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THE CULTURAL STUDY OF MUSIC

by

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THE CULTURAL STUDY OF MUSIC:

A theoretical and methodological introduction

Dick Bradley

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Introduction

The term "Cultural Study of Music" is, for convenience, already presented in the title of this paper. I am not, however of the opinion that such a study can be constituted by defining "cultural studies" a priori and then making up its musical variety as if by recipe. I believe that the study of music as part of culture (musical practices as the socially-situated practices of concrete persons and groups) is an integral part of a true "cultural-studies" field or discipline and, as such, will have something to offer at the level of method and definition to the field as a whole. In other words "cultural studies" cannot be applied to music; it must be generated out of a concern for music, among other things, and ought to bear the marks of this genesis as essential, definitive features of its existence as an intellectual project.

Taking my cue from some of the existing inter-disciplinary studies of literature, film TV etc, which use the "tools" of political economy, sociology, linguistics, semiology, psychology and so on, and which try to fuse these into a consistent method, I approached my problem at first by setting out to survey the existing sociology, economics, aesthetics etc of music in general terms - that is to read and digest a lot of "key" books. Simultaneously I was trying to build up my knowledge of "pop facts", especially with regard to Britain, and to the 1950s, in particular. I saw the two projects as temporarily separate, and hoped to be able to fuse them later. This was partly wrong - in that a theoretically-informed appropriation of the pop history-books and periodicals, (where I was rummaging for my "facts") was eminently necessary; I tended to view all these histories as hopeless in their approach and at the same time authoritative in their "content", - an error easy to see but difficult to avoid. I hope I have since begun to correct it.

Here my aim is to set out the results of that first part of my studies which consisted of reading the famous sociologists, "cultural critics" and to a lesser extent, aestheticians, and others, whose works constitute the field-in-the-making of "cultural study of music", if any such thing exists. The unsatisfactory but necessary vagueness and elasticity in this formulation can only be finally justified if I use the insights gained to illuminate my objects of study later, so I will spend no time justifying it here.

I would like, however, to apologise in advance for untidiness of classification. Writers like Adorno, or Weber, or Shepherd, are not easily pigeonholed, but for convenience I deal with each only once, and it will inevitably seem to someone that I do so in the wrong place or places. This arises from the origin of this paper - as a sort of work-in-progress report - and I have not felt it useful or necessary to recast the whole, although, of course, I could be wrong.

1. Some traditional views of music

The problems of what music is, what it 'means', what unifies different practices from different continents or epochs as 'musical' (if anything), what the relationships are between music and other areas of social life (or human practices, or whatever) - these have vexed and tormented a terrifyingly-long list of philosophers, critics and social scientists. The difficulties, extend from small but tantalising ones of, for example, terminology, to enormous ones related to our very concepts of the 'human', and the 'social'. I can make no claims at present for the approach which I use here except that it seems to me to be a validly-drawn analogue to the approach to fiction, poetry, TV etc which has become characteristic of 'cultural studies' - namely, to see the objects of study as human practices (and their objectification in artefacts), and to understand that the appropriation of artefacts and ideas by the readers/viewers/listeners, is no less of an essential dimension of the practice as a whole than is the 'deliberate' element in production - i.e. composition, authorship etc. To put it another way, I do not intend to decontextualise songs, singers, records, 'styles' 'periods' or anything else except in the sense in which I can justify a respect for their 'relative autonomies', as I will explain below. I will see music as part of 'musical life', and musical life as part of social life, or cultural totality, and I will see all these as developing and changing, as in no way static. If this approach contributes anything to the general aesthetic and philosophical debates, it will be by leaving them behind for a time, and looking at other aspects of music and musical life not usually dealt with in the aestheticians' treatises.

First however I must deal briefly with a few writers who do consider music at this generalised level, and suggest how and where their approaches leave me dissatisfied.

(A) The Aestheticians. The two authorities in this field, the ones all the other writers refer to respectfully, are L.B. Meyer and S. Langer¹. An intelligent critique of their views, which are distinct but similar is to be found in the first three chapters of "Whose Music"². Briefly I will suggest my own view of what is fundamentally inadequate about these works. Meyer argues that music is not "its own meaning", as some say, but instead has a relationship to "psychological constants" which enables it to express "emotions"³. Langer, arguing somewhat differently, arrives at the not dissimilar view that music "actually reflects the morphology of feeling" (1960, p.238). These writers have a certain familiarity with psychological theory, certainly, but the ideal listening-subject they implicitly posit, the person to whom this "expression" or "reflection" communicates, is never situated socially, historically or in any other way. The person has no sex, race or age, no beliefs, no technical knowledge of music, only a set of organs and responses. Of course Meyer and Langer are too sophisticated to leave the matter here. They both recognise that certain conventions expressive within one culture, or group, are meaningless to another. They recognise that "people", not bundles of experimentally-verifiable response-mechanisms alone, listen to music. But the recognition is external to the core of their argument, it is a parenthesis inserted as insurance against simplistic criticism. It does not affect their central thesis, which is that there is something "given" called a "work", and that in all works there is something encoded so successfully that it has ceased to depend for its meaning on the particularities of audience. Music speaks a "universal language" of the "emotions" and any development and change in it is a technical matter relating to the expression of further emotional nuances. If pressed, these writers would agree, as I have pointed out, that the listener has to be placed and dated socially or culturally before his/her listening-response can even begin to be predicted. But what ~~is~~ needed is an approach which puts this insight at the centre of its study, and theirs simply does not qualify by this test. Many other criticisms could be made of these authors, but that is not my purpose here. I will discuss the ideas of the unalterable "work", the idea that music expresses "emotions", always and only, and other such theories and assumptions in another context.

A peculiarly British and "empiricist" version of the view that music "expresses emotions" is to be found in "The Language of Music" by Deryck Cooke⁴. Having dealt rather perfunctorily with theoretical questions in

Chapter One, he arrives at a view which systematically relates "terms of musical vocabulary" to particular emotions. He assembles a mass of detailed evidence for his view, which is essentially as follows: the composer has a feeling, and reaches, apparently instinctively, for a musical expression of it. He need not know it, but what he actually reaches for is only a convention, or a "term in a musical vocabulary". The relation between "Tonic-Dominant" melodic lines and "joy" is one of the chief examples Cooke uses. Now Cooke is not sure about the degree to which the conventions of Western "tonal" music are derived from "natural" or "physiological" factors, if at all, and in fact he suggests that they are so-derived while admitting that other cultures have apparently derived different ones. Any "derivation", in either case, would seem to have been part of a process in which other, non-physiological, factors played a fundamental role too. But there is a bigger problem than this one in Cooke's argument. Some of the "cultures" with such different music from the "western tonal" type do not simply hear "joy" where "we" with our conventions consciously or unconsciously "in mind", hear only wailing, say, (or hear no "emotional expression" at all, but only scratching noises, for example); these so-different cultures do not, in many cases, think in terms of music-expressing-emotion at all. Their musical practices play very different roles in the social life. The very best evidence on this question is John Blacking's first-hand account of Venda music (from a small part of Southern Africa) with its ritual, celebratory, and educational functions, with its predominantly collective mode of performance in which individualised emotion hardly figures, and so on. It is clear from Blacking's book⁵, and from the researches of the "ethnomusicologists"⁶, that we must not think of all musical practices in terms really applicable (& then not unproblematically) to western "composed" and "tonal" music alone - a barely 400 years old, and quite conceivably dying "tradition".

(B) The Marxists. The "totalising" ambitions of "orthodox" Marxist writers (and some less orthodox) have on occasion led to contributions on these questions from within marxism. The major works of Adorno, in this field, I will deal with, at length, later. But here what I want to do is to show what a lacuna musical understanding is in Marxism, and what rubbish sometimes results when Marxist writers try to bridge or hide this lacuna rather than seriously to attempt to remove it. Both over-abstract and ahistorical

notions of what music is, akin to those of Meyer et al, and ethnocentric, pseudo-evolutionist notions about the "superiority" of the European classics over all other music (except, for some writers, a certain amount of "naive" folk-music) are to be found too often for comfort whenever the Marxists touch on the question. The best examples of the first error I have found are surely Ernst Fischer and Christopher Caudwell, but before I discuss them I would like to offer a quotation from Maxim Gorki as a warning to those who regard the second as rather academic or irrelevant here (since after all I am supposed to be writing about modern pop, not primitive tribal rituals, though they are all very well in their way?). Written in Italy in 1928, it was Gorki's⁷ reaction to listening to some modern dance music on the radio:

"This is radio - one of the greatest discoveries of science, one of the secrets it has wrenched from ostensibly mute nature. The radio in the neighbourhood hotel is entertaining the world of the fat men, the world of the marauders, conveying to them over the air a new foxtrot performed by a Negro orchestra..... In all the luxuriant cabarets of the "cultured" countries, fat men and women are lewdly wriggling their thighs to its rhythm, wallowing in obscenity, simulating the procreative act..... Love is the basis of culture, hunger is the basis of civilization..... But along come the obese marauder, the parasite who lives on the labour of others... and tramples with his fat feet over all that has been spun from the finest nerve-tissue of the great poets, the enlighteners of labouring humanity.... A inhuman bass voice roars English words, one is deafened by a prodigious horn that is reminiscent of the shriek of a maltreated camel, a drum thunders, a pestilential pipe squeals, and one's ears are rent by the croacking of snuffling of a saxophone."

Elsewhere he adds,

"It is an evolution from the beauty of the minuet and the animated passion of the waltz, to the lewdness of the foxtrot and the convulsions of the Charleston, from Mozart and Beethoven to the jazz - music of the Negroes, who no doubt laugh up their sleeves as they see their masters, the whites, evolving to that savage state from which the American Negroes have risen, and which they are leaving farther and farther behind"

and

"He, the fat man does not need woman as a friend and companion; to him she is a mere pastime.... Nor does he need woman as a mother, because, to him, although he loves power, children are a nuisance..... foxtrots have become indispensable to him, for your fat man is a poor male. For him, love is a dissipation, it is increasingly becoming a perversion of the imagination..... In the world of the fat men, homosexual love is spreading epidemically. The evolution of the fat men is degeneration."

This passage does not really deserve serious analysis here. However it serves the purpose of alerting us to the existence of a theory which sees popular music as the return or revival of "corporeality", sexual significations and effects, and other qualities, on western culture, due to "the Negro", specifically the American Negro, who is considered a repository of these qualities in particular. Some writers use this theory to damn popular music, some to praise it, but it is a racist theory in either case. If "corporeality" and "sex" do indeed prove to be prominent and essential aspects of contemporary popular music in any sense, it is certainly not possible to simplistically account for this in terms of "race", however conceived.

Gorki is a poor marxist. But unfortunately, writers of greater sobriety duplicate his error of believing that their Marxism gives them a right and duty to "totalise" even when it means passing judgement on things they know little about. An example of this is the important English marxist Christopher Caudwell, who in his attempt to define the "organisation of the arts"⁸ presents some very generalised ideas about music which are embarrassingly similar to those of Meyer.

"What does poetry become, if all external reference is eliminated, in the way that all value-judgements are eliminated from a scientific argument to make it become logistic? Poetry becomes "meaningless" sound, but sound full of emotional reference - in other words, music; (his emphasis) and music, like logistic, is translatable and universal."

And on the next page Caudwell writes:

"In fact it is music, not poetry, which is as abstract and generalised with regard to subjective reality as mathematics is to external reality. In music the environment sinks away, the ego inflates and all the drama takes place within its walls. Mathematics is externally abstract and generalised; music internally so."

Although Caudwell may turn out to be not without relevance to debates about the nature and distinctness of the "arts", this line of argument seems to me to be unjustifiable in the straightforward sense that he is clearly trying to relate a view of poetry which is very much his own (and argued for in detail throughout the book) with a view of music which is lifted more or less uncritically and insensitively from his general reading.

With Ernst Fischer we come to a different case⁹, a marxist who takes some trouble to consult the "classics", but who still flounders when he faces the question of integrating music into a scheme of "totality". His scheme is not simply one of dogmas out of Marx, it is derived from a study of the Visual arts and literature; but for this very reason it cannot help but fit badly when applied to objects outside of its experience. Furthermore its inadequacy in this respect rebounds upon Fischer's Marxism, striking at its surface of richness and sophistication and exposing a normative or prescriptive streak which he is better able to hide when writing of literature and painting, about which he knows so much more. Fischer begins his section on music in "The Necessity of Art" by taking Stravinsky to task for his assertion that there exists a "purely musical" logic which really has nothing to do with the social "setting" of composition, the composer's ideas, even the particular occasion giving rise to a work. Fischer finds this inconceivable, and approvingly quotes Hegel insisting that music does have a content apart from its arrangement of sounds. This content, says Hegel, is not one of abstract emotions (joy, sorrow) but one "closely related to the particular character of the emotion roused, so that the mode of expression will, or should, inevitably assert itself with essential differences according to the varied nature of the content". Again, in a generalised and vague way, music and emotional expression have been linked together as though this expression were only and always the "content" of music.¹⁰ Having got to this point, Fischer leaves Hegel's much more complex argument, and goes on to make assertions about the particularity of emotional

states expressed in Beethoven's works, assertions for which he offers no support. It may be true that the "loneliness" of the late chamber music is "not the loneliness of the pious hermit of a peasant snowed up in his mountain hut; it is the new urban loneliness.....," but can it be proved? Indeed is it conceivable at all that this "urban loneliness" is present in the resulting music each and every time the score is reconstituted by performers, and present in a way which listeners can group without being previously informed, as it were? Within Fischer's conceptual scheme the answer to these questions has to be No. His own interpretative opinions, though grounded, perhaps, in some technical knowledge, can never convincingly double-up as statements of "objective" authority. He has no final argument against the listener who hears nothing of the kind in the music in question and while he poses the question in this way he never will have.

The strength of Fischer's approach is in his linking of (historical) social forces and developments to new and original "forms" and "resources" in music, but his weakness is in this linking too - in the fact that he cannot specify anything much about the particular nature of the links. His argument founders on the apparent inaccessibility of musical "meaning" which in turn flows, in my opinion from his search for something timelessly and totally "within" the work. He has not dug deeply enough; in particular he has not considered that musical meaning might be a contingent or changing thing, to which audiences and others contribute as well as composers. As with many of the writers I am considering Fischer would no doubt grant in principle the truth of this criticism. What he does not do is make it an integral part of his approach, and this is where his inadequacy lies. Its cause may be in his fundamental conceptual framework but I think not. His discussion of the social conditions within which magic can be "real" and magically-associated art meaningful, earlier in the book, suggests that he can think in these terms within the areas he knows well. Once again as with Caudwell, the real obstacle is schemas, a priori constructs, the over-eagerness to "place" each phenomena within a unified marxist framework, - even though it requires that one first wrings its neck, as Sartre puts it in his polemic against such methods.¹¹

It is in fact not conceivable that, say, Beethoven's Vth "means" the same to modern listeners, however "trained" in the tradition "within which" it was written/composed/first performed, as it did to the audience on that first night on the 22nd of December, 1808. Listeners are an

essential part of the production of music, not merely receivers of something already fixed. The music is only more than "meaningless sounds" if it is apprehended as such by listeners and only such reception makes the composer/performer-etc-role meaningful in turn. And it is not merely hairsplitting to point out that no two audiences are the same. To take extreme examples the music of the Medieval Church in England has no "more" meaning to a modern englishman than to a German, and neither of them will be able to hear it without "placing" or "associating" it in ways learnt in our time (or failing to, and judging the music "meaningless" in consequence). Not only, then, do different cultures accord different sorts of meanings and functions, to musical practices, but the continuity that exists even within a society over a period is only a fragile, relative one, and does not justify the notion that any piece of music can have an unchanging effect on (or meaning to) its listeners. I will return to the question of continuity later.

Fischer does have some interesting speculations to offer - on old church music, on dance music, military marches, etc, on the arrival of "conflict" in Western music during the period of its "secularisation" (1600 and later), on the highbrow-lowbrow divisions origin in the 19th century when a new middle-class (and later working class) musical public grew up along the old aristocratic one. But it is not without significance that these suggestions are really in no way different from the small-change of "social context" remarks in many a non-marxist, academic music history.

In the last part of his argument Fischer is concerned to define "formalism" in music, a recurrent theme in "Communist" criticism especially during the "Stalinist" period. His definition is, once again, highly conventional: he writes of virtuosity for its own sake, cross imitation and slavish archaism, the forcible removal of warmth and feeling as in "neo-classicism" and "intellectualised" revivals of old religious music. Despite Fischer's eschewment of state censorship he has arrived here at normative principles, "Thou shalt not" and "Thou shalt". He holds up works of Elster as models, and implicitly, those of the practitioners of neo-classicism and religious revivals (Stravinsky, Hindemith, Reger?) as examples of paths to be avoided. We do not have to espouse liberal and romantic ideas of artistic freedom to understand that the insubstantiality of most of his argument cannot provide any basis

for this sort of conclusion. Its sources must then be elsewhere, either in an apriorism of an aesthetic sort or in enslavement to a political doctrine despite its failure to provide the substantial categories that are lacking.

2. The "Classical" Sociologists.

If the marxist tradition has not been very fruitful in attempting to move beyond the ideas of music as "meaningless" or "intranslatable", then what of the major figures of the "Sociology of Music" as a subdiscipline of general sociology? Again there were depressingly few substantial contributions here, but several of them do have considerable interest and importance. What we find running like a thread through these is a concern over the character and site of the autonomy of musical practices. Some writers believe that sociology has nothing to offer to the understanding of the "music itself", however defined and can simply set up a view of the context of social actions surrounding an autonomous musical production. Others believe that music must be seen as articulating in some way, its social and psychological origins and circumstances, and likewise that its use by listeners must be viewed as a social practice related to other practices and determinations in their social life, and not simply derived from what the music is supposed to "be saying".

[These authors vary in their opinions of whether anything "immanent" in music exists]. This second view has tended to be more fruitful of hypotheses and insights than the first, and it is where such a view is combined with some musicological expertise and interest that the very best contributions to my putative "cultural study of music" are to be found. Specifically I am referring to the work of John Shepherd and to a number of books and essays by Adorno. Before I deal with these writers, however, I will present a survey of the development of the sociology of music, beginning with the classical sociologists of the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Although Conte includes music among the "aesthetic matters" which he considers legitimate objects of sociological study, it is in the work of Dilthey that the sociology of music may really be said to begin. His writings on music are to be found in three major works, all of them unfortunately not translated into English¹². I have relied here on K.P. Etzkorn's

discussion of these works for the following summary.¹³ Music, argues Dilthey, expresses emotions, and nothing else. The expression arises in the first place out of the relationships of the elements "within the music" to each other. But the composer is an "unwitting" communicator, manipulating his technical means without knowing precisely how or why an expressive whole is formed. Thus certain musical configurations will turn out, apparently fortuitously, to have "meaning", perhaps the "same meaning" to the composer and the listeners, and to different sets of listeners.¹⁴ In his studies of the German national character Dilthey argues that the "meaning" of great works like some of Bach's is in fact the expression of "national feelings", of the "depths of Germanic fantasy". Thus what the composer is unwittingly doing is "striking a chord" as it were, which will resonate among all listeners sharing the elements of nationality and social conditioning, which have made the composer what he is. (Dilthey is the one who uses "he" throughout, not me). However, he rejects the concept "Volksseele" (soul of the people) which was to be turned to Nazi purposes in the next century) arguing that the meaning of terms like "nation" can "only be expressed analytically" by adding together separate analyses of many aspects and cannot be presented as an intangible unifier working through these aspects to realise itself.

Thus we find at the fountainhead of sociological enquiry into music the first statements of several lines of thought which will be evident throughout - namely, the belief that music has 'immanent' qualities or laws, and the attempt to formulate the problem of how it can then be said to express, embody, or indeed do, anything "social". The problem is still with us - viz, for example, "Profane Culture" by Paul Willis, ps 198-203¹⁵.

Georg Simmel, another of the major figures of early German sociology wrote one major work on music as well as a few bits and pieces later in his lifetime. His "Psychological and Ethnological Studies in Music"¹⁶, is a remarkable work, expressing a central thesis which, coming from the writer ^{who} Colletti has called "the German Bergson", is remarkably materialist in tendency. Opposing Darwin's theory that music originates in sexuality as unsupported by serious evidence, Simmel suggests that music begins as speech "exaggerated by emotion in the direction of rhythm and modulation". This becomes art-music, however, only when the spontaneity of the simple

shriek of pain or shout of joy is intercepted by rules - in other words an "objectivity" enters the process. Different sets of rules correspond to different social settings, and produce different kinds of music. Because music is, in this view "a sociopsychological and not a psychic" expression¹⁷, its appreciation depends on a (socialised) familiarity with its conventions. Simmel considers music to express, unproblematically, the "Volksseele" of its society; once again, however, he does not use this term with the nationalistic connotations it later acquires - but only in contrast to the Darwinian view of music as expressing natural "drives". Once again, then, with Simmel, we have a view of music as a social practice, and we have a rendering of the idea that "music expresses emotions". Also Simmel offers a clue to what is to become Weber's more systematic scheme of musical development - namely the 'rules' which intercept spontaneity and which Weber names as "rationalisation".

Max Weber's "The Social and Rational Foundations of Music", although it is in a sense a large fragment rather than a complete work,¹⁸ is important as a sort of "locus classicus" of many widely - recurring ideas among the sociologists of music, as well as among some critics and historians. "In its broadcast sense Weber's thesis is that Western music has peculiar rational properties produced by social factors in Occidental development", (write Martindale & Riedal in their introduction to the English translation). He considers the development of notation, and the related development of "tonality" as rationalisations of irrational materials, while delightedly noting that a flaw or irrationality inherent in the major-minor system is in fact the basis of its expressiveness (the 7th and the chord of the Dominant 7th), and of its variety. The rationalisation in question consists in the selection of certain intervals, and the suppression of others, for harmonic purposes, and Weber displays a vast erudition in selecting examples from all over the world of this process, of its "pentatonic" origins, and of other dissimilar cases. It is not my purpose here to discuss the pros and cons of his argument at a "technical" level, but to point out some of its implications and assumptions. Firstly despite Weber's own interest in "exotic" instruments and musics, his scheme implicitly asserts the superiority or the tonal, noted music of the West over all the other existing types. More rational action, more rational thought, and more experimentation and conscious

modification have gone into this Western music says Weber, than into any other. Secondly, insofar as Weber comprehends the inter-relatedness of notation, instrumental developments, mass production, etc and musical developments such as the rise of tonality, he envisages a continued development of the same sort in the future. The idea of a music which use new techniques to abandon notation and, indeed, to abandon a great deal of "technical knowledge" and which puts itself into a wholly different relation to the rest of the social life of its listeners from what which Weber rightly describes as the "middle-class" relationship - this is more or less beyond Weber's grasp. He is, despite a "romantic" interest in the "primitive", essentially a modern-is-best evolutionist when considering music, and the "modern" for him is the 1900 symphonic and operatic moment.

In addition to this study there is a section in one of Paul Honigsheim's lectures, quoted in Etzkorn's Introduction to his works cited above¹⁹ in which Honigsheim recalls Weber's interest in the thesis that Christianity is the root-cause of the peculiarities of Western musical development. There is, says Weber, very little use of the body in Christian ritual, in marked contrast to most other religions. This, combined with the development of mathematics in Medieval and Renaissance Europe, tended to push music in the direction of "abstract" instrumental forms for "cerebral" appreciation. Whatever the virtues of this thesis in general, the "non-corporality" of Western "art-music" (both pre and post-Renaissance) is an element in many writings on modern music and on popular music in particular. A whole school of thought, in effect, sees first jazz and then rock as the rejection of this central aspect of the Western tradition²⁰. This discussion of rationality and non-corporeality is yet another strand, then, which recurs in the sociology of music (we will find it in Adorno too) and elsewhere, though unfortunately few writers use it as a tool for examining and illuminating any concrete examples.

Despite Weber's own example, his followers in German "Musiksociologic" have tended to follow not this comparative anthropological approach, but one based on his central ideas of "value-free" study of "social actions and structure". This tendency has not been without its major controversies, however, both in relation to value-freedom as an ideal and in relation to the proper object of study. With reference to the latter debate, there

have been those who see the sociology of music as secondary to musicology - as helping to give the "science of musical interpretation and criticism" a social consciousness (of both contexts for, and influences on, composition and also behaviour of audiences, preferences, breakdowns by class, sex etc.). Walter Serauky is a leading example of this tendency. Adopting a somewhat similar approach, the influential Alphonse Silberman argues that "Musiksoziologie" is simply a branch of sociology as a whole, and that it can contribute nothing to the debates about what, if anything, is "in" or "immanent to", a musical work. Immanence is, he says, a useless category in sociology, since it is the experience of music which is the true object of sociological investigation, this being the socially shared aspect.²¹ Adorno has argued strongly against this view in his "Theses on the Sociology of Art".²² As this polemic makes clear the debate about what to study and the value-freedom dispute are intimately connected, because those who aspire to value-freedom regard any qualitative or analytical statement about "music itself" as beset hopelessly by "values" of the sort they seek to expunge. In contrast Adorno regards musical material as continuous with, of the same origin as, the "social process" itself. The separation of "art" from "life" is for Adorno a particular historical attitude, reflected in the art of its particular period, but in no way a characteristic inherent to art as a whole. Thus any total heteronomy of art in relation to social life should be rejected by the investigator, whose task it is to discover their fundamental inter-relatedness and indeed unity,²³ while accepting that a "relative autonomy" will exist.

3. Shepherd and Adorno

Other major figures of the Sociology of Music are Kurt Blaukopf, Gerhard Pinthus and Arnold Schering in Europe, and Paul Monigheim and K. Peter Etzkorn in the U.S.²⁴ However I do not think there is anything to be gained from continuity to survey such writers one by one here. I will have occasion to refer to some of them, in other contexts, no doubt. Here I propose to discuss the contributions of the two writers I named above as the most important for a "cultural study of music", namely Shepherd and Adorno. And in relation to Adorno I will also make some comments on "culture-criticism", and the "mass-culture" debate as a whole.

In spite of the title of the book, "Whose Music? - A Sociology of Musical Languages" to which John Shepherd contributes the 3 first and

and most substantial chapters, he is really a radical voice in musicology rather than a sociologist. It is undoubtedly this background which enables Shepherd to provide here²⁵ perhaps the most sustained attempt in existence to construct a theoretical view of the nature of music as social practice, of what different musics "mean" and of how this "meaning" is related to other social meanings. Basing himself on the Berger and Luckmann view²⁶ of the "social construction of reality", Shepherd discusses the limitations of Meyer, Langer and others at some length before presenting his own view of musical meaning, one which is greatly indebted to the work of McLuhan and others on the history of literacy and printing, and the nature of the "industrial" world sense " which these media help to sustain."²⁷ He argues that musical works articulate the world-sense of their time, as well as particularities of their separate geneses. This articulation is to be found in the very broad conventions of rhythm, harmonic system and melody and can be exposed by scholarship, even though it is not translatable into language. The particular genesis of single works/performances is not explained by Shepherd, but he implies that any such explanation would have to be situated in the framework he proposes.

His examples of Plainchant and early tonal music are worked out in some detail as evidence for his theory. For example the absence of a precisely measured "spatialised" time-sense which is apparent in the scores of Medieval music, and which explains its "other-worldliness", (to modern listeners) says Shepherd, is the product of the sense of time in that culture as a whole, while the lack of the tonal "polarity" (the "pull" of the "tonic") which we know from "classical" music corresponds to certain recurring elements in the verbalised ideologies of the time - namely the sense of the world as a set of "centres-without-margins" or "interlocking particularities" as noted by Bloch and other historians, (These broad assumptions are taken to have been shared by all the classes and groups of feudal society).²³ Shepherd's use of the term ideology is a somewhat problematic one - he uses it to mean something like "world-view" implies a visual bias he is trying to correct) rather than to imply any truth or falseness in the ideas referred to. Likewise he does not claim that the ideology is unified, or disunified, and he does not tackle the problem of how "conscious" of what they were articulating, his medieval musicians were. These limitations do not appear very substantial

with reference to plainchant, but they become so when Shepherd moves on to tonal music, especially when he begins to suggest a relationship between classical music (18th century, predominantly) and the "industrial world sense". In neglecting to consider the time-lag between this music and industrial capitalism's period of growth and predominance in Europe, as well as totally failing to consider the problem of "class" when specifying a "world-sense", Shepherd renders his approach inadequate despite its promise. It is not possible to talk of a "world-sense" corresponding to "industry" in the way he talks of a feudal world-sense common to kings and serfs alike. Indeed we can see retrospectively that his concept of ideology was lame from the beginning. Apart from class, Shepherd ignores sex too as a determination affecting musical production. While this may correspond to an almost total absence of women in "composition" during the periods he discusses, this cannot excuse his omission of any mention of the problem.

Furthermore these absences in Shepherd point to a peculiarity of his view which is surprising in the light of his starting point in the theories of Berger and Luckman. He writes only of the moment of composition. He insists that musical meaning can only be understood as social meaning, created-in-common by producers and listeners, but he considers "works" as containing this meaning in something like a fixed sense. One can apparently interpret the "Musica Enchiriadis" from its score (one of his Medieval examples), with little consideration of how, when and where it used to be performed, by how many voices, instruments if any, etc. So, despite his theoretical starting point, he ends up looking only for the equivalent of Fischer's "urban loneliness..... in the late chamber music" of Beethoven, i.e. still posing the question in a pre-sociological and pre-marxist way. [Shepherd acknowledges Marx as an influence on his method, but clearly has not gone far enough in this appropriation of him, and is not further forward if less dogmatic than Fischer with his truncated Hegelianism]. Another peculiarity of Shepherd's theory is that, while he espouses "media-determinism" of a McLuhan-like variety, in according fundamental causal status to developments in the media-techniques, he has very little to say concretely about instruments and voices, choirs and orchestras and new inventions of all kinds. The "level of the media" which has such importance in his scheme actually

amounts to the existence and minimal development of notation and very little else. While this is clearly important it is equally clear that very little development in notation-techniques takes place in Europe between 1600 and 1900. say, while musical developments of enormous scope take shape in the same period.

Shepherd's chapters are open to a number of other criticisms as well as these. However he remains a major contributor in that he has shown, in a relatively systematic manner, that we do not have to stand like Meyer, Fischer and the others, dumbfounded by the inaccessibility of music to verbalisation, and that there is nothing ineffable about it which makes fools of all investigators. Finally I should mention that he includes in "Whose Music?" a section on the blues, which while far from satisfying, is impressive enough to suggest that the methods and approaches we can learn from his contribution as a whole, will not be without purchase on the somewhat recalcitrant problems of contemporary popular music and its social meaning, despite its all too obvious differentness from the classical and pre-classical musics Shepherd deals with best.

Before I continue I will summarise here the central strands and problems with this survey has highlighted so far: Firstly, the problem of what, if anything is "immanent" in music and whether the social determination of a work's internal relations is a legitimate concept; secondly, the problem of the "rational" and the "corporeal/non-corporeal" in music, as specifications of possible intersections between the "social" in general and the "musically-immanent" in particular; thirdly the problems, if any, of assuming that music expresses "emotions", and by implication, nothing else; and fourthly, the need to avoid all apriorisms, especially ethnocentric theories and "vulgar" evolutionism, and the imposition of totalising schemas generated out of concerns which essentially exclude the musical, such as Fischer's or Caudwells.

With the towering contribution of Adorno to the social-scientific and Marxist study of music we enter the realm of a "great debate" about the quality and direction of contemporary culture as a whole. The existence of a world-wide working-class, of more or less monopolistic industries producing "cultural goods" of increasing "leisure-time" throughout

populations, and other factors, are all taken to conspire to "level", "vulgarise", commercialise and generally degrade the culture of contemporary capitalist societies. This is one side of the debate - and roughly speaking, it represents Adorno's view. On the other side are assorted "pluralists" who believe that the benefits of mass-literacy outweigh all the disadvantages, that the availability of cheap cultural commodities of all kinds is in itself a "good thing", and ^{that education can combat the negative aspects of} contemporary culture / this is the more optimistic version of another theory which believes that only education has any chance, but suspects that the tidal wave of "trash" is unstoppable - eg. Leavis & Thomson²⁹ and others⁷, or that "things are no worse than they always have been" etc.³⁰

All of Adorno's available writings on music are to be seen in the context of these concerns - even his "Philosophy of Modern Music" whose ostensible object is the work of Schoenberg and Stravinsky. But a number of works are of particular importance here, since they discuss popular music as well as "serious", and "modes of listening" as well as composition and "distribution". (The occurrence of terms from political economy (production, distribution, consumption, industry) from here on is the unavoidable consequence of entering arguments about contemporary music, in which an "industrial" structure is relevant at every point).³¹

Here I will present a sort of synthetic account of Adorno's fundamental view of musical practices in general, and popular music in particular, constructed from all these works; and a few preliminary criticisms which point forward to the alternative view I will be presenting elsewhere. Music, says Adorno, has "immanent laws". This essential point has been misunderstood by some of his critics and so requires further elucidation before his approach to contemporary musical practices can be explained. Adorno does not seek the sanction of acoustic physics for a particular type of music as some writers have done. On the contrary he writes:

"The idea that the tonal system is exclusively of natural origin is an illusion rooted in history. This "Second nature" owes the dignity of its closed and exclusive system to merchantile society....."³²

We may assume that if Adorno holds this to be true of European tonal music (which he has been accused of favouring unduly) then he holds it to be true of other types of music too. If there is ethnocentricity in his theory on this score it is of the nature of a (revealing) lacuna, and not a damning of refutation of the whole.

If the "laws" of music are not "natural" but social in origin, we must ask in what precise ways they are seen as originating, operating and changing. Discussing the idea of the "materials" at the disposal of the "composer", Adorno writes:

"This material is traditionally defined - in terms of physics or possibly in terms of the psychology of sound - as the sum of all sounds at the disposal of the composer. The actual compositional material however, is as different from this sum as is language from its total supply of sounds. It is not simply a matter of the increase and decrease of this supply in the course of history. All its specific characteristics are indications of the historical process..... The "Material" itself is a crystallisation of the creative impulse, an element socially predertermined through the consciousness of man..... [Thus] all the tonal combinations employed in the past by no means stand indiscriminately at the disposal of the composer today. Even the more insensitive ear detects the shabbiness and exhaustion of the diminished seventh chord and certain chromatic modulatory tones in the salon music of the 19th century. For the technically trained ear, such vague discomfort is transformed into a prohibitive canon..... etc."³³

This comparison with language has its dangers, but it helps, I think to explain why Adorno felt able to distinguish "lawful" from "unlawful" musical developments. Change in "musical material" proceeds within socio-historically-created directions and limits, and not in an ideally-free way as might otherwise be thought. Because this "material" is "of the same origin as the social process" it is not wholly malleable, capable of infinite transformation at any given time, but has a certain meaningfulness, which functions as a "given" to which new musical work

must relate if it in turn is to have meaning. / Such development, by the way, can be progressive or regressive, according to Adorno. This point, which seems to rest on an un-mentioned analogy with natural evolution, is of great importance at a later stage in the argument/.

The "historical tendency" which exists in music (i.e. its limitedness and direction, as explained above) is located not in composers' minds, not in the score, still less in abstract "imagination" or "spirit", (although these categories do have a place in Adorno's theory), nor is it simply a pressure from the listeners. Its locus is the changing relationship, dialectically conceived, between musicians and listeners. Both parties are more or less active, and more or less conscious, in their effect on each other and on the development of the "musical material" itself. Wishart has claimed that Adorno makes no "attempt to uncover the social bases of aesthetic response styles"³⁴ but in fact, Adorno's theory accords listeners an active, transforming role in musical development, and furthermore, in "Introduction to the Sociology of Music" he suggests precisely a typology of contemporary listening for empirical verification. This particular line of criticism of Adorno is clearly unjustified. For instance, statements such as:

"sacrosanct traditional music has come to resemble commercial mass production in the character of its performances and in its role in the life of the listener, and its substance has not escaped this influence"³⁵

and

"social reception is not one with musical content not even with the social one for which the musical one serves as a code"³⁶

are clear evidence of a more complex and subtle view of the ultimate social derivation of the "laws" of musical material, as well as its relative autonomy at a given time, than Wishart can apparently comprehend.

Adorno's remarks about the "shabbiness and exhaustion" of certain elements of 19th century "salon music" show us how he conceives of this kind of musical development taking place. Certain conventions become hackneyed, to listeners as well as to musicians, and are dropped while

new ones become accepted. The innovating composer or performer may rupture the understanding with the listeners but it is soon re-established as the innovation is appreciated as logical and necessary by them. Such development justifies the epithet "autonomous art", according to Adorno. However, the social conditions required for the flourishing of this particular kind of "autonomy" are only temporarily and insecurely (or "contradictorily") present in European history, namely during the rise and heyday of the bourgeoisie. Already in this period the social tendencies which will undermine it are at work - namely the invasion of the "cultural sphere" by commodity-production and its concomitant psycho-social phenomenon, fetishism.

Mozart's career and Haydn's move from ecclesiastical and aristocratic patronage, respectively, to a bourgeois position of composing and mounting performances of, their works directly for a paying audience. Already before them Handel and others had done this in the most advanced mercantile nation, England, while after them it increasingly became the norm. Nonetheless it was a precarious bourgeoisdom for most, and only a century after Beethoven's career of shocking nobility and royalty with his radical espousal of the "bourgeois freedoms", the composers of the "second Vienna school" - Schoenberg, Berg, Webern - found themselves unable to organise profitable concerts during the post-world war one inflation, and began to experience the full force of that isolation and incomprehension which has, in this century, once again forced many "serious" composers into seeking and accepting patronage - this time, that of Governments and "foundations" funded out of corporation profits. Thus the very "mode of production" which began by liberating composers and performers from a patron's whim ends by "proletarianising" them and subjecting their production to that alienation from its social destination and "usefulness" which destroys in reality the ideal freedoms of all wage and salary earners. On the subject of modern patronage Adorno writes:

"The conflict between commission and autonomy results in a reluctant and scanty production..... [and, he concludes, there may be] validity in the suspicion.... that the concept of great music which has today been passed on to radical music [meaning Schoenberg and a few others - DB] belongs itself only to a moment in history... Once music has been refined to an end in itself, its purposelessness, or a pragmatic concern with the consumer market, causes it to atrophy."³⁷

At the same time as commodity production has derailed the "autonomy" of serious music from the side of production, commodity-fetishism has invaded the manner in which listening is done, destroying the "mode of listening" which supported the "serious tradition" of the 18th and 19th centuries, while developing another mode in an audience vastly larger - namely, "the masses". This development is the subject matter of one of Adorno's most important essays "on the Fetish-character in Music and the Regression of Listening."³⁸

In order to explain precisely and in detail what effects commodity-character and fetishism have on musical production and listening, in Adorno's view, I will use a string of quotes from this essay with some added explanation. I have not quoted them in their order of appearance in the essay, however, but in an order which clarifies, I hope their logic at the expense of Adorno's literary presentation.

Serious music is performed in a manner which does violence to the intentions encoded in the works. Thus in some cases "classics" are performed in a way which Adorno, quoting Edward Steuermann calls "the barbarism of perfection":

"Perfect, immaculate performance in the latest style preserves the work at the price of its definitive reification."

[Here Adorno is presumably thinking of "great recordings"]. Alternatively the works are sacrificed to the "personality" of the particular conductor, who, "like a Fuhrer", "reduces" aura and organisation to a common denominator". Again, they may be performed, or even arranged anew - a practice which Adorno considers particularly pernicious - in such a way that

"the delight in the movement and the gay facade becomes an excuse for absolving the listener from the thought of the whole, whose claim is comprised in proper listening. The listener is converted, along his line of least resistance, into the acquiescent purchaser..... The isolated moments of enjoyment prove incompatible with the immanent constitution of the work of art, and whatever in the work goes beyond them to an essential perception is sacrificed to them. They are not bad in themselves but in their diversionary function."

This emphasis on climaxes, big tunes, unusual orchestrations, etc in the performance or up-dating of the "classics" corresponds, says Adorno, to the new mode of listening which has become predominant in Europe and the U.S. this century. And because of this same listening-pattern, new music is composed which lays claim to the serious tradition but which actually panders to the new type of listeners. Tchaikowsky is the originator of this trend says Adorno, which has continued via Rachmaninov Sibelius and others. Increasingly however, "banal" and unashamedly "light" types of music have come to predominate, and so what we know as contemporary "popular music" is arrived at.

On this subject, and its relation to serious music, Adorno writes:

"The power of the street ballad, the catchy tune, and all the swarming forms of the banal has made itself felt since the beginning of the bourgeois era. Formerly it attacked the cultural privilege of the ruling class. But today, when that power of the banal extends over the entire society, its function has changed..... The diverse spheres of music must be thought of together. Their static separation, which certain caretakers of culture have ardently sought..... the neat parcelling out of music's social fields of force, is illusionary It would be just as easy to go in the other direction, and conceal the break between the two spheres, assuming a continuum which permits a progressive education leading safely from commercial jazz and hit songs to cultural commodities. "[By "cultural" here (not always) Adorno simply means serious or classical works]." This unity of the two spheres of music is that of an unresolved contradiction..... (elsewhere he adds) The illusion of a social preference for light music as against serious is based on that passivity of the masses which makes the consumption of light music contradict the objective interests of those who consume it. It is claimed they actually like light music and listen to the higher type only for reasons of social prestige, when acquaintance with the text of a single hit-song suffices to reveal the sole function this object of honest approbation can perform."

With statements like the last, Adorno is on his weakest ground. He does not merely generalise, he admits of no exceptions. And this sort of bluff overstatement is found again and again in his writings. When he does get round to considering possible exceptions he sees them as unrealised possibilities (eg the potential in jazz, which Adorno sees but considers to be thwarted by market conditions) or as dying remnants (eg. the occasional felicitous musical phrases and progressions whose very beauty merely underlines the banality of the whole). He is weak, however on examples, and also sometimes falls into the common error of discussing principally lyrics ("text") when arguing about the supposed bad effect on listeners' consciousness, despite the emphasis on the music in the argument as a whole.

This endless supply of trivialised, lifeless and destructured performances of classics, of new "serious" music written with the appeal of frequent climaxes, "collossalism", "big tunes" etc in mind, and of light and popular music which is no longer ashamed of its "non-autonomous" state, of its thoroughgoing commodity - status - this supply is both a response to, and a contributory cause of, the development of the new "fetishistic" mode of listening, which in turn is part of the development of "mass-culture" as a whole. A socio-economic development ("culture-industry") and a socio-psychological one underlie this change, says Adorno, and here he implicitly or explicitly always refers to the other works of the "Frankfurt School" on these questions.

The socio-economic development involved is a strong economic concentration, and sharpening competition, among the corporations, which Adorno derives in a relatively "orthodox" Marxist manner from the "tendency of the rate of profit to fall," allied with the penetration by these competing corporations of new markets - in the working masses themselves - on an ever-larger scale. The "petty" character of the whole business of cultural commodities in the 18th and 19th centuries has given way to an industrialisation of distribution and marketing; and the continued artizanic character of musical production (song-writing and economically-autonomous musicians and bands contracting themselves to corporations etc) has become anachronistic. "Song-factories" and mass-production have not been able to take over this production however in the main, because, Adorno argues, the illusion of individuality and personal-^{ness} in the pop-song is necessary for it to

sell. It is an illusion, however, because, although the individual or small-group-pattern of production survives the imperatives imposed by mass-distribution, and the economics of the process force the producers into the repetition of successful formulae, the eschewment of too much experiment, the writing of banal lyrics and so on.

The socio-psychological development in question is more complex. The masses are atomised, they have no existence "for-themselves" due to the inadequacy of their unions and political parties, and are thus subject to the domination not only of a ruling class economically-speaking but of its "ideology" in all its forms. This ideology has had several phases, and has moved, in modern times, into a phase which rests heavily on the direct mystifying power of the commodity-form. This is allied to a vast proliferation of consumer-goods, technification of all aspects of their production and consumption, and a related recomposition of the working classes both in terms of the greater numbers doing light-industrial and white-collar work and in terms of their standards of life. Precisely, the process means that the masses see their liberation, their future improvements and their present satisfactions in terms which each point to ^acommodity which is there for them to buy and use. The curtailment of their use of productive and creative powers outside of wage-work proceeds till it is total, or alternatively till the only uses made of such powers are themselves means for ensnaring people into further consumption - as in do-it-yourself, gardening, or "home-music -making". No "escape-attempts" remain which are not really deceptions of this kind, says Adorno.

Thus in their listening, the masses have "regressed", not in relation to the masses of the past but in the precise sense that a minority-mode of listening existed previously which was concentrated, knowledgeable and interested in the structure of the whole, and this mode now has no heirs, except a few remaining individuals. The new listening is not conscious in the same sense as the old, though it incorporates "sudden dives into recognition", which merely confirm the familiarity of a tune often heard but not normally consciously perceived.

"They the "listening subjects" listen atomistically, and dissociate what they hear". "Deconcentration is the perceptual activity which prepares the way for the forgetting and sudden

recognition of mass music. If the standardised products, hopelessly like one another except for conspicuous bits such as hit lines, do not permit concentrated listening without becoming unbearable to the listeners, the latter are in any case no longer capable of concentrated listening Benjamin's reference to the apperception of the cinema in a condition of distraction is just as valid for light music. The usual commercial jazz can only carry out its function because it is not attended to during conversation, and above all as an accompaniment to dancing."

This listening responds only to "striking melodic intervals, unsettling modulations, intentional or unintentional mistakes, or whatever condenses itself into a formula by an especially intimate merging of melody and text". The listener does not, and indeed cannot, perceive "the whole" or the longer-term qualities of "form" which are so central to Western serious music, and so in the new popular music, listeners "are not even offered the structure which they cannot follow". On the other hand the "isolated charms" (which include, alongside the "unsettling modulations" etc mentioned above, tricks of execution and instrumental colouring) are of the most limited kind.

"They all centre on an impressionistically-softened tonality. It cannot be said that interest in the isolated "colour" or the isolated sonority awakens a taste for new colours and new sonorities. Rather the atomistic listeners are the first to denounce such sonorities as "intellectual" or absolutely... dissonant every extravagant sonority must be so produced that the listener can recognise it as a substitute for a "normal" one. While he rejoices in the mistreatment the dissonance gives to the consonance whose place it takes, the virtual consonance simultaneously guarantees that one remains within the circle."

Adorno spends little time in the "regression" essay explaining the socio-economic basis of this deconcentrated listening, and little time on the problems of psychological theory which his generalisations raise. Nonetheless we can construct his view of these questions from sections of this essay in conjunction with points he makes elsewhere. He writes:

"The concept of musical fetishism cannot be psychologically derived..... all contemporary musical life is dominated by the commodity form..... music, with all the attributes of the ethereal and sublime which are generously accorded it, serves in America today as an advertisement for commodities which one must acquire in order to be able to hear music. If the advertising function is carefully dimmed in the case of serious music, it always breaks through in the case of light music. [Adorno here seems to be thinking of radio, which combines the function of providing music with that of encouraging listeners to buy the records played]. The whole jazz business, with its free distribution of scores to bands has abandoned the idea that actual performance promotes the sale of piano scores and phonograph records." [?? - is this a mistranslation? Surely the point is that performances do serve as adverts for the scores and records, and this is why the publishers and record companies distribute their scores free to well-known bands. Perhaps "abandoned" should read "adopted" or "promotes" should read "prevents"?]

"Countless hit songs' texts praise the hitsongs themselves, repeating their titles in capital letters. What makes its appearance like an idol out of such masses of type is the exchange-value in which the quantum of possible enjoyment has disappeared. Marx defines the fetish character of the commodity as the veneration of the thing made by oneself, which as exchange-value simultaneously alienates itself from producer to consumer - "human beings". [?] "A commodity is therefore a mysterious thing, simply because in it the social character of mens' labour appears to them as an objective character stamped upon the product of that labour". This is the real secret of success. It is the mere reflection of what one pays in the market for the product. The consumer is really worshipping the money that he himself has paid for the ticket to the Tascanini concert. He has literally "made" the success which he reifies and accepts as an objective criterion, without recognising himself in it. But he has

not "made" it by liking the concert but rather by buying the ticket. To be sure exchange-value exerts its power in a special way in the realm of cultural goods. For in the world of commodities this realm appears to be exempted from the power of exchange, to be in an immediate relationship with the goods, and it is this appearance, in turn, which alone gives cultural goods their exchange value..... The appearance of immediacy is as strong as the compulsion of exchange-value is inevitable. The social compact harmonises the contradiction. The appearance of immediacy takes possession of the mediated exchange-value itself. If the commodity in general combines exchange-value and use-value, then the pure use-value, whose illusion the cultural goods must preserve in completely capitalist society, must be replaced by pure exchange-value, which, precisely in its capacity as exchange-value deceptively takes over the function of use-value. The specific fetish-character of music lies in this quid pro quo. The feelings which go to the exchange-value create the appearance of immediacy at the same time as the absence of a relation to the object belies it. It has its basis in the abstract character of exchange-value. Every "psychological" aspect, every ersatz satisfaction, depends on such social substitution."³⁹ [My emphasis throughout this quotation].

This highly problematic passage is central to the whole of Adorno's theory of contemporary musical practices. It is cryptic and contorted in style, as well as loose in grammar, though the translator may be partially responsible here. I have underlined points which seem to me to be difficult but important throughout. Firstly he asserts that the "quantum of possible enjoyment" disappears into pure exchange-value. This might seem to be a clumsily-expressed reference to that point of Capital, Chapter 1, in which Marx writes that for the purposes of exchange, the use-value of a commodity is irrelevant and only its exchange-value matters. But Adorno then writes that the thing a person makes "alienates itself from producer to consumer - "human beings."" Apart from the problems raised by his use of the term "alienation" here, there is the peculiar addendum, "human beings" at the end of the sentence. These terms are not from the chapter on commodities in Capital, but brought together from other writings of Marx. For what

reason?, we may ask. This becomes a little clearer a few lines further on, when Adorno argues that the consumer makes the success of a concert by buying the ticket, but does so "without recognising himself in it". The consumer is now the producer of the musical success, and experiences the same estrangement from this product that the alienated labourer does from the thing "he" makes. Now Marx does posit the unity of production and consumption as moments of the economic process, but it must be questioned whether he posits it in this form, either in "capital" or in the section on this question in the "Grundrisse". He posits production as a social process, distribution as determining "the proportion in which the individual shares in the product", and exchanges as delivering "the particular products into which the individual desires to convert the portion which distribution has assigned to him". Consumption is then seen as "gratification" / of "needs" / or "individual appropriation".

"In consumption, the product steps outside this social movement and becomes a direct object and servant of individual need, and satisfies it in being consumed".

There is no question of use-value "vanishing" here - it has its irreducible moment, that of satisfying a "need". He goes so far as to say that consumption

"actually belongs outside economics except insofar as it reacts in turn upon the point of departure, and initiates the whole process anew".⁴⁰

However Marx does not leave the matter here. He continues: "Production is also immediately consumption" - and "Consumption is also immediately production". So, for instance, production consumes "raw materials", while the consumption of food for example, produces the consumer's body. Marx writes: "every kind of consumption..... in one way or another produces human beings in some particular aspect." And below continues:

"Consumption produces production in a double way, (1) because a product becomes a real product only by being consumed..... (2) because consumption creates the need for new production, that is it creates the ideal, internally compelling cause for

production, which is its pre-supposition. Consumption creates the motive for production; it also creates the object which is active in production as its determinant aim..... No production without a need. But consumption reproduces the need."⁴¹

Marx goes on for several pages making his abstract categories more and more precise. But it is already clear that a bland identity between consumption as an activity and the labour-process, such as Adorno suggests, is not his point. It may be true that the consumer co-produces a musical event in a very particular sense, but this should not be confounded with the general (abstract) unity of production and consumption, nor should this general unity be mistaken for an identity. (Marx adds "Noting simpler for a Hegelian than to posit production and consumption as identical"!)). Here at the heart of Adorno's "Marxism" I think we can begin to trace his error, his principal misunderstanding which begins to derail the whole train of his theoretical thought. He believes that the consumer, "making" the success but failing to "recognise himself in it", is alienated in the same primary sense as the labourer in relation to the product. In arguing this he not only collapses the specificity of consumption but also misrepresents the relationship between the "individual" and the "social" in Marx's argument, for it is not for the individual consumer to recognise himself in another individual's product anyway, but to recognise the socially-imprinted character and meaning of the product (insofar as he and its producer share, in their humanity and historical placement, attributes (of "subjectivity"), which enables communication, or in this case, let us still say consumption, to take place), and so to find in it the satisfaction of "need".

Of course in this introductory section of the "Grundrisse" Marx is arguing at a "high level" of abstraction about the categories "production" "Consumption" etc in general. It is still conceivable that Adorno, despite sloppily misconstruing "Capital" has a valid point. That is, it may be that the consumption of cultural goods in the present phase of capitalism does "alienate" the consumer. Or, perhaps to the extent that consumers co-produce cultural goods in a special sense, (ie. produce cultural "meanings") they share the alienation of the producers in a more immediate way than in

consuming "ordinary" products. Adorno is by no means clear here, at first he seems to consider "fetishism" in general as more or less identical with the primary alienation of the producer under capitalism, as a misrecognition of commodities which, though originating in the production-process, has become the psycho-social concomitant of the complete permeation of society by commodities, and as such universal.

[If so, he does indeed collapse the specificity of consumption completely; if not, he is guilty merely of momentarily oversimplifying]. Later he argues more specifically about the particular fetishism of music, in a way which suggests that despite the error in his interpretation of Marx (an error I find by reading "Grundrisse", but which Adorno in 1940 made without access to that text) the second half, roughly speaking, of the long quotation above is precisely an attempt to formulate a more consistent and acceptable thesis. Cultural goods, argues Adorno, are a special case, because the "appearance of immediacy" is what enables them to sell. They preserve the illusion of a "pure use-value" of something untouched by the market, something "higher" more "human" and more spiritualised than the banal relations of everyday life. He grants here that "the commodity in general combines exchange-value and use value", (without mention of "vanishing"), and goes on to argue that it is the particular character of "cultural goods" which forces them to turn eventually into pure exchange-value (posing as use-value), rather than a "vanishing" of use-value inherent in every commodity. He is not very clear, however, on the subject of what this particular character consists of.

The difficulty here centres around the word "immediate" which Adorno appears to use in a strict sense, as the opposite of "mediated". If all commodities are objectified human labour, then consumption is an indirect social relationship with a producer. Furthermore the consumer can only consume by having money, which is his or her payment for producing something else, generally speaking. The exchange equates these two different kinds of labour as quantities of "abstract" human labour. This is what Adorno means by "the abstract character of exchange-value". Thus exchange is a "mediated" social relation. The two parties are each present in it, but the thing exchanged seems, to each of them, to be a third wholly separate component - a "commodity". The possibility of an "immediate" relation is camouflaged by the commodity-form. The "cultural goods" appear as exceptions

to this pattern because they seem to contain the ideas, feelings and values, of the producer in such a way that these are directly available to the consumer. Something human, not "reified", appears to be on sale.

In his attempt to relate this persuasive view of the specificity of cultural goods to his earlier misconstruction of Marx, Adorno then comes up with the final complex formulations I have underlined.

"The feelings which go to the exchange-value create the appearance of immediacy at the same time as the absence of a relation to the object belies it".

Having denied the specificity of consumption as a satisfaction of needs, Adorno now sees no "relation to the object" at all in consumption, and presumes that the exchange-value is doubling-up as a use-value, as it were, that it is posing as an "immediacy" which it is not. In other words, the consumers are purchasing a pure exchange-value under the illusion that it will satisfy their "need" for "culture".

Clearly this formulation will not do. However, in the same sense that his view of the specificity of cultural goods redeemed part of his argument from its error of misconstruing Marx, so the same insight seems to me to be rescuable here. We can tear free the conception which says consumers purchase the "illusion" of immediacy from the context of speculation about exchange-value, and reformulate it more or less as follows: Consumers are placed in the position of having to purchase a thing in order to hopefully, satisfy the "cultural" need. This opens up the abstract possibility of things being offered which cannot satisfy this need, since the consumer only finds this out later. This in turn can be disguised by various discourses about "art" etc, which, whatever their "truth-content" as ideology, here function to make the consumer confused about his or her reactions, to reconstruct those reactions along lines which acquiesce to the "sub-standard" things on offer, and to whet the appetite of the consumer for more, and always hopefully, better accesses of "cultural" satisfaction in future. Something like this circle of "regression" is indeed implied throughout Adorno's musical writings.

I mentioned above that both the socio-economic and the psychological implications of Adorno's "Regression" thesis were not spelt out fully in

the essay, and, having dealt with the economic somewhat cursorily I will now attempt to cover the suggestions of a social-psychological order which arise. Firstly however, I must make a comment on "needs". The way I have quoted from Marx above, and the way I have used the term myself, might seem to imply that I see needs as simple, more or less fixed, perhaps biologically-derived, conditions of "being human". Food, shelter and rest, perhaps sex and perhaps "spiritual" yearnings of a less tangible kind, would seem to constitute quite an unobjectionable list. Nothing could be further from my intention. Roughly speaking I am with Adorno in conceptualising "needs" as being always the concrete, historically-placed needs of individuals and groups, and the apparent continuities across epochs of such needs as food and shelter are then seen as too abstract to be analytically useful; we must conceive of the reproduction of needs in continuously modified forms, as part of the process of history, specifically as an aspect of the "humanisation" of the "natural" which is rooted finally in labour. The body and mind of the labourer, no less than the materials worked on, are progressively transformed, and all their attributes reproduced in changed forms as labour proceeds. When Marx calls "human nature" a "totality of needs and drives" (Grundrisse) he is not positing a static totality, as numerous passages of the book demonstrate. Nonetheless the "need" does impose itself on the concrete individual as "given", as a more or less "natural" thing, and enters through the individual into the economic and social process as a necessity - i.e. the "reproduction of labour-power". The process itself however changes and reproduces the needs it satisfies and thus produces future necessities which to the present individual cannot seem necessary. The "historical and moral" factor involved in the social definition of subsistence, which Marx points to in Capital, is an alternative formulation of the same insight.

However the nature of the "need" which, according to Adorno, induces consumers to buy things repeatedly which nonetheless do not satisfy the need, (though they may increase the craving?) is clearly problematical in a particular way. Either Adorno is arguing that a real need for "things cultural", an "aesthetic" need, perhaps, exists in everyone in our time, but is not capable of satisfaction through cultural commodities because their commodity-status has destroyed their cultural meaning; or he is saying that a "false need" for these commodities, despite their

objective "untruth", has arisen and poses as the true need for culture which is either buried irretrievably beneath it or extinguished in some way. If we read the "Regression" essay carefully, and also Adorno's "Philosophy of New Music" and "Introduction to the Sociology of Music" we begin to discover that Adorno says both these things, or vacillates between them.

Nowhere in Adorno, to my knowledge, is the theory of "false needs" explicitly set out. But to the extent that it seems to underlie some of his descriptions of "listening" - viz especially "Introduction to the Sociology of Music" - I have considered it worthwhile to glance at his colleague Marcuse's version of this theory in the brief form in which it is presented in "One-Dimensional Man".⁴²

Having stated that "human needs are historical needs", in the sense given above, Marcuse writes:

"We may distinguish both true and false needs. "False" are those which are superimposed upon the individual by particular social interests in his repression: the needs which perpetuate toil, aggressiveness, misery and injustice. Their satisfaction may be most gratifying to the individual, but this happiness is not a condition which has to be maintained and protected if it serves to arrest the development of the ability (his own and others) to recognise the disease of the whole and to grasp the chances of curing the disease. The result then is euphoria in unhappiness. Most of the prevailing needs to relax, to have fun, to behave and consume in accordance with the advertisements, to love and hate what others love and hate, belong to this category of false needs..... "Truth" and "falsehood" of needs designate objective conditions to the extent to which the universal satisfaction of vital needs, and, beyond it the progressive alleviation of toil and poverty, are universally valid standards. But as historical standards they do not only vary according to area and stage of development, they can also be defined only in (greater or lesser) contradiction to the prevailing ones" (his emphasis).

Marcuse, then, justifies his theory of "false needs" finally by an appeal to a relativistic Utopia. While recognising the historical character of standards of "satisfaction of vital needs, and..... progressive alleviation of toil and poverty," he argues that, nonetheless, we should counterpose our definitions of these to the contemporary reality as critical weapons. The problem is now one of "original sin" -

"how can the people who have been the object of effective and productive domination by themselves create the conditions of freedom?"

The problem here is that Marcuse has done away with the belief of Marx that the conditions of proletarianisation, in combination with crises of the economic system, can produce an awareness of the surpassability of the present, and of its desirability, and has replaced it with a definitive claim that, on the contrary, the very logic of capitalist development has produced the "total administration" of the "population" as a whole, so that the individuals who might fight are "kept incapable of being autonomous..... indoctrinated and manipulated down to their very instincts".

But Marcuse's logic is not so impeccable as first reading might suggest. At the very beginning he posits an "individual" who suffers the "imposition" of needs, and who therefore is already a formed social subject prior to this contamination, presumably. Clearly no such process takes place in "advanced capitalist" society, since the individual is formed by a socialisation already possessing the basic character which the individual is to help "reproduce". Thus at this level there can be no talk of falsehood and truth but only of change and identity. Marcuse imports the categories "true" and "false" from his view of "vital needs and..... alleviation of toil etc", and superimposes them on his model of socialisation. To cover his tracks he then solemnly assures the reader that these categories truth and falsehood are "historical" and not definable except by contradicting what exists. While this is true in itself, Marcuse is simply using it to disguise the fact that he wants to judge "needs" by reference to a moral schema, rather than judging that scheme by reference to needs. Now certainly the moment of criticising "reality" must always make reference to ideal categories including "moral" ones, but when these categories of critical thought are turned into the

court of appeal by which the "truth" or "falsehood" of real "needs" is to be judged, then either Marcuse has slipped into an ethical idealism or he is dangerously misusing the terms "true" and "false" to mean simply "more or less autonomous to the individual" and "more or less heteronomous to the individual" respectively.

To return to Adorno, we can see clearly that his theory would tend to place contemporary listening alongside relaxing and having fun in Marcuse's list of "false needs". And as I have remarked, there is some justification for seeing Adorno's view as similar to Marcuse's on this point, and open to the same criticisms. Certainly the following formulations from "Introduction" are within something like the same problematic:

"tired businessmen.... who seek in a realm that will not affect their lives, to compensate for what they must deny themselves otherwise;" - the "emotional listener", who "considers music a means to ends pertaining to the economy of his own drives"; - music to the "vast majority" of listeners is "not a meaningful context at all but a source of stimuli."

These quotations neatly move us on from the discussion of needs as a category effective in political economy to the subject of socio-psychology, - namely the part of Adorno's approach which rests on an appropriation of Freud and others, and in which he tries to offer a set of suggestions about the psychological states and tendencies of the masses, as illuminated by their cultural consumption. If "needs" and "drives" are conditioned, social, phenomena and not simply natural, biologically-given attributes, then the process of their internalisation, and the nature of changes and developments in this, become integral and important, problems of social-scientific inquiry. With this insight firmly in mind, Adorno returned again and again throughout his career to the problems of bringing psychoanalysis and social psychology into the totalising framework of his personal brand of Marxism. The famous study "The Authoritarian Personality", of which he was the co-author,⁴³ is the locus classicus of these concerns, but I think it is possible to present a very simple outline of his view without taking on such a difficult and substantial text. What is written here is therefore based on the musical and other writings already referenced.

The development of capitalism, has passed through various phases, arriving in our time, in the "advanced countries" at a phase characterised by monopolies, proliferating state controls of economy and social life, and a "consumer revolution" in which the mass of the working class gains access to an unprecedented range of commodities but at the price of entering into a type of relation to them which is unfree - this last point being the fetishism/needs complex discussed above. The bourgeois revolution and the industrial revolution swept away previous social relations and replaced them with a new type, characterised by a "freedom" extending to all male and some female persons, to enter autonomously the sphere of exchange, the market. In practice those who only had labour-power to sell and those who had accumulations of wealth became two classes, bourgeois and proletarian, but the possibilities of self-help, the phenomenon of "self-made men" the virtue of thrift and temperance etc. - these were for a time real conditions for many as well as ideologies for deceiving the masses. Furthermore, and closely related to this freedom to "improve" the condition of the self, there was a mobilisation of all the bourgeois, petit bourgeois and proletarians who cared to take part, in a vast network of institutions, from clubs to professional associations to sports leagues etc. which spread itself across the class-reality of capitalist society, and both disguised it and was not without considerable "effectivity" within it, to use the presently-fashionable terminology. (This "civil society" (in one sense) had at first arisen in combat against the old social relations when the whole bourgeoisie and its allies involved themselves more or less in struggles and controversies aimed at consolidating the new social relations and weakening the old). In the Britain and Germany of the middle 19th century, and in the U.S. also (but to a different extent and across a slightly later time-scale?) this network was at its height, and found its reflection in all the agencies of socialisation. The family and the school combined to produce a highly-individualistic, competent and outward-looking personality-type (typically the male "petit-bourgeois") and to a certain extent, to produce also the characteristics of this type elsewhere in the population. After this period, changes in these agencies, (reflecting and helping to produce changes in social relations as a whole) produced a more submissive, even "masochistic" type adjusted to the control of economic and state agencies, and again produced it not only in the "proletariat" but elsewhere too.

The proletarianisation of various crafts and professions, and of much intellectual labour hastened the spread of this development beyond the barely-literate labourers of previous decades, although it also helped to produce a sort of resentment of the process which Adorno professes to see embodied in much listening-practice.⁴⁴

Precisely, the content of the change in socialisation is that the authority of the family (in which the strength of the two parental roles is mimicked and reinforced by the growing children as they internalise them) is weakened as schools and other institutions take over part or most of rearing children. This contributes to an atomisation from an early age, that is, to a weaker structure of reference and identity for children, so that, paradoxically, their individuality is weakened and not strengthened. This childhood prepares these less-than-individuals for their atomised-working lives later, but is also reflected and reinforced in the patterns of their "leisure". [Adorno is weak on specifying gender in these arguments, though certainly he has much to say about this and about male and female sexuality in other respects]. Thus these atomised masses know neither themselves nor the workings of their "world" which is increasingly controlled by a more or less fused, (but also non-self-conscious) technocracy - a combination of state and corporate bureaucracies; and they relate to themselves and their world through the mediation of commodities, all of which are conceived of as ministering to a need or drive of the self and nothing else, and therefore as reinforcing the atomisation.

In "Introduction to the Sociology of Music", Adorno develops some of these suggestions in relation to a "typology of listening". He does not claim that there is any empirical basis for this typology, but derives it by logic and imagination from his general theory; and then suggests that it can be boiled down to a set of hypotheses and a methodology to form the starting point of an empirical study which would verify/modify the types. He does make some reference to his own radio-research, and to various partial studies, -- eg. those of Macdougall, and Allport and Contrile,⁴⁵ but it is clear that his devaluation of what is specific to consumption (above) influences his rather hasty, reductionist theorisations here.

He defines his first type as the "expert"- the "ideal type" of a

completely adequate listener who practices a "structural" approach, keeping past and future in his mind as he (sic) grasps each moment, including in his response an "affective element" but with the conscious mind always on top, "integrating" the whole process. Hardly any such people exist, says Adorno, the type is merely "the limit value of a typological series which extends away from it". It is clear already that this expert is an expert in European, serious music since it is in this music that the virtues of "structure" and extended "forms" are said by Adorno to find their highest expression. Also, this type is defined not psychologically but by competence.

The second type is the "musical person", and this type is defined also by competence, in the same sense, but it is not expected to have the same technical knowledge, or to use quite such fully-conscious mechanisms in listening. "Historically such musicality required a certain homogeneity of musical culture, furthermore it needed some solidity of the total condition, at least in the group reacting to works of art". The old aristocracy, or some part of it, may have constituted such a group of such listeners. Hardly any bourgeois or petit-bourgeois individuals of this type occur any longer, and certainly none from other classes, except a few "polemical lone wolves who are already tending to expertise." (In this last category Adorno may be modestly counting himself). This type is therefore seen as supporting "autonomous music" in the past, but no longer existing in the same sense.

With the third type Adorno arrives at real contemporary listening, and psychological explanation enters the argument. He describes the third type as the "sociological heir" to the second,

and calls it the "culture-consumer".

The culture consumer is a well-informed record collector and concert-goer, who "respects" music as a cultural asset, either from earnest sense of obligation or more or less out of snobbery. But the listening relationship is now to objects and techniques more than to the structure and meaning of music. "Interpretation" tuning, the age of instruments, and so on, occupy the attention. He (sic) "lies in wait for..... supposedly beautiful melodies, for grand ~~ideas~~ moments". "The joy of consumption, of that which - in his language - music "gives" to him,

outweighs his enjoyment of the music itself as a work of art that makes demands on him". This is apparently a key group, forming the bulk of "serious" audiences, including the "committee-ladies" who wield so much power over American "Philharmonic" Orchestras. [The idea of the work of art as definitively containing a meaning, and demanding that listeners attend to it is not, in Adorno, a contradiction in regard to his understanding that listeners co-produce musical meaning, but a particular claim he makes about "serious" or "classical" music, to the effect that it was written in a milieu (of "solidity" and "musicality") which accepted and understood the code in use, and it could thus claim to objectify intended "meanings" in an accessible form, though of course this musical meaning is never verbalisable and never apprehended in a solely conscious intellectual manner]. Though Adorno avoids discussion of "fetishism" in this book, it is clearly in the background of such formulations as the "joy of consumption" and "that which - in his language - music "gives" to him".

With the fourth type, the "emotional listener", this socio-psychological kind of classification and explanation comes further to the fore. Music acts as a "trigger" to listeners' feelings. Adorno speculates that this may often apply to people who can "invest their working lives with very little feeling". The emotional listener, ostensibly naive, may in fact not want to know more about music: - "Don't spoil it". Perhaps the archetypal "tired businessmen" belong here, also those who respond to music with visual associations and those who fall into a vague "torpor". Music is, for the emotional listener, a "medium of pure projection", and anything "immanent" in the music-heard except the "trigger" itself is ignored.

The fifth type Adorno calls the "resentment listener". He is a "stark anti-type" to the fourth, he "scorns the official musical life as washed out and phantasmic", and flees from it back into time, hoping to find an old music "proof against reification" (unfortunately Adorno is unclear on where the category "reification" fits into his theory). The Bach fanatics and other "antiquarian" listeners fall into this category. They are often organised into societies, and have vast influence on musical education (in Germany). Their basic view is that all "Romantic" and modern music is self-indulgent, and that only old music permits an

access to "collectivity". They "self-deny", forbid themselves the cankered fruit of "emotive music", and indulge in sectarianism against other listeners. Adorno writes:

"the masochism of a mode of conduct where one must incessantly forbid oneself something or other indicates a necessary premise: collective coercion. Internalised, such coercion may well remain a determinant of the type even where the listener's real situation is an isolated one. These listeners come from the upper petit-bourgeoisie faced with decline."

For decades members of this stratum have become more and more dependent, less and less able to turn into "outwardly self-determining" and thus "inwardly unfolding" individuals. This has hampered their understanding of the "great music that is mediated..... by the individual and his liberty". At the same time their fear of "proletarianisation" (sic) made them cling to the ideologies of eminence, of elitism and of "inner values". Their consciousness in general, and their attitude towards music in particular, result then from this conflict between social position and ideology. They pretend that this is no conflict and that they prefer the "collectivity" into which they are being pushed. And central to this pretence are such judgements or taste-preferences as their espousal of Baroque music (and in some cases modern "backward-looking" music such as that of Reger and Hindemith) their professing to find in the "post-individual" state the virtues of an idealised "pre-individual" state such as existed when Baroque music was written. The process is "formally comparable" to the fascist manipulation which invested the

"compulsory collective of the atomised" with the insigma of a pre-capitalist, nature-grown "peoples community".

Adorno then goes on to argue that "jazz-listeners" too are reacting against "official" musical culture in a similar way. But the jazz listener is free of the "ascetic-sacral gesture" he "boasts of his mimetic side even though he has reduced it to a pattern of standard devices". But jazz remains imprisoned within "expanded-impressionistic" harmony and standardisation of "form", as well as the "undisputed predominance of the beat". And it is tied to commercial popular music by "its predominant basic material, the hit songs, if by nothing else". In this type, concludes Adorno on jazz-listeners,

"the estrangement from sanctioned musical culture recoils into a preartistic barbarism vainly advertised as a burst of primal feelings"

This section is bold and sweeping in its scope and its method, and it seems to me that the ideas on antiquarian listening do have some value, and certainly deserve consideration, and perhaps some empirical verifi-
catory work. But the section on jazz listeners is to say the least confused, and appears to refer to the musicians not the listeners at the end. Also, in arguing that the basic material of "jazz" is hitsongs, Adorno reveals that he is thinking really of popular "big band" jazz or of "Dixieland" revivalism, perhaps and not of the whole jazz cer-
tainly.

Adorno's sixth and last type is the "entertainment listener" ("Unterhaltung", his German term, has a derogatory connotation not adequately expressed in the word "entertainment"). He believes these listeners are the vast majority, as well as being furthest from good ("expert") listening. The ground has been prepared in the "culture-consumer" and the "emotional listener": - as with these types, music to the entertainment listener, is "not a meaningful context but a source of stimuli". With the sixth type nothing is left in listening except such stimuli. The extreme case of this is when music becomes a habit like smoking, with little or no conscious attention given to it at all. People who cannot work without the radio on, people who seek to annul loneliness or boredom by listening, all such listeners are "opposed to the effort which a work of art demands". They make a virtue out of mediocrity, and listen "distractedly" with odd bursts of attention and recognition.⁴⁶

After mentioning the possibility that there may be logically a seventh type - the un- or anti-musical person who does not like, does not "hear anything in" music at all - Adorno goes on to write a whole chapter on popular music which essentially expands the consideration of his sixth type, the "entertainment-listener". Here he writes:

"To people harnessed between their jobs and the reproduction of their working energies, the hits are purveyors of an ersatz for feelings which their contemporaneously revised egos tell

them they should have. Socially the hits either channel emotions - thus recognising them - or vicariously fulfil the longing for emotions..... In an imaginary but psychologically emotion - laden domain, the listener who remembers a hit song will turn into the song's ideal subject, into the person for whom the song ideally speaks. At the same time, as one of many who identify with that fictitious subject, that musical I, he will feel his isolation ease as he himself feels integrated into the community of "fans". In whistling such a song he bows to a ritual of socialisation, although beyond this unarticulated subjective stirring of the moment his isolation continues unchanged.

"Vulgarity", according to this section, is the crucial trait of popular music. "But I don't want to be human", the listeners say, in either a sullen or merry refusal to acknowledge "higher possibilities". It is this "identification with abasement", not the abasement-in-itself which is central, along with the fact that the abasement is administered and controlled. The standardisation of popular music cannot be understood intra-musically, but only "sociologically" (and psychologically) as aiming at "standard reactions", conditioned reflexes in the listener, and at their perpetual repetition. Those tonal sequences and simple rhythms which are "sensed as problematic" by serious composers, and avoided as "hackneyed", turn up in popular music with "unproblematic imperiousness": The tonal system as simplified and truncated in popular "tunes" is a "training course in a passivity that will probably spread to his thought and social conduct" [the listeners]. Popular music, to be successful, must "void" a contradiction between catching the attention and at the same time remaining unobtrusively conventional in its "musical language". This requires a "pseudo-individualisation", as in the hopelessly-limited "improvisations" in commercial jazz, and it provides the basis for the survival of individual craftsmanship in an otherwise rationalised industry. Likewise numerous individualising tricks of scoring, of rehearsed spontaneity etc, are found throughout the performances and recordings of popular music.

In this framework of criticism, jazz seems to Adorno to have some unquestioned merits.

"Against the idiotic derivatives from the Johann Strauss-type operetta, it taught technique, presence of mind and the concentration which pop-music had discarded, and it developed the faculties of tonal and rhythmical differentiation. The climate of jazz freed teenagers from the stuffily-sentimental utility music of their parents. Jazz calls for criticism only when a timeless fashion, organised and multiplied by special interests, comes to misconceive itself as modern, if not indeed as an avant-garde."

He quotes Winthrop Sargeant as saying that "jazz is a get-together art for regular followers", and adds, that it is a "sportive acoustical occasion for normal citizens to gather at". "Jazz", he continues, "stresses a conformist regularity by submerging the individual consciousness in a kind of massive self-hypnosis". [it is not clear whether he is still quoting Sargeant here]. Later he writes

"Certainly, jazz has the potential of a musical breakout from this culture on the part of those who were either refused admission to it or annoyed by its mendacity. Time and again however, jazz became a captive of the culture-industry and thus of musical and social conformism..... [But] Popular music can no more be exploded from within, ^{than} its own sphere points beyond it."⁴⁷

Other points which can be seen as elements in a social-psychology of listening (which Adorno never systematically produced) are scattered through this book. For instance, he says "nostalgic songs" : "fake a longing for past, irrevocably lost experiences, dedicated to all those consumers who fancy that in memories of a fictitious past they will gain the life denied them." In the next chapter he writes that popular-music listeners

"do understand scraps of the context of meaning. The idiom of tonality, for instance, which circumscribes the traditional stock of music consumed today, is identical with the worldwide musical consumers' language. People may fail to grasp what is said in that language..... but they are familiar with the works' superficial connections..... Splashing along with the idiomatic current substitutes for the performance of the thing itself(?) and yet cannot be absolutely segregated."

Music survives its degradation, and continues to be produced and consumed, principally because "the reigning ideology keeps the failure to experience it from becoming conscious.

"In a society that has become functionalised virtually through and through, totally ruled by the exchange-principle, lack of function comes to be a secondary function. In the function of functionlessness truth and ideology entwine. What results from it is the autonomy of the work of art itself: in the context of social effects, the man-made-in-itself of a work that will not sell out to that context promises something that would exist without defacement by the universal profit. That something is nature".

Here Adorno restates, in altered form, his view of the transfer of "feelings to exchange-value" from the earlier essay. He goes on to specify another aspect of this "fetishism" which surely is considerably clearer and more useful than that early view:

"Accepting what there is has become the strongest glue of reality, the replacement of ideologies as specific, perhaps even as theoretically justifiable, conceptions about what exists. The blindspot of unquestioning acceptance of a given thing, of something set in its place, is one of the invariants of bourgeois society. From Montesquieu on, that society has honoured such given things with the title "historically evolved."

This "positive" ideology which uses the existing to destroy the possible is indeed reinforced by every act of consumption which a person makes - insofar as one either contracts into this commodity - permeated society or dies.

Adorno goes on to discuss music's straight-forward distractive function, which he sees combining with the above affirmative one to constitute music's "ideological" character. Music is suited to these functions because it is a "conceptless language" and hence, points to an abstract collectivity which is no less shared for being univocalisable.

In responding to a piece of music people feel they are put in touch with "life", with their own "human-ness", with their own "nature" and reminded that these things are "shared by all",

"Just as poor old women shed tears at a wedding of strangers, the consumed music is the eternal strangers' wedding for all".

Continuing his discussion of functions, Adorno suggests a "psychoanalytic" one, in which music becomes "a defence mechanism in the dynamic of drives".

"What it suggests to him (the listener), through the ritual of being present and the identification with social power, as it paints his subjective course of time as meaningful, is this: that it is precisely in self-limitation, in entering into himself and departing from the hateful reality, that he will be in accord with all, accepted by and reconciled with all..... The deceptive moment, that lies in great music too, the autarky of an inwardness split off from objectivity and practice, and compensated in works of art by the truth content of their externalisation in a structured objectivity - this moment, in functional music, is unreservedly transferred to ideology."

Thus if music seems to help people suffering from paranoia, it is by confirming them in "the Fata Morgana of inward abundance" and this, though "therapeutic" in no way does it enlarge or "cure" them.

It is at the end of this discussion, of the "functions" of music, that Adorno turns his attention to the "anthropological basis", as he calls it, of his socio-psychological hints and categories. He writes:

"The ear is passive. The eye is covered by a lid and must be opened; the ear is open, and must not so much turn its attention towards stimuli as seek protection from them. The activity of the ear, its attentiveness probably developed late, along with the strength of the ego; and universally regressive tendencies late ego traits will be the first to get lost. Deterioration of the faculty of musical synthesis, of the apperception of music as an aesthetic context of meaning, goes with relapsing into such passivity."

The passive character of the ear cut it off from labour in any form, and it thus ended up a "tolerated enclave amid the rationalised world of labour." The fact that sounds are not things, in any sense, on which labour (as normally conceived) is performed, means that the ear remains undisturbed, and its function as a mental receiver remains conceptualised as a "deep interior" of the mind.⁴⁸

The "Introduction" like all of Adorno's musical writings is crammed with hypotheses and speculations, with theoretical polemics and concrete examples. I want to return here, however, to my criticisms of his basic point of view, and to summarise them in a less meandering form than I have been able to present them insofar. Basically, I believe Adorno collapses the specificity of consumption as a "satisfaction of needs". He considers the alienation of the producer and the fetishism (or reification) of the commodity by the consumer to be not merely linked but (via something called the "social compact" which unites consumers and producers) more or less identical. The misunderstanding of the whole social process which is supposed to result from these, is to Adorno the very foundation of all modern bourgeois ideology. In the case of cultural commodities the consumers relate not to the "work of art" but to the exchange-value it becomes in the market. Their fetishism renders them incapable of the immediate relationship with the work which constitutes a proper appreciation, and they only go on buying such goods as a result of the illusion (underpinned by ideological discourses about the "nature of art") that they embody something "human" something "really alive" in a context of dead and alienating commodities.

Of course Adorno is a knowledgeable Marxist, and the objections we can raise to this basic view on Marxist grounds are all mentioned in one place or another in his writings. Nonetheless the fact that he exhibits confusion in these arguments points back to the validity of my claim that the view summarised above is his basic one, and is erroneous. So for instance he is aware of the category "needs" but never completely engages it. And he is aware of the fact that his argument would do well to rest on a worked-out view of the specificity of cultural goods, and of the co-production of meanings which goes with them, yet still falls back on generalities (in his accounts of alienation and fetishism) applying to all commodities.

Adorno's peculiar conception of "autonomous music" arises from his reduction of need-satisfaction to the purely economic category "consumption" (at least with reference to "mass-consumption in advanced capitalism"), that is, from his ignoring of what is irreducibly extra-economic in consumption. He readily grants the social character of musical meaning, and hence accords' listening a role in co-producing it, but he also argues that "musical material" crystallises past social "impulses" within an objective form which in a certain sense means those impulses, even though any given listener may not realise it. This view seems to me to rest on the existence of the score, and therefore to be true not of all music but of "European notated (and possibly recorded) music only. The particular autonomy of that music then, can be precisely defined as follows: a coincidence of musical understanding between producers and listeners extending over a period of perhaps a century or two, exhibiting steady internal change but even greater continuity, and enabling the idea of the "work" which wholly contains an intended meaning, to be realised repeatedly, more or less, within the milieu in question, although even in this milieu some development of the work's meaning over the decades still remains inevitable.

Now this "autonomy" is indeed a useful way of understanding the "classical" music in question. But because Adorno believes contemporary musical consumption to have "no relation to the object" consumed, to be entirely "fetishistic", he believes that no autonomy whatsoever can be accorded to musical practices now. They are a peculiar enclave of the economic process not quite fully integrated into it structurally, but long ago emptied of their antagonistic content. That is, they are all but epiphenomenal to the self-movement of capital.

But the capitalist "process" Adorno invokes here is a pure abstraction, a set of determinants which work through concrete social relations and "forces" but are not identical with them. The abstract process has become for Adorno the "real", while the concrete relations among human persons, (making, even when they do not comprehend it, their own history), have become abstract:- no real relation between producers and consumers of music is seen. This is not the purely "Hegelian" error often attributed to Adorno, but a particular Hegelian relapse of Marxism, found no less in "Stalinist" reduction than in the apparent richness of the Frankfurt

School. Sartre characterises it well in the following formulations: "The Marxist therefore is impelled to take as an appearance the real content of behaviour or of a thought; when he dissolves the particular in the universal, he has the satisfaction of believing that he is reducing appearance to truth. Actually by defining his subjective (his emph) concept of reality, he has only defined himself;" and "the dependence of the worker who comes to sell his working strength cannot under any circumstance signify that this worker has fallen into an abstract existence. Quite the contrary, the reality of the market, no matter how inexorable its laws may be, and even in its concrete appearance, rests on (my emphasis) the reality of alienated individuals and on their separation."⁴⁹

This error, then originates in Adorno's misapprehension of the relationship of production and consumption, of producers' alienation and consumers' "fetishism", and there it rests on an idealist inversion of the abstract and the concrete, which though post-Marxist, is Hegelian in implications. It leads Adorno to confuse the particular relative autonomy he correctly identifies in European serious music with the general autonomy attributable to all musical, as to all social, practices, and hence to believe that once the former autonomy declines and disappears, none at all is left. Contemporary listeners, whom he calls "post-individual" become in fact "post-human", mere ciphers of a system which is now more 'real' than they, and history, logically speaking stops. All Adorno's brilliance, all his discrete insights, are rendered problematic by this error, and to be rescued require that we dig each of them carefully out of its bed of "logical consequences" and set it on its feet, as a "socialistic" insight to stand or fall in itself, and no longer as part of a theoretical system which has been proved mistaken.

4. Some conclusions.

My purpose here is not simply to repeat myself, but to offer a synthetic, relatively self-explanatory, account of points, insights, implications and suggestions which are dispersed through my comments on the writers dealt with above, or which "follow on" from them fairly unproblematically.

If the "cultural study of music" is to vindicate itself in relation to the existing disciplines and sub-disciplines which deal with "the musical" (criticism, history, aesthetics, sociology, musicology, psychology etc), then all the musical practices of each society be understood

first and foremost as practices. That is to say, musical practices, whether composition, performance, listening, improvisation, interpretation, engineering, record-manufacture or even selling the drinks in the interval, have to be studied as a whole, in their inter-relations, as well as parts of social life as a whole. At the same time these wholes must not be seen as static, or pre-determined, but as produced and reproduced by the constituent practices concerned. And the "totallising" impulse must not be permitted to prevent the investigation of the details and internal relations of each practice and artefact, since only in these are the determinants of that production and reproduction of the "total" concretely available to be studied.

I argue here that the artefacts of music, (instruments, scores, recording techniques etc) must be seen as objectifications of the practices of real, concrete men and women. This is not really so difficult to grasp. In addition, however, what we often call the "performance" of music is also the objectification of the practice of the performers and listeners involved. It is easy to forget that the "intangible" sounds of music-performed-and-heard are no less "material" than the instruments being used, though orally rather than visually perceived. The materiality of music, not just sound, must be insisted upon in this precise sense - that is, it is the sounds that are material, but the music's "social reality" depends on the fact that there are sounds involved as a "material sub-stratum". The importance of this point is not just logical but also polemical - numerous influential writers are either ambivalent or downright anti-materialist in this sense.⁵⁰

However in the apparent physical immediacy of music-heard there is already a mediation. The sounds of an instrument, for example, are "physical" or "material" certainly, but they are not "natural" things, in the sense of occurring without human agency. They are objects "to a social end", and even though they pose, in their physical form, as "natural" they have meaning only for so long as the social conditions of their social existence last. They are thus incapable of leaving their artefaction behind, and speaking the same message to all people for all time. Indeed, strictly speaking, no two performances of any "piece" are ever the same in any valid sense,

whether to the musician (composer/improviser, performer of a "work" or whatever) the audience, or the media involved. Listening to music is always a creative process, and this is always mediated by the listener's knowledge, or lack of knowledge of musical conventions, and by the place the "musical" occupies in a structure of conscious "subjectivity" and unconscious formations which is the listener's "personality". Again it is always "placed" by the social practices surrounding that act of listening which help to determine the listener's "subject-position" when the music starts. There is no such thing as the "open" "indeterminate" response which permits nothing but the "immanent qualities" of the music-heard to have an impact on the listening subject. All listening has a social and psychological context.

Thus we can say that "it takes two" to produce music. For the musical status of some sound-object to be constructed requires that someone else apart from its producer agrees that it is music. Of course individuals can carry this knowledge (of what the "musical" is) around in their heads, so as to hear, for example their own solitary whistling as music; but the knowledge is no less social for all that. Music (and I make no apology for speaking at a "high level of abstraction" for the time being), is co-produced by its "producers" and listeners. To some extent the terminology of "communications theory", in which "messages" are seen as existing solely insofar as they comprise relations between "transmitters" and "receivers" comes close to describing the structural relationship I am trying to establish. However these terms, like my own abstract statements here, state over, or disguise, an essential aspect of musical practices, as of all others - namely, the historical, or perhaps the "diachronic" aspect. We can perhaps begin to conceptualise this by arguing that, for a "receiver" in a particular society at a particular time, a certain musical "heritage" exists as a "given" which he/she has "learnt" (not necessarily "formally"), and which has become "part of" what he/she is. I can respond to music produced and reproduced in social conditions which are continuous with my own (temporally and spatially) and I cannot respond (in a way bearing any determinate relation to the way a Venda will) to Venda music, to take Blacking's excellent example.⁵¹ However the internationalisation of economic and socio-political life

characteristic of our epoch may rapidly produce a situation in which this latter inability of mine may cease to exist, in the same way as German and Italian "Classical" music which, when written, had a very local and class-specific audience (the upper classes of a few major European cities, particularly those of Germany, Austria, France and Italy as the "leading" musical countries) has become part of many or even most persons' "given" to a greater or lesser extent, in contemporary Britain. This continuously-reproduced continuity of musical practices means that new producers of music produce in an unwilling, inevitable relation to the "given" which functions whether they are conscious of it nor not. Thus a composer may produce a "radically-new" score or recording, but only when listened to, and accorded meaningfulness (or meaninglessness) by audiences, is the production of music completed. And the "givens" of the audiences cannot but intercept this listening and interpretation, and help determine its outcome. Furthermore, through the understanding of chiefly, psychology and socio-psychology as determinations of the moment of composition, we can see the operation of the composer's "given" too. And all these givens are related, are parts of a heritage, tradition or language of music. The problems of how to "think" such musical traditions or languages are immense and I will return to them below.

Another set of terms or categories which might be applied to musical practices, on the basis of what I have said so far is that of semiology - i.e. codes (encoding/decoding) and signs (signifier/signified etc). This terminology is of course derived from linguistic studies, and I would suggest that its usefulness for understanding any "semiotic values" in music must be conditional on a more thorough working-out of the specificities of musical practices, and certainly cannot be read from one field into the other in a simple way - though the analogical use of semiological categories may help in this working-out. Likewise the relatively precise use of terms in "discourse-theory", such as that of Foucault (as opposed to the legitimate use of such terms "loosely" and without claims of rigour) is something to be approached gradually, if at all, with due concern for all the complexities involved, rather than something to be taken over and "used" unproblematically.⁵²

It is attractive to view "musics" as unified, structured systems of meaning, in which persons can work to produce messages meaningful to

others, although not language-based and not directly translatable into language. Such a system is thought of as not a language but like language in a vague sense - that is, in being "structured communication". Such linguistic analogies have considerable currency among writers about music, and it would certainly be potentially helpful to be able to lean on them for analytical purposes. Music, like language, is "species-specific" and "universal" - a "human" trait or characteristic. And it can be argued that musics develop like languages, by a process of conscious and unconscious innovations within a context of consciously and unconsciously followed "rules". Again there are different musics co-existing at any given time, and familiarity with one gives no necessary access to the meaning of another. It is with all these characteristics of music in mind that writers like Deryck Cooke are able to argue that "Occidental" music is a language, in effect, with a vocabulary of terms, and rules for their combination.

However I want to suggest that linguistic analogies in general should be used with very great caution for a number of reasons which I shall briefly sketch here. Firstly, language is much more complex than these analogies ever admit: - even the attempts to apply advanced "code" and "signification" theories to music have to construct relatively abstracted and static versions of these theories tearing them from their context and applying them as schemas to music. All theory develops in relation to its object and only if music had been included in the intended object of these theories all along could the living, developing theory be made use of here, without modification.

Secondly, some musics exist as practices in very different relationships to other practices in a society from those to which "we" in Britain now are accustomed. Indeed I will argue later that much "pop" can only be understood by reconceptualising the relationship of "listeners" to "musicians" and abandoning those preconceptions which are based on European and "traditional" assumptions about the roles of musicians, of listeners, of the "industry" and so on. Music explicitly played, recorded for dancing to can clearly not be accounted for fully in Cooke's terms, for example, even if they have a partial relevance. And when Blacking tells us that music among the Venda has celebratory ritual and even educational functions, we can see clearly how simplistic ideas

based on linguistic analogies are inadequate for understanding these.

Thirdly, if our "model" is language, what are we to make of the "fusions" of elements from very different "cultures" which are characteristic of contemporary popular music? Can we imagine African languages, English and German all mixed together and producing a "fusion" easily assimilable to all British kids, without formal or even informal teaching? And yet is this not what has come about in musical "languages" in about seventy years, or even less?

Other reasons why linguistic analogies are suspect could certainly be added.⁵³ But I wish to go on here to a further aspect of the point I made above - namely that "it takes two" to make music. This unity of production and consumption is an abstraction, true of all social production but telling us nothing of any particular type, phase or development. That is, it is "ahistorical" as it stands. This unity may be on the "surface" of social life, to us looking at Venda society. In our own society, however, it is very definitely not on the surface, and it can only be fully established, in all its ramifications, by "interrogating" many practices and institutions and by a sythesising of the results.

There is a simple level to this argument - that which refers to the size of the music industry. A massive geographical and technical division of labour in the production of musical artefacts, and a norm of separation between production and consumption, both spatial and temporal - these are inherent in mass production for a worldwide market and they do tend, in themselves, to disguise the fact that the central relationship towards which all this effort is bent is the (technically-mediated) sharing of a musical experience by producers and (many different) listeners. However the whole structure and economic "logic" of this vast system is what it is not as a result of purely natural growth, or human ingenuity, but as part of an overall economic and social development based on commodity-production and under no overall human control. And the commodity-form inserts its mystifying power between producer and consumer, and between both and their artefacts. Thus, while the scale of the contemporary music-industry requires the investigator to "think big", it is the fetishism and mystification, which cling to all commodities,

which constitute the really difficult problem. I will return to the particular problems of grasping the unity of this economic and social process in the area of "cultural goods", and music in particular, in another context.

The sort of generalised, at times ahistorical, argument, which I have been laboriously working through here, constantly runs the risk of including or even basing itself on, unwarranted extrapolations from the supposed nature of "one's own" musical experience to that of the "musical" as a whole. Ethnocentrism is as big a danger here as ahistoricism - the attribution of permanence or even "naturalness" to what are actually characteristics of the musical practices of one time and place only. Are we to conclude, however, that we should not even try to "define" music or that the question of what, if anything, can be said to unite, say, Venda music with symphonic music is a non-question? Some radically materialist thinkers do indeed argue in these terms, believing that it follows from their claim that music has no "immanent laws". Insofar as they grasp the potentially-infinite variety of possible musical practices they are right, and in their polemics against the idea of music as "immaterial" and "ideal", they make excellent points. Both Shepherd and Wishart in "whose Music"?⁵³ Come into this category to some degree. On the other hand we are justified in using one term - music - for an essential aspect of all these practices. This is true because, whatever else they are too, these practices are relationships between persons and "nature"; to be more specific they are all productive relationships with nature, the products being "sounds" - i.e. material, though intangible things. Of course the sounds have meaning only in a social context; they are "humanised objects" in the terminology of the young Marx. Without some notion of the social practice of music as the production of humanised sound-objects out of "natural" objects we cannot proceed.

On the other hand this central relationship, which can so easily be dubbed "Man-Nature" and treated as a simple basis for further developments, is, in fact, no less of a "dialectical" and changing relationship than are many of the inter-subjective relationships of "musical life". In a very important sense the category "Nature" is itself a social category, as Lukacs has pointed out.⁵⁴ One cannot posit a pre-human nature, or a nature

excluding the human, except as that emptiest of abstractions, one which attempts to describe something into which human praxis and thought can enter into no relation. However there is an "autonomous" aspect of "nature" in the sense in which the term is used here, namely that which emerges as a condition and consequence of human praxis in "historical time"; that which Sartre calls the "practico-inert" and which appears to concrete persons and groups as a resistance in objects and even institutions which forces subsequent praxis along certain paths and closes off others. "Worked" matter does not lose its non-human content in acquiring its human one, and this is the meaning of the limitations and the potentialities of instruments, of media, of recording techniques and so on. Thus although the very concept of Nature is meaningless except in relation to "Man" there is equally no basis for supposing that Nature is "just another" social category, at the same "level of abstraction" as say "production", or "association". The Nature with which "man" enters into a "dialectical" relationship, whose development comprises the marrow of history, is itself a unity comprising two terms - a socially-imprinted character and an autonomous role, though the latter is realised only through, and in the historical development of praxis. This unity develops as a sort of groundbass to all social change. This is true, finally, because "Man" is after all "natural" though set against the remainder by a development which can be seen as natural or human depending on the viewpoint - that is an "evolutionary" one. Thus the real synthetic form of that dialectic which is all too often given as "Man versus Nature = History" (with a future re-harmonising posited as an abstract possibility), is "Nature divided against itself, in which the humanly-appropriated moment acts "subjectively" on the rest (which is non-human) making it its "object" of "objectivity" so that both moments are progressively transformed till they harmonise once again, or, as Barnes writes in her introduction to Sartre's "Search for a Method"⁵⁵ till "men and women will find that the image which their praxis has inscribed in the "practico-inert" is in truth the reflection of their freedom."⁵⁶

The developing relationship between men and women and their "environment" as well as their own "nature", to return to more conventional terms, constitutes a continuity which links all the social formations of historical time, and which justifies such terms as "music" even when

applied to vastly different cultures. Musical practices can be reproduced in forms different in every way from the preceding form, except insofar as they are new variations of sound-production resulting in social meanings. Thus one can speak of a fundamental category "music" and at the same time one cannot detect a "natural musicality" underlying a particular practice or cultural form, since the "natural" component develops from one form to the next as well as the "purely-social". A comparison (strictly limited to this point in the argument) with sexuality might be useful here. Theories like that of Marcuse,⁵⁷ in which sexuality is a sort of seething cauldron off which the lid is lifted slightly to prevent the pressure becoming too great (- i.e. "repressive tolerance") implicitly posit a constant - the sex-drive - which does not change in historical time, though the forms through which it is both "expressed" and "controlled" develop and change indefinitely. This is too mechanical to provide an adequate tool for analysing complex changes in sexual practices and discourses. On the other hand an analysis which considers sexuality only as "discourse", and does not enter the problem of the dialectics of "human-nature", (on the grounds that it "does not exist" or that it is indeed "constant") is, though superficially subtler in one respect, no more complete. "Human-nature" is a term which has lent itself to major ideological distortion, chiefly the pretence that its "unchangeable" characteristics directly justify aspects of the present social formation. Nonetheless a developing "nature" of human beings exists, as can be shown by anthropological comparisons in relation to the "balance of the senses" and other "faculties" and "traits" at the interface, as it were, of the physiological and the cultural. Again the existence of what Freud calls the "sub-conscious", even if we have to reconceptualise it very considerably, is clearly evidence on this question. Musicality and sexuality are not directly comparable in any way except this, but in this precise sense, their investigation ought to shed light, each on the other, and on aspects of this "human-nature" problem.

Musical instruments are artefacts, and as such pieces of "worked matter". They "alienate" their users and audiences as a result - not by any ahistorical anti-human character, not as timeless ontological limits on human-ness, but as counterweights to human freedom. This means that, in the nature of social development, up to now and for the

immediately-foreseeable future, worked matter itself restricts further praxis. As a result "lines" or "directions" of development of the relationships between humans and "nature" (as explained above) come into existence. If there is any validity in Marx's famous "base-superstructure" analogy, it may well be these lines and directions, (which are also "closures") that constitute the "base". They are the "productive forces", and as we see they are relationships too, and not "entities" as some critics of Marx profess to find. The famous dictum used by Engels, "Freedom is the recognition of necessity" can also be seen to have a subtle and dialectical meaning in the context.

All the techniques of musical production and reproduction are "worked matter" and thus appear as resistances to production as well as its tools. They are, in other words fundamentally ambiguous. This ambiguity is itself a developing relationship. The technology which afflicts one group as a "dead hand" may be given a new and "revolutionary" meaning by another, and will be changed and re-developed accordingly. The microphone which so horrified one group of singers in the earlier years of this century, came as a great boon to others, who were prepared to experiment and to imagine different relationships between singer and "accompaniment". On the other hand if it had been invented considerably earlier or later we could not expect the same social development of new musical practices to have taken place.

If I am right in the main line of my argument, about the "musical" as a relationship between men and women and "Nature" (as qualified), then it is reasonable to expect a provisional definition of this relationship to be possible. The production of sound is clearly an element of this definition, and the "organising" of these sounds is clearly essential too - as the condition of their acquiring a social meaning. Some musicologists and aesthetic-philosophers insist that only the production of fixed, i.e. repeatable, intervals qualifies as music, but I see no reason to include this criterion at the level of general definition. A point which escapes the notice of some such writers but which does seem to me to be of cardinal importance, however, is the temporality of music. Some durational character is necessary to the definition. Unlike the "fixed intervals" approach, I think the insistence on temporality in music is fundamental for the simple reason that "time" is another one of the "natural" components involved, and therefore,

although musical practices may vary enormously in their articulation of time, as of sound the two components, transformed appropriately, will always be present. I am not arguing here at the general philosophical level at which no phenomenon is conceivable except "in" time in some way, but at a particular level - musical practice takes a bit of time, so to speak, and recreates it as or, imposes on, and into it a flow of sounds. "Musical material" is defined in other words, by its audibility its humanisation and its duration, and the bringing of these elements into relationships with each other, which modify each in turn.

I should mention here that the "organisation" to which I refer above does not imply that only that product whose every detail has been planned, which has a definite, calculated "beginning, middle and end" etc, is musical. Loose organisation of sounds, the "building-in" of chance elements as in some avant-garde compositions, the mixture of pre-planned (loose) structure and immediate improvisation, which is found in jazz and some other musics, - all of these can be included in my category "organisation" which only refers to the broad "work" done on sound-objects by concrete persons and groups to make them meaningful, a "work" which always involves creating either "pattern" or a studied lack of pattern which relies on the contrast with a pattern for its effect. But I am getting ahead of myself here, and introducing terms and ideas which belong to a later part of my argument.

There are more, and more complex, problems involved in these highly generalised areas I have been discussing, but I cannot discuss all of them in this context. The totality of what I have to say here on music and musicality in general can on no way pose as even the beginnings of, let alone the full outline of a philosophy or aesthetic theory of music. I have tried on the contrary to restrict myself to those points without which the plunge into the study of contemporary and recent popular music would be sure to lead to a rapid drowning. I hope I have not left out too much of relevance.

At this point I would like to move on to an area of theoretical problems which impinges on every point of my argument up to now. It is once again quite impossible for me to have the last word on it here, but it is essential that I cover it nonetheless. I am referring to the

cluster of problems that usually go under the title of "relative autonomy". We can propose the general relative autonomy of all social practices in the simple sense that, in the course of their developing existence, they outstrip always any total-determination-by-something-else which we might try to "read into" them. However, where and how are we to specify the relative autonomy of musical practices? What I have written above about "definition" might be said to point to the "specificity" of the "musical". But it does not fully answer this question.

Many writers accord an autonomy to "the work" of music. It is, they say, "timeless" and has an "essence" which survives each particular performance. This "autonomy" is virtually an absolute one - its only "condition of existence" being that the work is composed in the first place. Once this is done it floats through history, immutable and cannot be destroyed. I believe that this view is an illusion rooted in notation. It is probably no accident that this quasi-religious view of the "autonomous work" is, as far as I can discover, peculiar to Occidental cultures of the last four or five centuries. It is rooted in the fact that musical notation, (like phonetic literacy) having originated as a simple mnemonic for the convenience of performers, enabled a written set of signs to survive its writing in time and in space (copying), to take on an existence independent of its writer. This "score" could then be "interpreted" by a musician who knew its "rules" and the resulting sounds were taken, with some sort of "rough" justice, to be, in a sense, a reconstitution of the original ones. From here it was a small step, of "abstraction", to the conclusion that the two performances were of the "same music" in other words of something which existed potentially, or was present though not realised, between performances. Of course the only thing which really existed between performances was the score, but that idealistic thinking which considers the abstract "entity" to be the "real" has never been in short supply; and indeed the history of association between music and religion (and ritual) had also left a residue of mysteriousness in the category "music", as had Pythagorean mysticism centred around the harmonic series. Actually of course no two performances are ever the same, for two principal reasons; firstly, in terms of sound-production itself they can never be identical, though this can often seem to be a negligible hair-splitting point. Secondly, the music is not the sounds-in-themselves, as we have already

seen. It is only the socially-created meaningfulness of the sounds which distinguishes music from natural noises. This means that the listeners co-produce the music by perceiving meanings therein, even though only the performer is producing the sounds. The fundamental reason why musical works cannot be accorded a "timeless essence" is, therefore, that the audiences change, and different audiences "get out" different meanings from the "same" work.

Like every other generalisation in my argument, this abstractly-logical reasoning for the falseness of the "timeless essence" view actually requires knowledge of the particularities of "concrete" situations if it is to be fully appreciated. The contemporary situation is complicated by the fact that as well as scores we now have another kind of artefact, which fixes a particular performance in an apparently timeless way, and this appears to have gone beyond the element of interpretability in the score - namely records (and tapes). In fact of course both the points made above still apply, and the first, which might have seemed trivial in relation to scores, becomes more important as the control over sound-production afforded to musicians by new electronic techniques brings previously-neglected nuances of pitch and timbre into the centre of musicians' and listeners' attention.

The "autonomy" of the work, which has seemed virtually absolute to many aestheticians proves to be a very relative thing, characteristic in the first place, of the period of the predominance of the score as the technical basis of musical reproduction. It is capable of affecting the uses made of "new media", however, and of surviving that period. The record is capable of preserving the more or less "perfect" performance of a notated work, and is indeed widely used for this purpose; but it is also capable of capturing the live performance, the improvisation and the error, practices with little or nothing to do with the "reified" work. In addition to this, the techniques of the recording studio permit the alteration, beyond recognition, of the sounds the "musicians" as traditionally defined, initially produce from their instruments and voices. Thus the roles of composer, performer and critical listener all enter a single collectivised process of production, and cease to exist in the separated form characteristic of the production of notated music. The potentialities of electrical reproduction clearly point beyond the practices which gave rise to the idealised view of the "autonomous work", but the realisation of these potentialities is a contradictory and in no sense an inevitable, development.

We should remember that, insofar as the musicians and listeners in the period of efficacy of an idea believe in it themselves, it has a certain effect on the practice. Composers have actually striven to encode their purposes and meanings so completely and clearly as to brook no misunderstanding. They hold only one interpretation of the work to be correct. The same idea has had an effect in "criticism" - chiefly in the belief that works are "great" if they have this imperious quality of imposing themselves on listeners apparently unequivocally. Beethoven is widely held to be the master of this sort of composition. Finally it has an effect on listeners, namely the sort of humility which prevents some people from responding to music "unselfconsciously", because they are acutely conscious of their (formal) ignorance of its "rules" and take this to be an ignorance of musical meaning as a whole.

If the idea of the autonomy of the work is conditional on certain practices, principally the predominance of the score, then what of the idea of the "autonomous tradition" in music? This idea, which is taken for granted in many histories, and defended by many aestheticians and critics, is, in its simple form nothing more than the claim that composers and performers of music learn from each other at a "technical" level (and perhaps at a "spiritual" level too), and that the sum of their productions can be seen, therefore, as a continuum or "tradition". At this level the idea is fairly straightforward, as long as we remember that other determinants, apart from a predecessor's techniques, will always register in musical production too. However the idea is rarely to be found in this simple form in music-histories and criticisms. Almost always it is mixed up with, firstly, qualitative judgements about the degree of success of this "learning"; secondly, narrowly-idealist views of what "history of music" consists of; and thirdly, a tendency to confound the particular "autonomous" lineage in question for the general relative autonomy of all musical practices - i.e. to say "musical autonomy is here, and therefore, nowhere else". This denial of real autonomy to other musics apart from one's "own" is found spelt out clearly in Adorno, but it is also the disguised content of other ethnocentric and elitist arguments, which use different terms but essentially refer to the same central points.

The first error of mixing up technical detective-work with aesthetic judgement is most frequently encountered in those books which pre-select the

compositions whose study exposes the lineage, excluding any which suggest alternative approaches. It is thus that "serious" music is often first constructed as a category. The second error is the first writ large: - a second "tradition" - that of the "great" music - emerges from the first and music history is seen as a series of "great" eminences separated by other names and works of purely or primarily "technical" interest, as precursors or imitations of the great works themselves. The third error associates the idea of autonomous music with what I described above as the effectiveness of the idea of the timeless essence of the work, believing that only the music for which great concert halls, opera houses and training academies are built is taken seriously "in itself", and other musics, which involve ritual or educational or dance purposes, are not really autonomous at all. This error naturally considers "absolute" music (symphonies, concertos and chamber music) as the highest type, is prepared to admit church music, because of its lofty purpose, to the canon, and is somewhat condescending to opera, marvelling at how such a "ludicrous form" has given rise to excellent (by the "absolute" standard) music. This approach naturally considers non-notated music as incapable of possessing the "logic", the structure, the combination of complexity and definiteness of "truly autonomous" music and therefore as inferior. As a matter of fact the music of Bali in Indonesia as described in Small,⁵⁸ is evidence for the falseness of this view, as is the rhythmic complexity found in many a "primitive" music (eg. of the Indian sub-continent and of Africa) but rarely approached by the "classical" tradition.

The location of a "relative autonomy" in the technical inheritances passed on from musicians and audiences to their successors seems to me to be a just argument as long as it is kept separate from the errors outlined above. Such autonomy is conditional on some stability or continuity of audience, and of norms of musical training. But the very core of the autonomy concept lies in the insight that changes in the audiences or the norms over a period do not destroy at a stroke the conditions of existence for the continued meaningfulness of old music, but reproduce them or reconstruct them so that the meaningfulness lives on in altered form. Of course changes may be so big that the tradition is effectively wiped out, but even then whatever musical practices succeed this collapse will bear the marks of its particular character in some way.

Adorno believed he was witnessing in his lifetime the collapse of European "autonomous music" and the spread of "light" and "popular" musical types which rested on a different (less concentrated, sustained and exclusive) "mode of listening". He saw the abstract possibility of a new autonomous music, whose autonomy would have to be appreciated in a radically different way, and he also saw the real possibility that "jazz" could evolve into an imitation of classical music, with rules, academies and intelligentsia to match. But he thought neither of these developments was likely because the direction in which listening was changing, combined with the development of the music-industry towards monopoly and mass-production, suggested a further "regression" a further development of "deconcentration" and attitudes "akin to sports-enthusiasm" among listeners. He was apparently deaf to the genuinely new and "creative" elements in the Afro-American and popular musics all around him, except insofar as he grudgingly granted "talent" to a few musicians in order the more to condemn their prostitution of it. I believe that Adorno is guilty of the error, identified above, which consists of believing the "autonomy" of one's own preferred music to be the acme of musical autonomy as a whole. Other musics are inevitably considered inferior in this view. However, we can separate his error in this respect from much of the rest of his argument, which then becomes a challenge to prove him wrong -- to show that the popular music of our age is, or at any rate includes a type of resistance to the pressures of "massification" "atomisation" and so on which he identifies, a way of winning, and humanising a "space", for the enjoyment of an "immediate" social life even in the face of that invasion of all relations by the commodity-form he describes.

To return to the "autonomous tradition" I must point out again that we can posit a continuity of technical developments, dependent on certain conditions of existence. But this is not the be-all and end-all of the relative autonomy of musical practices. Even where such always-precarious continuities are disrupted, or exploded outwards by contact with others, (as happened to European popular music in this century, perhaps) musical practices will always exhibit an autonomy in relation to other practices, by virtue of their very existence. The problem that can deal a deathblow to "the musical" is the collapse of any audience capable of completing the construction of its meaningfulness. A problem of the development of

popular music in this century is precisely how to conceptualise that listening which is "technically" ignorant and yet capable of keeping pace with this explosion of techniques and "musical language" which amounts to a fusion of elements from at least two very different cultures, one originating in Europe but divided into several strands, the other Afro-American and also far from fully unified. One thing is clear, however when the question is posed in this way, and that is that "regression" is in no way an appropriate description of the development.

I wrote in the introduction that my eventual aim, which had at first been confused and contradictory, was eventually to integrate the study of pop history with the work on theory and method which I have introduced here. I can now add to this that my particular object of attention will be a moment of pop history, chosen both for its documentation, which gives us the material to work with (the "secondary sources" as well as the primary) and for what it is supposed to represent - a great explosion of new "sounds", a new sociological phenomenon ("youth" and "youth-culture" - the latter meaning chiefly music (and clothes) to the outsider), and a new step in the internationalisation of the music industry and of the "tastes" of audiences. In a moment of obvious shake-up and reconstruction of all the practices of popular music the truth, the limitations and the basis of a critique of the Adorno view - as the most sophisticated in existence - ought to be more readily discoverable than in less perturbed periods. If all is not deception the mid-1950s in US and in Britain saw a gigantic wave of amateur music-making among young (chiefly male) people. This was not family-based as was the old amateurism of the "middle-classes", but "group-based", generated out of neighbourhood friendships, gangs, schools, particular coffee-bars and even workplaces etc. It could be interpreted, in Adorno's terms, in two ways:- either as the basest form of mass-imitation of the commodities offered, some strange quirk of the mass-society (a bit like football-fans thinking they themselves are Best or Francis when they play in the park), or as proof that all is not as Adorno says. The very idea of kids listening so hard to records that they learn to play and sing in a more or less identical way, the idea of kids getting together to make music, and learning to rely on each other as parts of an ensemble

or group - these might be taken to strike at the very heart of Adorno's claims about regressive listening and atomisation respectively. My purpose is to study both the history and the theory of this problem - to attempt to prove that the second interpretation has some truth, to work out how much, and to develop a view of pop-musical practices as a whole which includes these dimensions. It is to these ends that I intend to try to apply elsewhere the theoretical considerations set out above.

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13. Contained in the invaluable "Introduction" to "Music and Society:
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14. These ideas from Dilthey 1927 & 1933.

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38. All references on pps 29, 30-37 are from this essay.
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41. *ibid.*