobody will act to pursue it, and the force which is presumed to move and change human affairs will not have any explanation. The question for such critics becomes how the transition occurred from the class interest and intention of the bourgeoisie as the driving force of history to the impersonal non class-based totality of administered society having its own momentum. We have suggested that in considering Adorno, the study of society should be distinguished from the study of culture, with Adorno more interested in the latter. His focus is on the reality of the individual, and from that point of view what matters is the impact of the idea in affecting the reality that inheres in the individual subject-object interaction. The history that Adorno (and the early Lukács) is explaining is that of the epistemological relationship of subject to object, and of its consequences in the history of the nature of art.

Chapter 2.

1.Adorno, **Aesthetic Theory**, tr. C. Lenhardt. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1984. p.3.

2.ibid., p.186.

3.Adorno, as Thomas Huhn points out, also expresses this necessity from a different perspective, as illusion: "Aesthetic illusion is not an appendage of an artwork, as if an artwork presented itself as something and **also** evoked or provided an illusion to accompany itself, but is rather its very mode of existence. Illusion is the defining characteristic of artworks. An artwork is an artwork just so far as it pretends to be something which it is not"("Adorno's Aesthetics of Illusion" **Journal of aesthetics and Art Criticism** 44(2):181-89, 1985. p.181). We will be discussing illusion more specifically in connection with its history below.

4.Adorno uses this comparison in **Aesthetic Theory** (p.10). He also uses the term "constellation" in this same sense in his late article, "The Aging of the New Music": "To be sure, the material does speak, but only in those constellations in which the art-work positions it; it was this capacity to organize the material and not the mere discovery of individual sounds that from the very start constituted Schoenberg's greatness." (**Telos** 77:95-116, Fall 1988, p.104-5). Gillian Rose in **The Melancholy Science** (London: Macmillan, 1978. p.13) describes a use by Adorno of the word "constellation" which is quite distinct, but nevertheless throws some light on how we are to understand it as applied to the Art-work: "...consistent with the idea that the object cannot be captured,...that a **set** of presentations may best approximate it. Adorno sometimes calls this a 'constellation'...." This use of the term also emphasises the contention that there can be no single presentation that captures the essence, either of an idea or an art-work; rather, understanding is only to be found in the diversity of the different elements of a "constellation".

5.See, for instance, Julian Roberts' characterization of the rebus in Adorno in **German Philosophy: an Introduction**. p.277.

6.See, for instance, **Aesthetic Theory**, p. 10-11: "Synthesisis not some process of imposing order on the elements of a work of art. It is important, rather, that the elements interact with each other; hence there is a sense in which synthesis is a mere repetition of the pre-established interdependence among elements, which interdependence is a product of otherness, of non-art. Synthesis, therefore, is firmly grounded in the material aspects of works of art."

7.cf. Adorno in **Aesthetic Theory**, p.62: "...to insist, as I do, on the passage of art through the subject is not to think under some subjectivist veil."

8.Adorno, **Aesthetic Theory**, p.10.

9.ibid., p.10.

10.ibid.,p.10.

11.As in **Aesthetic Theory**, p.10, where he writes, "Hegel mistakes the replicatory (abbildende) or discursive treatment of content for the kind of otherness that is constitutive of art."

12.Adorno characterises this in **Aesthetic Theory**, p. 10: "The moment of unreality and non-existence in art is not independent of the existent, as though it were posited or invented by some arbitrary will. Rather, that moment of unreality is a structure resulting from the quantitative relations between elements of being, relations which in turn are a response to, and an echo of, the imperfections of real conditions, their constraints, their contradictions, and their potentialities."

13.cf.**Aesthetic Theory**, p.61: "...at the present time no work of art can be accomplished except in so far as the subject puts its own being into it. It is not for the subject, as the organon of art, to decide as a matter of judgment or arbitrary will if it wants to particularize itself or not. Its particularization is predetermined. .... Undoubtedly, the moment of mimesis that is indispensable to art is universal, but in order to attain it art has to go through the individual subject with its irreducible particularity."

14.See particularly **Aesthetic Theory**, p.61-62, on "Subjectivity and Collectivity". The subject, the "organon" of art, must be particularized as long as the universal and the particular diverge, which is the case given the effort to subsume all reality under concepts. This divergence would not yet have taken place in a pre-rationalistic reality, in which collective subjectivity was an unmediated aspect of the experience of reality.

15.ibid., p.163.

16.ibid., p.163.

17.ibid., p.163.

18.ibid., p.30.

19.ibid., p.30.

20.One of the most detailed of Adorno's numerous analyses of the history (and falseness) of the conservative bourgeois taste and institution of concert-going can be found in his article "On the Social Situation of Music" (**Telos** 35:128-64 Spring 1978, tr. W.V. Blomster), which originally appeared in 1932.

21.Note, for instance, Adorno's analysis of Beethoven's art in "Alienated Masterpiece: The **Missa Solemnis**" (**Telos** 28:113-24 Sum 1976).

22.Adorno refers to "the likes of Pfitzner, Sibelius, Carossa or Hans Thoma" (**Aesthetic Theory** p.61), and "names such as Hindemith and Milhaud" (**Philosophy of Modern Music** p.4).

23."...hopes for a renascence of interest in the likes of Pfitzner [or] Sibelius ... are as futile as they are revelatory of the state of mind of those who harbour them; ... such hopes are not grounded in the value-immutability of soulful artists like these." (**Aesthetic Theory**, p.61).

24.Adorno, **Aesthetic Theory**, p.31.

25.The original characterization of the "culture industry" is in the essay of that title in Adorno and Horkheimer, **Dialectic of Enlightenment**, tr. John Cumming. New York: Continuum, 1986. p.120-167.

26.Adorno, **Aesthetic Theory**, p.44.

27.ibid., p.49.

28.ibid., p.62.

29.As he expresses it in **Aesthetic Theory**, p.49: "There is surely a qualitative difference between the hand that draws an animal on the wall of a cave and the camera that makes it possible to view prints of the same object in innumerable places at the same time. Yet the objectification represented by the cave drawing as against the immediacy of the object viewed already contains the seed of a technical procedure effecting the separation of the viewed object from the subjective act of viewing."

30.ibid., p.48: "...The material [forces of production], hemmed in as they are by existing relations of production, cannot be unleashed."

31.Adorno & Horkheimer, **Dialectic of Enlightenment**, p.120 &ff.

32.Adorno, **Philosophy of Modern Music**, tr. Anne G. Mitchell and Wesley V. Blomster. New York: Continuum (Seabury Press), 1973. p.29 (written in 1941).

33.Again, cf. **From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology**, p.66.

34.In **Aesthetic Theory**, p.149: "[Art works] themselves <u>are</u> an aesthetic illusion (quite apart from the illusion they evoke in people). Their illusory quality revolves around the claim to being wholes."

35.Adorno, **Philosophy of Modern Music**, p.9.

36.On the subject of Beethoven, in addition to the discussion in the next chapter, see also Adorno's article, "Alienated Masterpiece: The **Missa Solemnis**" **Telos** 28:113-24, summer 1976, which was originally published in German in 1959.

37.See, for instance, **Philosophy of Modern Music**, p.24.

Chapter 3.

1.Adorno, **Aesthetic Theory**, p.148.

2.Adorno, **Philosophy of Modern Music**, p.34-35.

3.ibid., p.24.

4.Adorno, **Aesthetic Theory**, p.148.4.

5.Schoenberg gives an outline of this derivation in **Theory of Harmony**, ch.2 and 3. While he does not accept (although he acknowledges that others have) that tonality is an eternal law, or a natural law, of music (p.27), his characterization of it is instructive: "Tonality is a formal possibility that emerges from the nature of the tonal material, a possibility of attaining a certain completeness or closure by means of a certain uniformity. To realize this possibility it is necessary to use in the course of a piece only those sounds and successions of sounds, and these only in a suitable arrangement, whose relations to the fundamental tone of the key, to the tonic of the piece, can be grasped without difficulty." It is of course that completeness or closure which confers on tonal music its ability to mime the organic aspect of the reality of the bourgeois age: for Adorno the authenticity of art in that time would require such closure, and consequently would require that tonality be taken as a

rational law, to which the derivation easily lends itself as justification.

6.Adorno, **Aesthetic Theory**, p.55.

7.The technical term is often formulated as "thematic development", which we will mostly adopt for the sake of consistent usage and clarity. However, although in Adorno's analysis "development" refers consistently to the same phenomenon of subjective reflection, by the time the stage of "total development" is reached, the notion of "theme" is no longer meaningful, since it carries with it the implication of a tonal relationship between elements. We will therefore use the formulation "total development" instead, on the occasions when it applies.

8.See particularly, Adorno, **Philosophy of Modern Music**, p.55.

9.cf. **Philosophy of Modern Music**, p.55: "The technical principle of the development...was at the beginning, in the eighteenth century, a minor element in sonata-form. Experimentation with subjective illumination and dynamics were [sic] conducted with the themes once they had been stated and their existence could be presumed."

10.ibid., p.56-57: For Adorno, Brahms' great accomplishment was to create a unity of the work which is constantly renewed at every moment, at the same time staying within a framework of tonality and developing the most extreme multiplicity. This marks the stage at which modernism necessarily began to assume preponderance, because organic unity could go no further.

11.ibid., p.54 and ff.

12.ibid., p.62. We rely on a fairly simple technical description of the 12-tone technique in its first clearly defined form, which appears on pp.61-63.

13.ibid., p.61.

14.ibid., p.30. **Erwartung** is a sung "monodrama" (Schoenberg's subtitle) in which the heroin and sole character comes upon the body of her lover in a darkened wood at night. As the music proceeds, it gradually becomes clear that her long searching is a delusion, and a psychological avoidance mechanism; she has, in fact, just finished murdering him out of jealousy. The music is a portrayal of the progression of her psychological state.

15.ibid., p.42.

16.ibid., p.197 & ff.

17.ibid., p.197.

18."All music purports a becoming" (**Philosophy of Modern Music**, p.191.).

19.ibid., p.197-198.

20.ibid., p.198.

21.ibid., p.198.

22.In connection with popular music, Adorno has characterized the kind of subject this has produced as the "Rhythmically obedient" type: "This obedient type is the rhythmical type, the word rhythmical being used in its everyday sense. Any musical experience of this type is based upon the underlying, unabating time unit of the music,--its 'beat.' .... To be musical means to them to be capable of following given rhythmical patterns without being disturbed by 'individualizing' aberrations, and to fit even the syncopations into the basic time units. This is the way in which their response to music immediately expresses their desire to obey." Stravinsky and Hindemith are linked to this "category of mass listening" in the discussion which follows. (Adorno, "On Popular Music", **Studies in Philosophy and Social Science** 9(1):17-48, 1941. p.40).

23.We recognize here (as does Adorno) that the twelve-tone music of which a description was given above ("Total Development and the End of Musical Art," Sec. III, p.72 &ff.) represents only one stage in Schoenberg's compositional development; nevertheless, as the culmination and bringing together of all the important philosophical features, it can stand in this context as the exemplar of one pole of the culminating stage of great music in general. Analogously, certain aspects of Stravinsky's music (Adorno would maintain) are common to all the stages of a very diverse musical career, and can be presented at this point as the definitive image of the opposite pole.

24.Stravinsky is on record at many points (for instance, **Poetics of Music**, p.129) as disapproving of the custom of departing from the tempo giusto in musical performance (especially of his own works) where such latitude is not directed by the score.

25.This colouristic impulse is also to be seen in Stravinsky's emphasis on the use of instruments in unusual combinations as values in their own right, which Adorno describes as "Fetishism of the Means" (**Philosophy of Modern Music**, p.172-3). For Adorno, the instrumentation of such works as **Les Noces** (four pianos, percussion and chorus) and **The Soldier's Story** (solo violin, clarinet, trombone, percussion and spoken narration) no longer "serves the clarification of continuity or the revelation of purely musical structures."

26.Edward Lockspeiser records that Debussy reportedly first manifested this outlook in his Conservatoire days: when urged by the composer César Franck to modulate while improvising, he replied, "Mais pourquoi voulez-vous que je module, puisque je me trouve très bien dans ce ton-là?" (Why do you want me to modulate, when I'm doing perfectly well in the present key?) (Lockspeiser, **Debussy: His Life and Mind.** London: Cassell, 1962. v.1, p33).

27.Adorno, **Philosophy of Modern Music**, p.141.

28.Rudolf Kolisch, quoted by Adorno, ibid., p.182.

29.ibid., p.150.

30.ibid., p.151.

31.The ultimate presentation of music as a commodity is exemplified for Adorno in popular music and jazz, which he sees as highly standardized products of the culture industry. He views this music as fulfilling a number of functions, both physiological and ideological, such as satisfying the desire for distraction in leisure, and ensuring conformity to the needs of totalizing society through the promotion of obedience. Of his numerous analyses of popular music, the most important in English are: "On Popular Music," **Studies in Philosophy and Social Science** 9(1):17-48, 1941; and "Perennial fashion--Jazz" in **Prisms**, translated by Samuel and Shierry Weber. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1967.

Chapter 4.

1.Adorno, **Philosophy of Modern Music**; for example, on p.4: "The best works of Béla Bartók, who in many respects attempted to reconcile Schoenberg and Stravinsky, are probably superior...."

2.ibid., p.35-36, note 5.

3.ibid., p.4.

4.Bartók is of primary interest here because of the more radical ("progressive") character of his music; Janáček's music might possibly be construed as being more conservative, although his use of triads in "suspending the tradition of every official music" (**Philosophy of Modern Music**, p.36, note 5) might thereby place him closer to Stravinsky on the continuum.

5.ibid., p.34-35.

6.Among many others. Cf. Halsey Stevens, **The Life and Music of Béla Bartók** (revised edition. London: Oxford University Press, 1964), p.181, in reference to the latter technique as used in the second movement of **String Quartet no.2.**: "...section after section is suspended upon a single tone, repeated in even eighth-note patterns. ... By such drastic means ... a tonal level is established which no chromaticism, no matter how remote, can dislodge."

7.Adorno seems to have been disappointed with Bartók's later works, and to have changed, to some extent, his estimation of the earlier music. In "The Aging of the New Music" of 1955 (This section of **Philosophy of Modern Music** was written in 1941), he considered even the most radical works to have been covertly regressive: "He [Bartók] explained that a composer like he, whose roots were in folk music, could ultimately not do without tonality -- an astounding statement for the Bartók who unhesitatingly resisted all populist temptations and chose exile and poverty when the shadow of Fascism passed over Europe. In fact his later works, like the violin concerto, actually count as traditional music,... no longer heralds of the threateningly eruptive, the ungrasped. The development of his work has a peculiar retrospective effect. In its light many of his most radical compositions, like the first violin sonata, appear much more harmless than their sound and harmonies"(**Telos** 77:95-116, Fall 1988; p.98-99). Bartók himself seems always to have understood his work as tonal; it is possible that there is an element of pique in Adorno's later attitude, since the violin concerto to which he refers contains a passage that is likely a deliberate caricature of Schoenberg in its first movement (see Halsey Stevens' **Life and Music of Béla Bartók**, p.247-248).

While Adorno might no longer wish to acknowledge the importance of Bartók in this discussion, it is still nevertheless clear that he still considers him part of the

Western tradition, still acknowledges him a tonal composer, and at one time, "A leader of new music"(**Telos** p.99). Neither would there seem to be any doubt in Adorno's mind about correctness and selectivity of Bartók's technical canon. The questions of its legitimation, of which tonality Adorno is referring to, and of how (differently) tonal music can have the alienating effect he ascribed to it in 1941, remain.

8.Schoenberg, **Theory of Harmony**, p.27.

9.Adorno, **Philosophy of Modern Music**, p.188.

10.ibid., p.189.

11.ibid., p.191.

12.ibid., p.191.

13.ibid., p.191.

14.ibid., p.195.

15.ibid., p.182.

16."Pessimism" is understood here in a limited and overt sense, as relating to the demise of something (tonality and great music) which Adorno valued and admired. This is not to be confused with the general proposition that Adorno's outlook as a whole was pessimistic, which is vigorously contested by such authors as Robert Hullot-Kentor (eg., in **Telos** 81:5-29, Fall 1989, p.10-11).

17.For example, Pierre Boulez in **Répons** (described in **Scientific American** 258(4):44-50, April 1988), and Karlheinz Stockhausen in **Gruppen** and **Carré**.

18.As in Stockhausen's **Stimmung**, in which pitch relationships are held constant. Each member of a vocal ensemble sings only a single note, but to varying words and syllables, which varies the timbre.

19.Adorno greeted these developments in musical technique negatively, on the grounds that technical progress could not be substituted for the musical meaning of a composition. See particularly Adorno, "The Aging of the new music", **Telos** no. 77:95-116, Fall 1988, and "Music and technique", **Telos** no. 32:79-94, Summer 1977, which are translations of articles that originally appeared in German in 1954 and 1958, respectively. The most important of these is "The Aging of the new music":

in it Adorno sees the technicisation of music as a symptom that musical meaning is lost, and as an inevitable consequence of its drive towards autonomy. This drive for him was implicit in its birth in separation from the debased "popular" music of the Market (Hullot-Kentor's formulation), and the resulting technicisation constitutes the historical manifestation, in the present era, of the predicted death of Western musical art. In both articles he maintains that construction, the employment of techniques, is always to be seen as a means to musical expression, rather than constitutive of it. In this Adorno was in agreement with Schoenberg, who otherwise disapproved of his arguments in **Philosophy of Modern Music** (MacDonald, Malcolm, **Schoenberg**. London: Dent, c1976, 1987. p.267). Hullot-Kentor's article on Adorno, which accompanies "The Aging of the new music" in the same issue of **Telos**, is a useful introduction to the latter's treatment of new music.

20.Adorno is probably referring to Messiaen, among others, when he castigates the modernism of the new music of the 1950s: "In fact, what is produced today under the headings of pointillistic music and integrally rationalized music is only too closely related to Tonfarbenmusik [tone-colour music, which develops correspondences between sounds and colours] and the like: infatuation with the material along with blindness toward what is made out of it resulting from the fiction that the material speaks for itself from an effectively primitive symbolism" ("The Aging of the New Music" **Telos** 77:95-116 Fall 1988. p.104).

21.Particularly in the works of Steve Reich: for example, **Music for Eighteen Musicians**, **Octet**, or **Variations for Winds, Strings and Keyboards.**

22.See, for instance, Eric Walter White's **Stravinsky: The Composer and his Works**, Second Edition. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979. pp.498-9, 505.

23.In the concluding "note" of 1958 (Adorno, **Philosophy of Modern Music**, pp.219-220).

24.cf. "the temptation of imagining that the responsible essence of music could be restored through stylistic procedures", ibid., p.135.

25.As Andreas Huyssen puts it, "Commodification invaded Wagner's oeuvre without completely debilitating it. On the contrary it actually gave rise to great works of art. But then one must be permitted to ask why it should not be

possible today to produce ambitious and successful works of art which would draw both on the tradition of modernism and on mass culture, ..." ("Adorno in reverse: from Hollywood to Richard Wagner" **New German Critique** no. 29:8-38, Spring-Summer 1983. p.38). It would not take very much effort to apply this characterization to the works of the American "Minimalist" school, for example.

26.See, for instance, Lockspeiser on Debussy's artistic development (**Debussy: His Life and Mind.** London: Cassell, 1962; notably the chapters on "Bayreuth", "Wagnerian Friends", and the composer's various interactions with Richard Strauss). Schoenberg's enigmatic pronouncement that his twelve-tone system would "assure the supremacy of German music for next hundred years" (to Josef Rufer, July 1921; reported by Malcolm MacDonald in **Schoenberg.** London: Dent, 1976, p.29) is also potentially significant (if not to be taken literally) in this light.

27.MacDonald in **Schoenberg** quotes a letter by that composer: "You have rightly worked out the series of my string quartet... But do you think one's any better off for knowing it? ... This isn't where aesthetic qualities reveal themselves ... I have been dead set against: seeing how it is done; whereas I have always helped people to see: what it <u>is</u>! I have repeatedly tried to make Wiesengrund [Adorno] understand this... I can't say it often enough: my works are twelve-note <u>compositions</u>, not <u>twelve-note</u> compositions..." (p.88).

28.cf. Adorno, "The Aging of the new music"(1954), **Telos** no. 77:95-116, Fall 1988, and "Music and technique"(1958), **Telos** no. 32:79-94, Summer 1977.

29.As James Bradley puts it ("Frankfurt perspectives" **Radical Philosophy** 13:39-40, Spring 1976): "[Adorno's] demand that 'Enlightenment must examine itself' ... is not a call to the traditional forms of philosophical criticism. On the contrary, the critique of reason hitherto exercised within epistemology can only be accomplished now, they argue, if the socio-historical experience of Western man is recognized as an internal and essential element of the whole enterprise; our meditations can no longer be Cartesian in character."

30.Hullot-Kentor makes the point that Adorno is looking for an ethical answer to the situation imposed by reason in a dialectical world: "[quoting from Adorno] 'Whether history has meaning, depends on whether humanity is able to constitute itself as humanity; whether humanity achieves this or not will depend on whether reason -- as a force of the domination of

nature -- is able to gain control of itself, to reflect on itself.' The concepts of humanity and reason are identical here, and there is no question where Adorno stands on the matter. He is pursuing a critique of reason by way of reason. How this is possible is not obvious; if it were, it would not have occupied all of Adorno's life." (from "Back to Adorno" **Telos** 81:5-29, Fall 1989.)

31.Rose, **The Melancholy Science**. London: Macmillan, 1978. pp.18-26. Note particularly this on p. 21: "The way in which Adorno describes Nietzsche's position is very close to his own discussion of irony and of the immanent method... Pitting reality against ideals is a way to criticise both the ideals and the reality without assuming a different fixed reality or a dogmatic standpoint. Adorno, of course, belongs to this tradition too."

32.Hullot-Kentor puts it this way, in "Back to Adorno," p.26: "...Adorno['s] maxim was to lose arguments in such a way as to convict the other side of its mistakenness,...."

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