

Public Voices



Public Voices

Music and Civic Space Symposium

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Front Cover

The Celtic or Irish Harp was a favored instrument in Irish history. Harpists were policy advisors to Irish kings. Here an Irish King, before the decline of Irish nobility in the late 1600s, plays the harp himself. During the 1600s thousands of harps were destroyed in Ireland and dozens of harpists were hanged by the British who feared that they were spies fostering the seeds of revolution.

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Contents

Symposium: **Music and Civic Space**

Editor: Linda Dennard

Some Epigrams	1
<i>Donncha Dall Ó Laoghaire</i>	

Music and Civic Space: The Political Harp	
Introduction.....	3
<i>Linda Dennard</i>	

In Irish culture, the Celtic Harp is a metaphor for human struggle, freedom and intellectual life and, as such, is inextricably bound to politics. Separating Irish society from its politics, the birth of its government and music is simply not possible. Having a conference on Music and Civic Space in Ireland made a kind of sense in this way. In May 2005, an interdisciplinary group of international scholars were invited to University College Cork by the Department of Government to discuss the relationship between music and governance and, in particular, music's role in creating public culture. The symposium offered here to the readers of Public Voices is a product and a direct outcome of the conference.

The Beatles, the Beatles Generation, and the End of the Cold War	13
<i>Vessela Misheva</i>	

An effort to rationalize history brought the Western world to perceive the “velvet,” “bloodless” revolutions that swept Eastern Europe as arising from the fact that people there had become painfully aware of the conditions in which they lived and the shortcomings of the system they had built. The author of this article argues instead that it was those young East Europeans who early in childhood failed to fall in love with the social system in large numbers who, when they finally came of age, put an end to the Cold War, and not because they were dissatisfied with the economic conditions, but because they wanted to put an end to the world’s East-West division. But how could people with “different” minds grow up inside the communist system, and how could they miss going through the standard process of communist socialization? To answer these questions, the author explores the hypothesis that Beatlemania, along with The Beatles themselves, may have contributed in a significant way to the collapse of the communist regimes in Eastern Europe.

“Love and Peace or Else”: U2 and the Development of Social Consciousness inside and outside the Framework of Rock	44
<i>Visnja Cogan</i>	

Rock and popular culture have had a tremendous impact on youth since they emerged. Rock music was the symbol of change, may it be social, sexual, or political. This article addresses the influence that the Irish rock band U2 may have had, more specifically, on their fans and, more generally, on society by charting the evolution of the band’s social consciousness throughout their career.

John Adams, <i>Klinghoffer</i> and <i>The Transmigration of Souls</i>: Musical Responses to Terrorism.....	58
<i>John Anderson</i>	

This paper explores the way in which the music of John Adams responds to terrorism and looks at some of the controversies surrounding his work. It represents a reflection on how the musical and the political can interact in the modern world, engaging his work on the level of political dialogue.

Beyond the Fife and Drum: Northern Protestant Working Class Cultures	73
<i>Paul Burgess</i>	

The author contends that throughout the duration of the present conflict in Northern Ireland, the world has been repeatedly given a one-dimensional image of this culture depicting it as mainly a product of ethnicity and also a reflection of class sentiment and lived experience.

As drummer and songwriter of *Ruefrex*, a musical band internationally renowned for its songs about the Troubles conflict in Northern Ireland, Burgess discusses the need to express Protestant cultural traditions and identity through words and music. Citing Weber's argument that individuals need to understand the world and their environment and that this understanding is influenced by perceptions of world order and attitudes and interpretations of symbolic systems or structures, the author argues that losing the importance of symbolic structures in relation to actual events will result in failure to understand why communities embrace meaning systems that are centrally informed by symbol and ritual. In his mind, rather than seeking to promote an understanding of Protestant or Catholic reality, it is important to speculate how the practice of difference might be used in developing any kind of reality of co-operation and co-ordination.

The Politics of Aesthetics 86
Andrew M. Blasko

An examination of the role that art and aesthetic activity have played in the affairs of state can be useful in shaping a framework for a discussion of the more specific issue of the interrelations between music and political life. The following discussion focuses on the manner in which the Russian avant-garde aesthetic movement gradually coalesced with the centrally planned construction of Soviet-style society in the efforts to build a new way of life and a new type of human being in accordance with the developing practice of the Communist-led revolution.

"Let Us Say Yes..."
Music, the Stranger and Hospitality..... 113
Helen Phelan

The stranger, or the foreigner, is a familiar figure in Western literature, philosophy, and theology. The turn of the millennium from the 20th to the 21st century has re-cast the concept of the stranger against a backdrop of global migration, unprecedented in its scope and character. Philosophy, psychoanalysis and literary criticism have all re-engaged in what is increasingly acknowledged as one of the seminal challenges to contemporary political, social and ethical human organization. One of the concepts rehabilitated in this most recent engagement is the concept of hospitality, including absolute hospitality.

Through an exploration of some key contemporary approaches to our understanding of the human phenomenon of music-making, as well as a case study of a particular musical happening in Limerick, Ireland, involving a group of women from the Travelling and asylum seeking communities, this paper attempts the postulation that music is a potential medium through which absolute hospitality can be glimpsed and, on occasion, realized.

The Suppression of the Music of Ionian Islands by the Modern Greek State: Culture that Did Not Fit the Political Agenda	125
<i>Adamantios Dionysios Minas</i>	

Music plays an important role in social integration, often providing the vehicle for how one culture reinterprets itself in another. However, as in the case of the Ionian Islands, a peoples' ability to incorporate outside influences and produce local culture may find itself at odds with the more nationalistic purposes of the state. The Ionian Islands came to be part of the Greek state without enduring the yoke of occupation by the Ottoman Empire or suffering in the wars that preceded the Greek free state. Therefore, the Ionian culture, in particular its popular music, has been made obscure by political elites who defined Greece as the benevolent opposite of its enemies, as the center of civilization and therefore without cultural influences – a definition that Ionian music, influenced by Italian settlers, did not meet.

Reflections

A Story of Saxophone Craftsmanship: Implications for Public Administration Theory	138
<i>Terence M. Garrett</i>	

The idea for this story emerged in the course of a conversation among friends about the loss of American (and, indeed, outside of the U.S.) craftsmanship and the propensity for manufacturers and service providers to obey the laws of mass production. When it was my turn, I recounted the story of my own experience when it came time for me to buy a “new” baritone saxophone. After having talked about the story, my friends told me that the story had important aspects pertinent to public administration.

Letters from Readers	144
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Some Epigrams

Donncha Dall Ó Laoghaire

The world laid low, and the wind blew – like a dust –
Alexander, Caesar, and all their followers.
Tara is grass, and look how it stands with Troy.
And even the English – maybe they might die.

Loss of our learning brought darkness, weakness and woe
On me and mine, amid these unrighteous hordes.
Oafs that have entered the places of poets
And taken the light of the schools from everyone....

Last night as I lay in my bed, enfeebled and faint,
I uttered (unthinking awhile) complaints to Christ
The he handed the lime-fields of Flann, every one to the
stranger.
While the Gael was laid low and ceaselessly robbed and
tormented.

They were gentle, alms-giving and friendly in their time,
Their bishops, their monks and their clergy melodious at
Prayer.
If it's true that their sins fell upon them and turned them to wolves
Show me, O Christ, a snug Saxon didn't mangle they law!

This poem by **Donncha Dall Ó Laoghaire** (fl. 1720) would have been recited or sung in Irish to the accompaniment of the Irish Harp. Such metered ballads express the complexity of conditions for individuals under the occupation of the English – poverty, loss of culture, and oppression of religion. They also express an individual's attempt to make sense of political events that seem out of their control. These kind rich epigrammatic poems written en mass by Irish bards and combined with the music of the Irish Harp were influential in bringing about revolution in Ireland.

The entire poem can be read at: *An Duanaire (1660-1900). Poems of the Dispossessed*. Séan O'Tuama & Thomas Kinsella, (eds.). 2002 Dublin: Foras na Gaeilge.

Music and Civic Space: The Political Harp

Linda Dennard

Like most things Irish, the Celtic Harp is inextricably bound to politics. An official symbol for the Republic of Ireland, the image on the Irish Euro, the harp is a metaphor for human struggle, freedom, intellectual life, and the role of music in Irish culture. Before the decline of the Irish nobility in the 16th century, harpists were advisors to kings. They provided council on matters of policy, placing Celtic mythology and history in a contemporary context in their ballads. They had wealth and prestige, although their holdings could not be passed on to their children – but rather went to the best harpist born after them, an indication of the importance of the music.

Being a harpist became a dangerous occupation as the reign of Irish kings gave way to British rule. The harpists became wandering minstrels and their ballads took on the voice of the people, their sufferings and experiences, illustrated by the poem opening this symposium. The British, however, recognized the power of the harp. Although Elizabeth I had her own harpist, in 1603 she issued a proclamation, endorsed by the Pope in Rome, that banned harps and had harpists hanged. Harpists, traveling from one village to the next were thought to be spies, especially given their history as political advisors to Irish monarchs. Irish historians also speculate that the particular nature of the harp, combined with the power of lyrics that often kindled the memory of old traditions, relationships, and freedom were by their nature subversive. Indeed, the particular sound of a Celtic Harp was thought to unduly stir the passions. As Francis Bacon said in *Sylva Sylvarum*, “no harp hath the sound so melting and prolonged as the Irish Harp.”

Rebellion first broke out in Ireland in line with the civil war in England. Oliver Cromwell’s hatred for the Irish led him to many instances of brutality and oppression during 1649 in an attempt to quell the unrest. He ordered the destruction of 500 harps in one day in Dublin, and on another occasion 2000 were destroyed in the countryside during his siege. Given the meaning of the harp to the Irish, it was perhaps also meant to be a blow to the morale of the

culture. It is little wonder, therefore, that the harp is a symbol of Irish independence and history, especially given the generally powerful role of music in shaping the Irish State.

Songs sung at the fireside at pubs and in homes helped shape the Wolfe Tone Rebellion in 1798. The rebellion failed, but the music continued to express the uneasiness of the Irish people with British domination, their suffering from poverty, and their hopes for freedom. The songs of the rebellion acted as an undercurrent to Irish society through the 19th century, conveyed in “sessions” in private homes and pubs where musicians would frequently gather to sing and play.

Having a conference on Music and Civic Space in Ireland made a kind of sense in this way. Separating Irish society from its politics, the birth of its government and music is simply not possible. In May 2005, an interdisciplinary group of international scholars were invited to University College Cork by the Department of Government to discuss the relationship between music and governance and, in particular, music’s role in creating public culture. The participants were music educators, political scientists, program administrators in the arts and other public administrators, philosophers, sociologists, musicians and social psychologists. Musical performances by students and by participants played a central role in the conference, often creating the space in which participants were able to reflect on what was being said.

The Voice of Caution

It was an auspicious year for the City of Cork, having been named the European Capitol of Culture for 2005.¹ Cork is Ireland’s second-largest city, located in the southeast of Cork County in the Region of Munster. Like all Irish cities, Cork, the seat of the ‘rebel south,’ has its own unique character (The local beer is Murphy’s not Guinness, for example.) Settled by the Vikings, Cork has a nine hundred year history and is the source of some of Ireland’s most moving poetry and most rebellious songs. Public gatherings in Cork always begin with a chorus of *The Lovely Banks of the River Lee* – not a rebel song exactly – but one that captures the sense of nostalgic pride that Cork natives have for their town. The song also expresses something of Irish character (although I would be quick to add that Irish character is not subject to any particular definition), in that it employs poetry to express those emotional dimensions of human existence that normal speech, especially modern English, cannot fathom.

Yet to say that Irish politics are meshed with Irish music does not necessarily mean that poets and harpists are any longer the instrument of the State. It is certainly true that Eamon De Valera, one of the architects of the Irish revolution, one opposed to the 1922 compromise that split the North and South, saw music as one of the cultural links to the stability of the new

¹ The Capitol of Culture project is a competitive title bestowed on different cities in Europe. It is meant to be a way for cities to revive their cultural infrastructure. Large grants are available to these cities to renovate historical buildings, support innovations in the arts, and host an intensive year - long series of music of all forms, theatre, and the Arts.

government he helped create. He was Taoiseach (prime minister) during the development of the Irish Constitution that made the south the Republic of Ireland. Indeed, De Valera's arguments about Irish culture were similar to those made by Kalomiris, the founder of the Greek National School of Music - described by Adamintios Minos in this volume – that certain music and the identity of the state were inseparable.

Working through the powerful Gaelic League, De Valera set about defining the boundaries of what it meant to be Irish. As a response to centuries of subjugation it perhaps made sense for a country, now free, to explore just what being “Irish” was. Both De Valera and Kalomiris in Greece equated musical style and musical expression with a clarifying definition of culture. For nearly fifty years after the revolution, Irish artists, musicians and dancers were confined to the kind of cultural “rule book.” Some things were Irish and others were not. Further, what was Irish was seen to need protection from outside influences.

What is sometimes referred to as “The Thaw” in Irish Arts and music began towards the end of the 1950s when Séan Lemass, the third Taoiseach, reversed the isolationist policies of De Valera and began reaching out towards the European Common Market and towards other countries such as the United States for investments in the Irish economy. It was a move that led to the phenomenon of the Celtic Tiger that would take Ireland out of poverty and make it among the richest countries in Europe. By the 1970s and 1980s Irish artists were beginning to experiment as they were exposed to more of the world. Ireland has become a world center for music, dance, and film. Irish musicians and scholars, however, often express resentment towards the stereotypic image of Irish music internationally – the predictable jigs and reels, the Leprechauns and shamrocks as Irish culture is “marketed” worldwide.

During its reign as European Capitol of Culture in 2005, for example, Cork and the European Union sponsored the formation of the *Cork Caucus on the Arts*. The purpose of the caucus was, in effect, to encourage the thaw of Irish art and music by promoting experimentation and exposure to new art forms and new music among Cork artists and musicians. A curator of the group was singer/composer Fergal Gaynor who also attended our conference – although somewhat reluctantly. The further agenda of the Cork Caucus was to employ the arts and music to enhance the development of European citizenship and integration, but the Caucus had no intention of doing it as an instrument of the university and by extension the State.

Gaynor (who has a deep and mournful singing voice, one suited to the poetry he writes, a voice that makes a person long to be the victim of a romantic tragedy) reminded us that dangers exist in using musicians as if they are tools with which to manipulate citizens. There was something condescending, he said, in all our benign chatter about “accommodating difference” through music. Who gave us the right to be the “accommodators?” His point was simply that government does not and should not control all aspects of human experience and, indeed, it was the responsibility of artists and musicians to resist the appropriation of public space.

Thinking beyond Wagner

The conference was convened partly on an intuition that there was indeed something different about music that was important to citizenship and the quality of citizen relations. The participants knew by chapter and verse that music has been used for evil as much as for good. They knew that Wagner had fascist sentiments and that Hitler used his music to create loyalty to his perverted cause. We knew that music and marketing are often said in the same breath, that music is used to bring consumers to a certain vulnerable emotional state upon which is imprinted the image of Hummers and deodorant. We lamented Bob Dylan lending his raspy voice to Victoria's Secret.

But what Gaynor was saying was something subtly different – something harder to put a voice to concerning the relationship between governance and music. These questions, for example, emerged from our discussions and papers, if we did not entirely answer them. Who owns public space – corporations, government, citizens? Is it possible, for example, that civic space – that inexact locale that represents our public life and reflects the quality of our relationships with each other – can be created without government intervention? Do all citizen relationships always make reference to the State or, put in another way, do all outcomes of citizen interactions necessarily relate to the goals of the state?

The further intuition was that music provides a kind of non-linear architecture (a reflection of my interest in complexity theory) in which the enigmatic and oft-obscured “process” by which citizens make meaning, accommodate each other, and indeed transform occurs. It is different space than political space in that it does not deal overtly with dualities, but instead seems to encompass the emotional, sensory, cognitive, and essentially paradoxical plethora that is human existence. As Scottish political scholar John Anderson notes in his piece of the controversial opera *The Death of Klinghoffer*, music does not necessarily resolve anything, but rather it tends to stir doubt and unsettle individual mindsets so they are perhaps vulnerable to change. Anderson suggests that Adams fails to achieve his goal of non – duality in presenting the suffering of both Palestinians and Jews. Perhaps there is a dilemma generally in music that appears to support one side of an issue or another. Setting up even the perception of dualities, the “us and them,” encourages citizens to create rational, cognitive arguments that may not fundamentally change the quality of social relationships because such arguments tend to re-enforce the perception of duality and the seemingly endless conflict it engenders.

Adams can take some credit for the failure to be apolitical. He and his librettist, Alice Goodman, were not subtle in their characterizations of the two sides of the conflict. However, in reading Anderson’s piece, a role for government seemed to emerge, one different than using music to support a particular cause, behavior, or point of view. Is it a proper role for democratic government, for example, to create spaces in which citizens can reflect on the more complex issues of human existence without being told in advance what is it they are supposed to think? The more esoteric question, perhaps one reflective of the role of aesthetics in public life, is: Can something be learned from the “non-dualities” – those spaces in time where the suffering of both sides of a conflict co-mingles in an emotional moment? Further,

can citizens mature as citizens without exposure to the more ambiguous and inexact conditions of humanity and without being asked to reflect on the complexity?

What Does Music Do? The Musical Moment

What we want music to do may be different than what it does – or, more precisely, what music does in relation to citizen interactions and politics depends on how it is used and by whom. Music, we might say, for example, is essentially neutral in the sense that it does not “care” who listens. At the same time (the same moment) individuals can interact with music in any given context and derive personal meaning from it. Further, as Vessela Misheva’s article on the Beatles notes, music seems to have the quality of intermingling with historical context as a vector for social change that may be emerging among the non-political relationships of citizens.

The difficulty with using music instrumentally to promote social change as Visnja Cogan chronicles in her piece of the Irish band U2 (Bono is the closest thing to Irish nobility there is) is that music is transitory. The emotional and sensory nature of music means that if change is going to occur – if citizens are going to embrace each other – it is going to happen in that moment and not in the longer stretches of negotiations and dialogue. Does this mean that music is merely inspirational because it cannot be harnessed in the long run? Was Bacon changed by his exposure to the “melting” of the Irish Harp or was he only made melancholy? Current research in a number of fields from neurobiology to music education would indicate something different than mere inspiration. Helen Phelan in her article on hospitality and music, for example, chronicles the unique qualities of musical “hearing.”

Current research in neurobiology, according to Gardiner and others, also indicates that the human brain quickly places sensory and emotional cues, like those generated by music, into the emerging pattern of an individual’s existence – that is the brain makes a cohesive, meaningful, and inclusive memory out of moments. Does music create the process space for meaning-making from events, meaning which then becomes part of the individuals’ evolving relationship to the world and others? Process space imagined here would be non-dualistic, not necessarily conflict free, but without the assumption that some things belong to the moment in question and others do not. In short, can citizens come to accommodate each other, make sense of one another, just that fast – in the stirring of an emotion, in the activation of the senses? For administrators, perhaps the question is: If change happens that fast, can it be predicted? Probably not. Can a “good” change be stabilized through further exposure to musical space? Maybe.

Martin Gardiner, a neurophysicist and music educator from Brown University, described his research at the conference, research that indicates a strong link between musical education and improved capacity for learning other complex subject such as math and science. Gardiner generated a key idea of the conference – the possibility that music and musical learning also increase citizen capacity for dealing with complex and ambiguous situations – perhaps like

those that characterize global relationships. Speaking at the conference, Gardiner said he felt strongly that this boost to complex learning capacity, however, only occurs in the presence of complex music – primarily classical.²

Gardiner's point raises another question about what music does. Certainly, one cannot say that pop music is not "influential" as chronicled in both the works of Cogan on U2 and Vessela Misheva on the Beatles' influence on the fall of the Soviet Union. Misheva points out that there was nothing particularly astonishing about the Beatles' musical ability or the profundity of their only occasionally political lyrics (*She loves you – yeah, yeah, yeah.*) It seems more that their influence was contextual – the right "message" at the right time to a nation of young people wanting to know their place in the larger world. The Beatles, in this regard, seem much different than U2, not only in musical style and ability, but also in their ability to keep themselves distanced from politics, at the same time they had a profound influence on the general public. As Misheva notes, the Beatles were banned in both the East and the West for a kind of ill-defined subversive quality. Yet, Lennon or McCartney did not take U.S. political leaders to Africa on a fact-finding tour as Bono did, nor did they seek to change any specific government policy or practice. Still, as Misheva so expertly chronicles, they had an effect on Soviet youth that contributed to the downfall of an entire regime.

Cogan says that U2 has come to terms with their own "politicalness," although they have struggled off and on to keep the project of their music somehow separate and above the causes they endorse. There is perhaps a reason for their uneasiness having to do with the difference between the public spaces created by music and that space shaped by modern politics. Does one lose the power of music to help citizens create meaning in a shared moment, if it is attached to one side or the other of an argument?

Cogan, however, seems to suggest that the influence of U2 is a combination of context, personality, and the drawing power of popular music. This is perhaps true of all musical phenomena as John Anderson notes about opera – it is contextual. Perhaps that is the source of its power – it expresses the totality of what cannot be expressed in simple conversation and even less in confrontational political dialogue. The Beatles, for example, as Misheva notes, were able to mirror the longing of Soviet youth for something that the State could neither deliver nor fully define.

Ironically perhaps, before the Cold War, Stalin and artists had a cozy relationship as Andrew Blasko reports. Avant-garde artists attempted to co-opt the government and realize a utopian society by blurring the distinction between art and politics – and in particular blurring the distinction between the private thoughts of an individual and aims of the state through "standardized art." The artists ultimately were the losers in this game with Stalin, as Blasko chronicles, leaving questions, not just about whether art should be used to support the purposes of the State, but how much can it co-opt itself and still remain art.

² Martin Gardiner's chapter will appear in the book on music and civic space now in process.

There is a distinction then that emerges in the papers between music (both popular and operatic) that purposefully delivers a specific political agenda that can lead to specific policy changes in existing regimes and music that embodies and reflects the unconscious yearnings of individuals – yearnings that can make a society vulnerable to transformational change that exceeds the capacity and scope of politics.

Further, there are Gardiner's comments that indicate that certain capacities are enhanced by exposure to a particular kind of music, especially the learning of that music. This may imply that struggling with complexity is a good thing for citizens to do, as Adams suggests in the comments on his operas. Maybe citizens need difficult space in order to develop the ability to interact effectively with reality.

It seems important, for example, that citizens not just listen to music, but rather also participate in learning and singing. Music may contribute to social integration in the process – although not always in a way that can be predicted, as Helen Phelan's research indicates. What people make meaning from and what they desire may not always be what is on the political agenda of “interests” but rather, again, is contextual to the group and their circumstances. The Association of Irish Choirs, for example, was represented at the conference, as were a number of groups, including Phelan's Sanctuary Project for immigrants to Ireland. The common experience of these practitioners was that something indefinable happens when people are gathered together to sing. Shy people become more expressive; people forget their differences without negotiating them, a culture is formed that one would not expect. As Phelan points out, however, this space in which citizens often make sense of each other and make their values known may not emerge if it is simply contrived by a well-meaning bureaucrat with specific outcomes in mind. Does this ambiguity make music any less important in the creation and maintenance of the social relationships that form the architecture of civic space? Can we define the “right” music for social engagement?

Ireland and Greece share a common experience in this regard. Minos outlines how the music of the Ionian Islands was neglected and destroyed simply because it was not “pure” – that is because it did reflect the State's view of itself. In Ireland, it was not just that parameters were set around “Irishness” after the revolution. Before the revolution, what was “proper” Irish music was largely defined by a handful of British Scholars who chose only a few hundred songs and disregarded the local traditions where music and poetry belonged not to the elites, but to individuals and their experiences.

An important distinction is also made in Paul Burgess's piece on the working class protestant music of Northern Ireland. While Kalomiris and De Valera may have seen music as having a common cultural and political character, one that mirrored the needs of the State for social stability, music might also be used to de-stabilize stereotypic images engendered by the mass media or by politicians seeking to characterize the side to an issue.

Music and Governance

The modern State is perhaps best at stabilizing historical patterns of social interaction. This is, of course, both a good and bad quality of the State. It is good to create and sustain the structure and organizing principles of society - those reflective of the collective will. It is bad when it re-enforces forms of relationships that simply support the State's right to exist according to its own vision as with Stalin. The difference between the two seems to involve a kind of democratic mobility that allows individuals to recognize their culture and their past at the same time it allows, even encourages, them to create meaning from changing circumstances while others are accommodated. Democracy is perhaps a process of meaning making in ambiguous/emotional circumstances so that stability is maintained, as difference becomes part of the evolving social repertoire.

Where Is Civic Space?

The conventional struggle in the modern State between the individual and larger community, for example, may be less of a conflict, one that must be mediated by the State, as it is a process by which individuals interact and make meaning in public space in ways that enhance both the individual and the community. But where is this public space?

Conventional politics would have it be at the voting booth or in the narrow corridors of lobbying. Perhaps social change, however, is not always so instrumental or confined merely to the resolution of conflict over resources. In reflecting on the papers in this volume, for example, there appears to be something "local" about music – not just in its lyrics, but also in the emotional, sensory, and historical context of individuals. Music's strong relationship with the appearance of cultures everywhere is an indication that it is, in some intrinsic way, involved in the expression of meaning and value of a community. At the same time, music is an expression of the individual – as evidenced by the frequency and number of lay poets and musicians in Ireland, for example. Likewise, it is an expression of the individual's relationship both to government and civic society.

In an age of globalized media, it is perhaps a forgone conclusion that music from different cultures reaches across borders. But what is the difference between the phenomena described by Vessela Misheva with the Beatles and the widespread concern about "MacMusic" – the commercial push for a standardized context and out put of music internationally? One answer involves the role of democratic governments in creating circumstances in which "non-standard" music and the relationships it supports can both compete in the market and be respected and acknowledged. This brings us, finally, to thinking about the specific role of music in governance and the creation of civic space.

The Role of Music in Governance Practice: Robust Civic Space

Music most assuredly has an impact on both individuals and communities. That it contributes to forming – perhaps giving shape to – an emerging set of relationships is also evident, as the papers in this volume indicate. Therefore music can be said to be a form of public space, one with complex dimensions. It can inspire, but it can also organize. It can destabilize, but it can also help form the meaningful relationships from which a new order emerges. Further, these emergent relationships may reflect the meaning making among individuals in a manner that allows them to place each other in the same evolving context.

So how do administrators act on this potential, knowing with certainty that the outcomes are peculiar to the circumstances? Appreciating the freedom of individuals and their capacity to make meaning from complex circumstances is an intangible, but very real aspect of an administrator's ability to imagine how he/she might participate in a creative act with citizens. Another perceptual change is the recognition that public space is not just government and politics, but also legitimately includes those spaces that allow citizens to interact even when they are not in conflict or disagreement. Oddly perhaps, this means that the emotional life of citizens is as important as their ability to cognitively formulate a good argument with which to defeat an opponent. An emotional life is the one that bridges individuals to each other and the channel by which we place each other in a context that makes sense to us.

But again, even with these perceptual changes, how do we act? It would seem the most efficacious thing government could do, if it were concerned about the quality of citizen relationships and the capacity of citizens to cope in the real, complex world, would be to create robust public space. “Robust” is a term used in policy analysis in recent years. It refers to the practice of gaining as much input as possible from as many different sources as possible before formulating a policy. But importantly here, it also means that what this robust environment creates may be something we had not thought of before. This is different than trying to figure out the optimal policy from three or four alternatives analyzed by experts.

Robust public space would provide the opportunity for citizens to interact in as many forms as possible on the basis of their individuality rather than only from their marketable interests. Perhaps the contentious shape of public space would change as a result. The role of public administrator then would not simply be to define and operationalize social outcomes, testing the “right” music, for example, but rather in providing opportunities for citizens to self-organize – and then to value what citizens create.

Democracies are different, in this regard, in that the State cannot merely defend itself at the cost of citizens, but rather it must provide space in which its members can produce meaning from events and from each other. Music, far from being irrelevant to the purposes of democracy, perhaps expresses them best.

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The Beatles, the Beatles Generation, and the End of the Cold War

Vessela Misheva

Were a monument to be erected in grand Stalinist style to the heroes of socialist rock and roll, the statue would have depicted a young man in blue jeans, head thrust defiantly upward. In his hand, where the Stalinist war hero once gripped his Kalashnikov assault gun, this longhaired warrior would clutch an electric guitar. The triumph of rock and roll in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union is, in the final analysis, his victory. This is the story.

Timothy Ryback (Rock Around the Bloc. p. 6)

The Velvet Revolutionaries

It would be no exaggeration to say that almost all of the players involved in the deadly serious competition of the Cold War feared that it would lead to open military confrontation, with unpredictable consequences. But contrary to all expectations, and in spite of all the military preparations, one of the powers collapsed from within, the Iron Curtain was dismantled in a matter of hours, and the Cold War suddenly came to an end.

Mikhail Gorbachev is generally considered to be the Soviet leader who initiated a process of liberalization and reconstruction that went far beyond all expectations and led the communist regimes in the entire Soviet Bloc to their demise. Today, however, the two short-lived catchwords that were intended to lead the reconstruction process, *glasnost* and *perestroika*, look more like life rafts for an already sinking ship than reasons for why it began sinking in the first place. It also seems clear that even more radical political, social, and economic reforms would not have been able to produce the effect needed to save the system. The communist regimes had lost their power and legitimacy, and neither a course of liberalization,

nor a course of stagnation could have saved them.¹

An effort to rationalize history brought the Western world to perceive the “velvet,” “bloodless” revolutions that swept Eastern Europe as arising from the fact that people there had become painfully aware of the conditions in which they lived and the shortcomings of the system they had built. But the people who crowded the public squares of East European capitals in fact appeared to have no particular identity, no specific interest, and no political program. It was often difficult even to find a speaker to address the gatherings of thousands of people, who could hardly be seen as anything but a mass of people from all walks of life comprised of party and non-party members alike. Indeed, the inability to this very day of most of these “countries in transition” to define where their true interests lie, and which course of social development should be taken, is clear evidence of the fact that the collapse of the Communist regimes was not a political or ideological victory of the Western capitalist world.² It in fact appears to be the case in many countries that even after more than fifteen years people’s minds are still not ripe for fully embracing Western ideals and the Western style of life. It is only that capitalism and socialism have now continued their Cold War inside the former communist countries, where these seemingly incompatible forms of social organization are still struggling to find a way for peaceful co-existence under one political roof.

In such circumstances it should be no surprise that those who immediately began in 1990 to look for organized dissident movements and leaders who could have been credited with the collapse of the Communist system were disappointed. They have concluded that the communist regime in Eastern Europe was such that it left little room for the emergence of a truly large or significant dissident culture. Indeed, only a very few dissidents assumed leadership in post-communist Eastern Europe, the most prominent being the Czech playwright Vacláv Havel, who began as a fighter for human rights in 1968 and came to be known for his participation in the Charter 77 movement.

The belief in the power of one, two, or several dissidents who supposedly comprehended the advantages of the capitalist way of life, organized themselves and the people, and finally overthrew the regime is an overly “romantic” conception. If there in fact was some mass East European “dissidence,” then it was expressed in much more complex and subtle forms. The real dissidents were not those who had undergone a transition from one mind-set to another, as many Cold War experts expected. The real “dissidents” were instead those young East Europeans who early in childhood failed to fall in love with the social system in large

¹ A crucial event in this respect was the Chernobyl catastrophe, which crushed belief in the system’s power and ability to protect its people. However, the point of the present discussion is that this was only the immediate cause for the system’s loss of legitimacy. The profound causes are yet to be revealed.

² Most of these East European countries seem to be stuck in a timeless stage of “social transition” that they themselves find it difficult to define. Lebow perhaps offered one of the best descriptions of what such a stage entails: “Hypocrisy is the hallmark of transition. It is most pronounced when old values have broken down but are still honored publicly because the new values that guide behavior have not yet been articulated or legitimated” (Lebow, 2003, p. 17).

numbers. When they finally came of age, they made up their minds and put an end to the Cold War because they wanted to put an end to the world's East-West division, not because they were dissatisfied with the economic conditions. The problems that the people in Eastern Europe had with the communist systems were rather psychological.³

But how could people with “different” minds grow up inside the communist system, and how could they miss going through the standard process of communist socialization? What follows here is an exploration of the hypothesis that Beatlemania, along with The Beatles themselves, may have contributed in a significant way to the collapse of the communist regimes in Eastern Europe. According to this hypothesis, the real dissidents were those young East Europeans who grew up with minds without “walls,” and who in large numbers failed to learn early in childhood how to fear and hate the political enemy of the communist system. Timothy Ryback’s “heroes of socialist rock” will here be credited not only for the “triumph of rock and roll in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union,” for the story does not end there. They also will be credited for the end of the Cold War. This is the full story.

Time for Confessions: The Beatles Rock Red Square

The well-known confession of Václav Havel, the architect of the “Velvet Revolution” and the first President of the post-Cold War Czechoslovakia, reveals that he worshiped Frank Zappa as the musician whose lyrics influenced him to the extent that his life was transformed. Somewhat less known, but perhaps even more important, is that Havel was also a great fan of John Lennon.⁴ And, as if to shed light on the confused question of whose fan he is, Havel organized a special performance for his guests at the NATO summit in Prague, including the U.S. President George Bush and the U.S. Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, just a few months before he left his office in Prague Castle. They were offered John Lennon’s “Power to the People.”⁵ Just as was the case with Miloš Forman, one of the most acclaimed filmmakers of the twentieth century, Havel belonged to a generation who was mature enough not to be attracted to The Beatles’ music. But a significant thread does lead back from Charter 77 to the Czech band The Plastic People of the Universe, who began their career in 1964 as a group influenced by The Beatles, even though this influence might refer to the idea of grabbing a guitar and using music and language games as weapons rather than to their music in the strict

³ The impression which these countries made to an external observer coming from the West as being poor was mainly due to the lack of the comparable to the Western market variety of goods, the Spartan attitude towards packaging, and everything that helps us define a society as “consumer society,” but the people’s basic wants were satisfied. As Fukuyama notes: “Havel’s charge against communism is not at all that it failed in its promise to deliver the material plenty of industrial efficiency, or that it disappointed the hopes of the working class or the poor for a better life. On the contrary, it did offer them these things in a Faustian bargain, requiring them to compromise their moral worth in return. And in making this bargain, the victims of the system became its perpetuators, while the system itself took on a life of its own independently of anyone’s desire to participate in it” (Fukuyama, 1992, p. 169).

⁴ Ryback, 1990.

⁵ Remnick, 2003.

sense.⁶

The work of Timothy Ryback, writing precisely at the time the East Bloc collapsed, contains a great number of facts that may be used in support of the hypothesis that rock music in general had a greater significance for the outcome of the Cold War than any other factor. But while young East Europeans in principle loved rock and roll and many Western groups, it cannot be said that any of the other no less popular groups were “loved” in the same way as The Beatles. That is why they defined themselves not as “the rock generation” or the “rock and roll generation,” but as “the Beatles Generation.” The “Lennon walls” that appeared in the centers of Prague and Sofia after John’s murder in the middle of the Cold War should also be taken as a sign of the strong “bond” that existed between the young people in these countries and The Beatles, whom they had never met or seen. Every year on December 8th die-hard fans gathered together to commemorate the anniversary of Lennon’s death, to sing and play The Beatles’s songs, and to write what seemed to be collective love letters in English on the wall with a P.S. “We love you! We always will be true!”

On 25 May, 2003, CNN reported that former Beatle Sir Paul McCartney “finally made it to Russia” and “rocked Red Square,” which was filled with a crowd of 20,000 Beatles’ fans. One of the most curious facts presented in this news report was that not only were former Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev and Russian President Putin present in the audience, they even met with McCartney before the concert. It was also reported that both Russian political leaders, whose names are closely connected with the current fate of Eastern Europe, stated in their private conversations with McCartney that they were great Beatles fans. Putin was also reported to have said that The Beatles’ music brought Soviet citizens “a taste of freedom, a window on the world.”⁷

The concert took place in Moscow’s Red Square against protests signed by more than 100 Duma deputies, who viewed it as a “blasphemous” offense to the memories of the communist leaders and national heroes, including Lenin and Gagarin, who were buried there. Even in 2003, more than a decade after the end of the Cold War, a rock concert on Red Square was still considered by orthodox communists to have “covert political meaning.”⁸ But apparently many more believed that the concert of a former Beatle could be held no place else precisely because Red Square is such a sacred place to every Russian mind.

Gorbachev’s admiration for the music and the personalities of The Beatles became known even when he still was working in the Kremlin. As Ryback writes, Gorbachev and his wife, Raisa, received Yoko Ono, John Lennon’s widow, at the Kremlin in 1987 and declared themselves to be passionate Beatles fans. When Raisa was reported to have quoted lines from Lennon’s songs, and when “the Soviet leader offered the doleful *bon mot*: ‘John should have

⁶ One of the Plastic People’s albums was entitled *Egon Bondy’s Happy Hearts Club Banned*.

⁷ “McCartney ‘Back in the USSR’,” CNN, Sunday, 25 May 2003.

⁸ BBC News World Edition, 14 May 2003.

been here,”⁹ they certainly were performing a sacrilegious act.⁹ It was as if the bastion of communist ideology was being betrayed from within by the very fact that the mind of a communist and the heart of a Beatle fan could somehow actually fit together. Although Gorbachev, unlike Lennon, thought that communism in Eastern Europe could be changed through political means, he nevertheless was the first Soviet leader who no longer spoke in Leninist terms of contending socialist and capitalist worlds, and as early as 1986 declared his conviction that the Cold War had to come to an end. And when he “spoke instead of one world, an ‘interdependent and in many ways integral world,’”¹⁰ he actually could be said to have spoken in “Lennonist terms.”¹⁰

On 8 August, 2003, *History Today* published an article by the Russian historian Mikhail Safonov entitled “You Say You Want a Revolution” after a well-known Beatles’ song. It was immediately reprinted in *The Guardian* under the title “Confessions of a Soviet Moptop.” Safonov states in this article that “Beatlemania washed away the foundations of Soviet society because a person brought up with the world of The Beatles, with its images and message of love and non-violence, was an individual with internal freedom.” He goes on to describe from personal experience and memory how his generation was supposed to have fallen in love with Lenin, but instead fell in love with Lennon. Among his more interesting claims are the statements that “the Beatles did more for the destruction of totalitarianism than the Nobel Prize winners Alexander Solzhenitsyn and Andrei Sakharov,” that they “helped a generation of free people to grow up in the Soviet Union,” and that without them “the fall of totalitarianism would have been impossible.”¹¹

1980 was not the best time in Eastern Europe for “confessions” and for pouring out one’s soul, but chess grandmaster Gary Kasparov, world celebrity and Soviet national hero, did not hesitate to name John Lennon as his favorite composer. As Safonov notes, his no less distinguished opponent Anatoly Karpov mentioned that his favorite composer was Alexandra Pakhmutova, winner of the Lenin Komsomol Award. Both of these chess celebrities belonged to the post-war, or Cold War, generation that extended into the 1960s.¹² Although a certain difference in musical taste can account for the difference between those who listened to The Beatles and became free thinkers and those who did not and became orthodox communists, Safonov adds that even the most politically loyal youths listened to and liked The Beatles and their music, even though they would not admit to doing so.

Safonov is not alone in his conviction that The Beatles were the single and most reliable reason for why the Soviet system collapsed, and that the most remarkable change on the Russian political scene during the 1980s and the 1990s was that “the Brezhnevites had been

⁹ Ryback, 1990.

¹⁰ Garthoff, 1994, p. 754.

¹¹ *The Guardian*, Friday, 8 August 2003.

¹² It is significant that Kasparov was only eight years of age when the Beatles split up insofar as it reveals that their fans were found among the youngest children rather than those who had already undergone a process of primary socialization. As the Beatles themselves grew up and their music matured, they never again had such an influence on children of such a fragile age.

replaced by people of the Beatles' generation.”¹³ Some Soviet emigrants currently living in the West have also sought to voice the idea that those who listened to The Beatles in the 1960s became Russia's “lost generation,” who “eventually grew up, took important positions, and changed the country.”¹⁴ Recent reflections from German authors on the Cold War and the question of what brought the Wall down have also put forward the idea that a music protest culture emerged in the 1960s comprised of young people who, although they were divided by different musical tastes, shared a love of the music of The Beatles and the Rolling Stones. Maase maintains in this regard that differing youth cultures developed in East and West Germany during the 1960s. However, they gradually became increasingly similar to each other and eventually merged in the final decades of the century into one “common culture” comprised of all those who were under 40.¹⁵

Ideological Enemies of Both Sides of the Iron Curtain and Beloved by Castro

Strangely enough, The Beatles were viewed as ideological enemies on both sides of the Iron Curtain. For the communists from the Bloc, they were agents of Western propaganda and a threat to socialist morality and the socialist style of life. In contrast, Western capitalist countries feared The Beatles as agents of communist propaganda and subversive anti-capitalist force, “potential tools of a communist takeover of the United States,” and a threat to the American way of life and its values.¹⁶ Subsequent to the “More Popular than Jesus” scandal that broke out in 1966 after public remarks by Lennon, people in the U.S. “gathered to burn, shred, or grind to bits records, magazines, and photographs of the group,” “Spain and the Vatican denounced Lennon,” and “South Africa banned Beatles music from its airwaves,” where “Lennon’s songs remained under ban” even long after the group broke up.¹⁷ The perplexity of the issue becomes evident from the fact that Lennon’s music was banned at the time he produced his song *Revolution* (1968), which appeared as “one of the few rock songs ever to take a stance squarely against the chic leftism typically embraced by artists.”¹⁸ The fact that The Beatles’ music was *persona non grata* in both East and West apparently was connected with something that went far beyond political attitudes and convictions.

It was only after the end of the Cold War that official attitudes towards The Beatles underwent a metamorphosis even in non-European communist countries, such as Cuba, where their music had also been banned for decades and judged to be “ideological diversionism.” In 2000 Fidel Castro personally unveiled a statue of John Lennon in Havana and declared his

¹³ *The Guardian*, Friday, 8 August 2003.

¹⁴ See “He loves them, yeah, yeah, yeah,” *Ottawa Citizen*, 17 November 2000.

¹⁵ Maase 2003, p. 14.

¹⁶ Sullivan 1987, p. 314.

¹⁷ Knight 1999, p. 236.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 191

respect for Lennon's art as coming from a fellow-dreamer.¹⁹ The reasons for Lennon being named by the Cuban Communist Party daily, *Granma*, together with Castro, Lenin, and Che Guevara, as one of the most important figures of the twentieth century may be basically ideological, but there is much more to it than that. Certainly the recent liberalization of Cuban culture following the end of the Cold War and access to Lennon's now declassified fat FBI dossier, which identified him as "a born rebel," are legitimate reasons. But while Castro praised Lennon for being a dreamer like himself, adding that unlike John he "has seen his dreams turn into reality," he also declared that he "shares Lennon's dreams completely." Is Castro in effect thereby suggesting that Lennon's dreams lie beyond the horizon of communist ideals?

The reasons for why communist authorities felt compelled to ban The Beatles' music still remain an enigma. It is clear, for example, why the Czechoslovak authorities banned Miloš Forman's *The Firemen's Ball* (1967) insofar as its attempt to rise above communist society and criticize its "fire-fighting bureaucracy" was obviously "dangerous." But what was so "dangerous" about four boys singing about true love, holding hands, true friendship, and universal values, something that could hardly be considered as alien to or in contradiction with communist morality? It is not clear what aspects of The Beatles' music was judged to be "ideologically inadmissible" and a "lethal threat" to the communist ideal when The Beatles' lyrics were considered to have neither political or poetic value, when the number of people in Eastern Europe who knew English and were capable of understanding the lyrics was negligible, and when young people could not have been influenced by The Beatles' stage personalities since most of them had only seen poor quality pictures of them and never even held one of their records in their hands. Nevertheless, Forman argues that The Beatles did bring down the Iron Curtain, but not because of some special quality that could be discovered in their music itself. It was rather "the regime's criticism of the 'fabulous' Beatles," the qualification of their music as "decadent," and their caricature of them as "four apes escaping from the jungle" that estranged the youth from the regime and "punched a hole" in its credibility.²⁰

No Western art, poetry, or music ever generated such unspeakable fear or mobilized the authorities to protect the youth as that of The Beatles. During the 1960s and 1970s the communist regimes in Eastern Europe became aware that they faced a particular problem with youth, and that the situation was spinning out of control.²¹ Although the rock and roll coming from the United States was still very influential, by the mid-1960s in both East and West Germany, "(o)n both sides of the wall, parents, educators, and party and state officials no longer worried about rock 'n' roll, but about so-called beat music that was produced by

¹⁹ "Fidel Castro unveils statue of John Lennon," *Reuters*, 9 December 2000.

²⁰ "Suddenly the ideologues are telling you this is decadent... I thought I'm not such an idiot that I love this music and suddenly these political ideologues were strangers" *Beatles 'brought down communists'*, *BBC News*, Friday, 23 March 2001.

²¹ For example, Ryback writes that "Surveying the disaffection among young East Germans in 1965, youth leader Horst Schumann confessed: 'We know that a new generation is growing up among us that will cause great trouble once these youngsters are 16 or 18 years old.' Clearly something was wrong" (Ryback, 1990, p. 55).

British bands such as The Beatles and the Rolling Stones.”²² The great problem then perceived by the authorities in fact came to be identified after the end of the Cold War as “the beat war” (*Beat-Krieg*).²³ The fact that The Beatles became so popular among the youth, who comprised their main audience, is at times considered to be a stigma downgrading their achievement that favorable analyses feel obliged to omit. It is nevertheless possible to find here the clue for why such innocent music came to be feared in all social systems and political regimes.

Although it is a well-known to socialization theorists that what happens to children at an early age never loses its significance, the reasons why The Beatles’ music cut such a deep “scar” in youngsters’ souls has never received a plausible explanation. The impression during the 1990s was that The Beatles music would not only manage to cross the temporal divide into the new millennium, but even “begin anew.” Everett very aptly expressed the wonder associated with this phenomenon: “It remains to be seen what priorities motivate The Beatles’ generation to make the resuscitated 1960’s group part of their lives again in the 1990s: Is it nostalgia for youth and rosier times? Mid-life crisis? The intrinsic value of the music? Effective hype from EMI/Capitol? The long-reclusive nature of the members and their reluctance to regroup? Crossover potential from Adult Contemporary radio pop?”²⁴

More recently, media and market specialists have assumed that a group who worked together less than a decade and split up many years ago would lose their audience appeal in the age of hip-hop. It was thought that they would hardly be able to compete even with other older groups who are still around, not to mention new groups. But The Beatles “just won’t go!” and new releases of their recordings have sold very well. This phenomenon has been all the more amazing to music experts since The Beatles’ songs were not supposed to be able to survive as they have done.²⁵

In a January 2004 issue of *The Guardian* we read yet another “confession”:

I went to the premiere of the Concert for George film; Paul and Ringo were there and there were girls genuinely screaming at them, which hardly happens when a member of the Beach Boys sticks his head over the parapet. Most of the screaming girls were Americans, who seem to be genetically programmed to scream whenever a Beatle appears. The US has a very straightforward relationship with The Beatles: unconditional love.”²⁶ And such feelings are

²² Poiger 2000, pp. 214-215.

²³ Maase, 2003, p. 13. See also Ryback’s (1990) discussion of “rock-riots.”

²⁴ Everett, 1999, p. 295.

²⁵ “‘She Loves You’ was unremarkable, its ‘Yeah, yeah, yeah’ chorus typical of the trashiness of pop. ‘I want to Hold Your Hand’ was worse: one of the most irritating aspects of pop was the growing tendency not to bother writing a song at all; and the seven notes on the word ‘hand’ was a good example of the use of a cheap white imitation of melisma to disguise the paucity of the lyrics. This was a warning of the triumph of style over substance that was already taking place in pop” (Clarke, 1995, p. 459).

²⁶ “A little help from their friends,” *The Guardian*, Friday, 16 January 2004.

shared by many.²⁷

The Beatles and the Children's Revolution

One of the main obstacles to efforts at analyzing the phenomenon of the Beatles as a whole is the fact that it has been viewed from an ethnocentric perspective as a “Western phenomenon.” However, the so-called “generation gap,” Beatlemania, and the revolution of the 1960s were all world phenomena that took different forms in different countries. If they could not be seen or studied as world phenomena, it is only because social science itself was divided by the Iron curtain into two sciences, each of which was deprived of the possibility to observe social reality as a whole. When studied in its entirety, Beatlemania emerges as a social phenomenon that took over the whole world, not just one or another social system, or country. Furthermore, the music of The Beatles affected both girls and boys, and its influence should be studied in respect to the youth culture of the 1960s and the particular needs of the teen and pre-teen youths that it came to satisfy. I thus will refrain from borrowing from the tradition that considers Beatlemania to be a kind of “contagious disease” that began in one particular place and then spread around the world with the help of mass media. Nor will I utilize the tradition that associates it with the hysterical behavior of young girls, assuming that boys were somehow immune to it.

Prelude to a Theory: More than Hysterical Girls

The main points of my theoretical framework may be summarized as follows:

First. The Beatles phenomenon is consequent to the fabrication of a multinational musical product upon which many national musical traditions and practices have had their impact (Irish, British, African, American, German, and so forth). For this reason it is difficult to trace the emergence of their music back to a single musical tradition or foundation. It is important, however, to recognize the fact that The Beatles were clearly a skiffle group who made their own music and thus voiced the spiritual longings of a particular generation. The latter can be identified as the children of the Cold War.

Second. I accept as still valid the economic principle that no new product gains market success if it does not correspond to a particular demand and does not satisfy a particular acute human need. This means that if a product is in universal demand, it satisfies a particular universal need, that is, a need that is experienced by people throughout the world and is emergent from a common human condition. If the existing economic system and market cannot satisfy this particular need, people will find a way to satisfy it, even with “home made”

²⁷ An inquiry conducted in 2000 by the most popular Swedish tabloid showed that its readers have no doubts that the Beatles were the best band of the twentieth century. McCartney received their unconditional love on behalf of the group together with the special prize of the Rockbear (“Yeah, yeah – ni är bäst,” *Aftonbladet*, 1 February 2000).

or lesser quality surrogate products, if necessary.

Third. Beatlemania is not something that spread merely because of the intervention of journalists and the mass media, who when reporting on the hysterical reactions of young girls in one part of the world are assumed to have caused the same hysterical reaction among girls in other places. If the mass media deserves any credit at all in this regard, then it should go to the record producers who made it possible for a skiffle group to appear on stage and on air, which until then had been reserved for professionals. The significance of their contribution cannot be exaggerated. The records that resulted became the only medium that could penetrate the Iron Curtain and affect the “civilian population” on the other side of the Cold War front line. The use of records intended for private or personal use apparently could not become subject to the same degree of state control as newspapers, radio, or films, something that Carl Friedrich has identified as a necessary precondition for the successful functioning of totalitarian states.²⁸ Friedrich maintains that another source of the power of totalitarian states is the monopoly over the production and use of all weapons (*Kampfmittel*). In a world that defines “weapons” solely as a means for violence, such an innocent instrument as an electric guitar was apparently neither viewed, nor identified as a type of “weapon.” But if we define weapons as a medium of power, then all communication technologies for dissemination, including the electric guitar, become easily perceivable as “weapons.”²⁹

The fabrication of homemade guitars, amplifiers, and loudspeakers that obsessed adolescent youth in the communist world remained unsanctioned and unconstrained. Although this activity was not unproblematic, the associated difficulties were consequent to the lack of certain necessary components that were unavailable, such as “strings for a Beatle bass.”³⁰ Human inventiveness has no limits, and it cannot be constrained by laws when serving the satisfaction of an urgent and acute personal need.

Fourth. Beatlemania was neither “contagious,” nor a “crowd phenomenon,” but rather only became more visible in a crowd in which young people’s behavior was amplified and took explosive forms. Furthermore, this “crowd” can be identified sociologically as predominantly comprised of teen and pre-teen children, but not necessarily girls. If The Beatles could have given concerts in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, their audience would have been comprised of boys and girls alike. It is true that gender differences cannot be neglected in this regard, but they concern the ways in which boys and girls respond or behave when the satisfaction of particular needs is threatened or rendered impossible and should not be taken as responsible for boys and girls having different needs. It is noteworthy that the confessions mentioned above concerning the role of The Beatles in the lives of communist youth have come primarily from male Beatles fans.

²⁸ Friedrich 1968, p. 186.

²⁹ Such an understanding became possible only with the advance of system theory in sociology, particularly following Niklas Luhmann’s analysis of, among other social systems, the system of the mass media.

³⁰ This is the title of a book by Yury Pelyushonok that gives a good picture of what was involved in being a Beatles’ fan in Soviet Union, which is representative of much what was going on in Eastern Europe at the time. See: Pelyushonok 1999.

Fifth. The early Beatles' music that generated the outbreak of Beatlemania was music for children written by boys who themselves had only recently succeeded in growing up and making it into the world of adults without yet severing their relationships with childhood. In other words, we can say that this music reflects the period of transition between primary and secondary socialization that previously had not attracted attention as a separate and peculiar stage in individual psychological development. The reason why "serious" analyses have carefully overlooked or undermined the fact that this is "children's music" perhaps resides in the common attitude that such music is supposedly not serious in the sense of being "unqualified," "immature," or "unprofessional." It would thus be insufficiently serious in a world in which everything must be taken seriously and bear the ideological stamp "made on this or that side of the Iron Curtain," even childhood.³¹ The consequences of the ideologization of childhood that took place throughout the world during the Cold War have not yet been studied. It nevertheless appears evident that the Cold War promoted a particular adult attitude towards childhood as an inferior and parasitic human state without value that carries the stigma of "unreason" and, thereby, "unfreedom." It was as if childhood was something that one should be ashamed of, but which could fortunately be successfully overcome through proper education and training under the guidance of teachers and parents who had survived "the disease."³²

In this sense, The Beatles' phenomenon cannot be understood if reduced to a musical phenomenon that is removed from its social context. Indeed, The Beatles exerted a complex *social* rather than musical influence upon young people and children. It suffices to note the fact that young boys in Eastern Europe found in The Beatles, as in no other group, a model for action in which the electric guitar itself, as Ryback has shown, became a powerful and popular weapon in the struggle to satisfy their basic human needs.

Sixth. The Beatles' music contributed to revolutionary movements in both East and West. This was possible insofar as their music brought to awareness certain unconscious but nevertheless urgent and unsatisfied human needs that thereby became the basis for eventual action directed to their satisfaction. In Western Europe the awareness of these needs drove mainly girls to action, and they eventually became the main driving force behind what has been termed "the sexual revolution" as well as the women's revolution during the second half of the twentieth century, the main centers of which are the Nordic countries, the United States, and the United Kingdom. In Eastern Europe this awareness drove mainly boys to

³¹ Clarke wrote that it was Stan Kenton, a pianist, bandleader, and composer known for uttering "futile disparaging remarks" about various types of music, such as country, who defined The Beatles' music as "children's music" (Clarke, 1995, p. 279).

³² Such questions make possible a further discussion concerning the relationship between the two Meadian concepts of "game," which takes place on stage and is played by role-players with minds, and "play," which has no particular place on any stage and has often been considered to be non-social. It appears that when sociologists claim that the whole world is a stage on which everyone has a role, they mean a world without children, and that when Niklas Luhmann identifies a social system whose members are producers of communications as being identical with society, this also means that he views society as a childless world that, as such, can neither reproduce, nor change itself.

action, and they eventually became the force that brought about the end of the Cold War and ousted communist regimes. That is to say that the “hysterical” girls who came to be associated with Beatlemania as a whole in Western Europe, who eventually grew up and carried on the feminist and sexual revolutions, had a no less remarkable and revolutionary counterpart in Europe in the 1960s. These were the East European and Soviet boys who listened to The Beatles, acquired a formidable courage, armed themselves with self-made guitars, organized themselves into bands, and became the enemy from within most feared by the communist regimes. From a certain point of view these two revolutions – the end of the Cold War and communist regimes and the women’s revolution – are not even separate phenomena but rather two forms of one and the same social revolution, of which The Beatles were “the architects.” Young rebels throughout the world struggled against one and the same social evil, namely, a society that had transformed the entire world into a stage on which all parents were “role-players” and there was no social space free of Cold War battles. This was a society that had deprived children of their most unalienable right – the right to grow up. That is why the revolution of the 1960s is best defined as “the children’s revolution,” which was supervised or led by countless self-taught songwriters and musicians.

Seventh. In line with the conception being unfolded here, efforts to ground this social revolution in consumer culture are sociologically and socio-psychologically inadmissible. This point also holds true for efforts to substantiate the idea of young girls’ sexual needs as a cause for revolutionary action. The emergence of a “teen consumer subculture” as well as the sexual revolution of the 1960s does not constitute explanations for Beatlemania insofar as they are rather consequences of the same conditions that generated Beatlemania in the first place.³³ In addition, that fact that young people had the means to buy records is a convenient but not a necessary condition for the emergence and continuation of a Beatle fan. The young people in Eastern Europe who lived in “non-consumer societies” were no less eager than children in the West to “consume” The Beatles’ music even though most of them had no means to afford it. It was even difficult for them to obtain a picture of one of The Beatles. The consumer society as well as the sexual revolution of the 1960s themselves demand explanations no less than the phenomenon they supposedly explain.³⁴

The now dominant explanation of Beatlemania as a phenomenon associated with young girls protesting “the sexual repressiveness” of the 1960s, who were driven by “the force of an

³³ From a socio-psychological point of view, consumers are not even in a position to cause a consumer revolution because their consumption is defined by their personal and social needs, all of which are social constructions.

³⁴ The myth of a consumer culture that emerged solely because of drive of economic agents for profit apparently fails to take into account the fact that the old economic rule that there is no supply without demand continues to be valid. Neither economic systems, nor individual producers, nor even some psychological peculiarity of certain people should be held responsible for consumer culture. Hannah Arendt was wrong in her assumption about human nature that she made on the basis of her disappointment with what she saw around her. There is nothing intrinsically bad about human nature that drives people to use whatever leisure time they have for increased consumption and not for the attainment of some higher human ideals or goals. In such matters it will be best to listen to social psychologists, who have insisted for the last century that if people behave in a particular way or are unhealthy, it is social conditions or the social system that should be held responsible.

ungovernable, if somewhat disembodied, lust,” unfortunately remains an interesting hypothesis that cannot be given scientific credit when all facts taken into consideration.³⁵ The need to re-examine this hypothesis arises not only in respect to events in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, but also from recent publications concerning the outbreak of Beatlemania in 1963 in Sweden, a country hardly known for sexual repression and Puritanism of the sort described in Ehrenreich et al.³⁶ There was of course a sexual revolution in the 1960s in Sweden as well, but it expressed itself in a further liberalization and relaxation of morals concerning youth that was supported by appropriate legislation on a scale that remains unimaginable in most Western countries even today.³⁷

It would perhaps be accurate to say that Beatlemania as a mass phenomenon involving mainly early teen and pre-teen girls was first observed in Sweden during the first Beatles’ tour outside England in October 1963. In a country whose entire population could fit into one large American city, crowds of several thousand young girls in each town where the group performed certainly made an impression. The media reported at the time about “hysteria” among groups of girls, about the fact that “so many little shoes have never entered the halls where The Beatles’ concerts were arranged,” and that the screaming made it impossible even to know whether the group was really playing. The recently published photographs of these shows have caught glimpses of events very similar to that which took place some days later in England or a few months later in America, as described in the literature. It is doubtful that Swedish girls from the small town of Eskilstuna had received “tips” for their behavior from the media when they rushed the stage and tried to grab their favorite Beatle, Ringo, hanging on his neck until they were carried away, hysterically screaming, by the guards. It is also improbable that they eventually gave tips to the American girls who several months later also considered Ringo to be their favorite Beatle and exhibited very similar behavior.

Photographs from the two Beatles’ tours in Sweden in October 1963 and March 1964 do not show women or young girls with awakened sexuality, but rather frightened children with smeared make up who do not care very much about their appearance or about whether or not they will be perceived as desirable sexual objects. It becomes especially clear from some of the interviews taken that absent from encounters with the Beatles was precisely the tension that has characterized gender relationships ever since love became a commodity. Even the attraction of somewhat older girls to The Beatles does not require an explanation that has a reference to sex. The four young performers in fact apparently promoted a new model of gender interaction that is freed from everything that makes it tense, namely, its quality of a “dove – hawk” zero-sum game in which the stronger wins and equality is excluded by the

³⁵ Ehrenreich et al., 1997, pp. 524, 527.

³⁶ David Allyn observed that when Americans began looking at other nations’ policies in the 1960s they discovered that “the Scandinavians were particularly adept at balancing the needs of the community with those of the individual and were apparently immune to the Judeo-Christian concerns about the body” (Allyn 2000, p 125).

³⁷ Ekerwald, 1993, pp. 147-148.

very rules of the game.³⁸ The encounters of smaller children with The Beatles, on the other hand, very much remind one of children who have found a long lost parent for whom the prospect of another separation is both unbearable and horrifying. The picture recently published in a popular Swedish tabloid of a girl holding John around the waist as he is playing his guitar somehow evokes in one's mind the scene from Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* in which Friday at last found his father. In addition, analyzing pictures from The Beatles' encounters with their audience reveals that all screaming ceases when fans finally find themselves in close proximity to their idols.³⁹ The desperation, frustration, and hysteria are gone, as if an insatiable need had been satisfied and no further goals or future plans existed. It may be assumed that the space in which The Beatles found themselves, which they themselves perhaps created, had a special quality to it; as if this was the only place on earth where one may feel safe and be free. In sociological terms this indicates not being in a role.

Eighth. The final point is that Beatlemania as a new social force burst out simultaneously in all countries immediately after young people heard The Beatles' music, recognized that it was addressed to them, and reacted to it with a type of behavior that everywhere exhibited a clear and standard pattern. It should thus be identified as a world phenomenon that, as such, was caused by a social condition shared by people throughout the world and characteristic of world society in the 1960s.

Children of Fear

According to the conception presented here, Beatlemania as a socio-psychological phenomenon involving children and adolescent youth was a reaction to the deterioration during the Cold War in the conditions of life and socialization in the First World, the Second World, and the Third World as well. But the people most affected were not the adults, who were members of either one or the other interaction party as well as role-players on either one or the other side of the stage divided by the Iron Curtain. A large share of the Cold War's total price was paid by the Cold War "civilians," that is, the children with innocent minds. If their revolution, which started with The Beatles as a "revolution in the head," was more or less completed by the end of the twentieth century, with the world being changed forever, this is due to the fact that their fight for freedom was unconditionally supported by the large army of musicians and song-writers whose contribution to revealing what was wrong with the world has never been properly acknowledged. This serves to substantiate the impression that the most hazardous job in the second half of the twentieth century was "rock musician," or

³⁸ The new model of gender relationships that the Beatles seem to have promoted is perhaps best expressed in the words of a 17 year old Swedish girl: "The Beatles were harmless, non-dangerous boys, no muscles, no macho" (Lundberg and Bohm, 2003, p. 159).

³⁹ The following observation of Ehrenreich et al. is generally correct, but its final words are speculation: "The screaming ten-to fourteen-year-old fans of 1964 did not riot for anything, except the chance to remain in the proximity of their idols and hence to remain screaming" (Ehrenreich et al., 1997, p. 523).

“soldier on the anti-Cold War front.”⁴⁰

It is justifiable to assume that social life was most frozen and the Cold War had its most tragic dimension at the two centers of world power, but the horror of the Cuban Missile Crisis and the assassination of John Kennedy, two of the most dramatic moments of the entire period of the Cold War, were felt the world over. Moreover, all countries and nations then found themselves in one and the same “boat” in the most direct sense, and no country, even if neutral, could ask the world to stop so that it could get off. The years between 1959 and 1962 are known as “the second superpower crisis,” which followed the first superpower crisis over Berlin in 1948 – 1949. As Lebow and Stein remark, the difference between these two crises is essential insofar as the “USA had a monopoly over nuclear weapons” in the first while “both superpowers had significant nuclear capabilities” in the second.⁴¹ Not only was the nature of the game changed when the both adversaries came into possession of nuclear weapons, on which the fate of the entire world depended, there were as yet no international rules or ideas concerning how, if at all, such game could be won, or even kept under control.⁴²

Beatlemania – A Definition

Against this background, I define Beatlemania as a reaction on the part of the “civilian population” of the Cold War that was caused by unconscious and overwhelming fear. The fear of death by nuclear bombing is a new type of fear that only recently has been added to the long list of research subjects concerned with the subject. It is known that the two world wars created a fear of death by bombing on an unprecedented scale, but to my knowledge the intensity of fear during the Cold War has never been measured. An empirical study undertaken in connection with the Gulf War (4-21 December 1990 and 15-16 January 1991) concerning the perceived threat of nuclear war among adolescents in Finland may cast light on this issue. It confirmed the hypothesis that both boys and girls in Finland clearly feared nuclear war, and that their fear intensified during the period in question. Gender differences were also reported, including girls being more affected by fear than boys, the existence of a positive correlation between higher levels of fear among girls and the trait of anxiety, and a positive correlation between higher levels of fear by boys and lower self-esteem. One of the study’s more interesting findings is that this fear led to an increase in “the number of positive life events” as well as to the adoption of “a neurotic defense styles” behavior. This study is all the more significant because it reveals that the world has shrunk and distance does not matter in the age of nuclear weapons and global wars.⁴³

⁴⁰ Driver provides a good summary of the associated hazards: “If you survive electrocution, drug addiction and over-fondness for the booze, avoid crashing your plane, car or helicopter, and steer clear of suicide, chances are your best friend, wife or record company boss will shoot you in the head. As Patti Smith once remarked: ‘Not even boot camp is as tough as being in rock ‘n’ roll.’ And she should know” (Driver 2001, p. 552).

⁴¹ Lebow et al., 1995, p. 7.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Poikolainen et al., 1998.

Hardly anyone doubts that the world is not safe in the age of world confrontations and the proliferation of nuclear weapons. But when this statement is translated into the language of social psychology, we are brought to the awareness a deplorable fact. That is to say that if freedom is to be defined in the best tradition of American democracy as freedom from fear, then no country or human being in the world was free during the Cold War, especially during its critical moments. The American psychologist Abraham Maslow has defined safety as one of these prepotent basic human needs that must first be satisfied before one becomes capable of longing for higher human needs, such as love, belonging, and ideals. The fact that all people will be freed from want by virtue of open markets and a free exchange of goods capable of satisfying all their needs does not make people free. As long as people's need for safety remains unsatisfied, they not only remain unfree, enslaved by their fear and incapable of pursuing higher human goals, but also are confined to what is possible – unlimited consumption and the endless invention and satisfaction of non-existing physiological needs. The constant desire to consume and to devote ever more time for consumption is, however, not a sign of what people really are. It is rather a sign of what people have become when their prepotent need for safety, although unconscious, remains unsatisfied.

The Beatles Phenomenon in a Sociological Perspective

It is interesting to note the fact that although the poetic quality of The Beatles' songs held an enormous attraction for young individuals and made perfect sense to their millions of fans, their words had neither meaning, nor significance as far as their "bettters" were concerned. The Beatles' songs introduced a type of interaction and human values that were quite contrary to those that one expected to hear or see on stage. The rules that counted there had been well summarized in 1959 in Goffman's sociological conception of the world as a theater with only two interaction parties and no audience.⁴⁴ The Beatles songs, in contrast, did not comprise a location where one should look in order to learn about the spirit of the end of the 1950s and the beginning of the 1960s or about rivalry, competition, personal fronts, deception of the other party, or double shields. They rather promoted a spirit of openness and intolerance to secrets that was quite atypical in the atmosphere of the Cold War. They emphasized love, friendship, trust, and truthfulness to oneself and to others as well.⁴⁵ At the same time, their songs had no social or political content and expressed no social engagement, as if the singers were unaware of what was going on in the world around them. They simply "overtly shunned adult values and adult behavior."⁴⁶

And contrary to their own claims, The Beatles could not even be said to have seriously sought commercial success. They became notorious for ridiculing newsmen's efforts to ask serious or

⁴⁴ Goffman 1990/1959.

⁴⁵ "In contrast to the anxious rock songs about a dying girlfriend or an unfaithful lover, the Beatles' music reflected an exuberant embracing of life and an ability to accept it causally on its own terms" (Belz 1972, p. 126).

⁴⁶ Ibid.

“important” questions, from which it is obvious that they were not interested in assuming social roles and responsibilities or playing the “game” with adults. They instead remained on the level of their fans, not wanting to be separated from them even if this required “mocking their own achievements.” In other words, they “conquered the adult world without submitting to it.”⁴⁷ This explains how they could become highly successful millionaires even though “their disdainful, witty attitude suggested that commercial success constituted an absurd goal.”⁴⁸

Singing in the Chorus: A Role for Children

One encounters a serious difficulty in trying to use sociological theories to explain the “Beatles phenomenon” insofar as traditional models of society focusing focus on the action “on stage” are not adequate. For example, if one uses Goffman’s perspective to view the social world as a theater in which “the whole world is a stage,” and if there are no more than two interaction parties, then there is no place on that stage for either The Beatles or their fans. As a consequence of the shortcomings of Goffman’s dramaturgical model, there is no alternative but to return to the original model of the Greek theater, in which there was a “lesser stage” in addition to the main stage. This “minor” stage area was known as the “Orchestra,” and it was the area where boys and girls too young to be given a role or participate in the interaction comprised the singing and dancing Chorus.

Yet, although the Chorus in classical tragedy was generally invisible because its members did not participate in but only observed the action on stage, the chorus always knew the full truth of what transpired and had the final word. In addition, those young boys and girls who played in the Chorus without being in a role alone had the possibility of alternating between the two stages or, should we say, between the two worlds.

The idea that Goffman’s model should be replaced by that of the classical Greek theater is motivated by the notion that modern society is not necessarily a society with a better stage construction. It is rather a society in which only one of the stages is lighted while the other, or the Orchestra, remains in darkness. As a result, bringing light to bear on the Orchestra does not mean illuminating something that was not known before, but rather something that had been suppressed and forgotten in the course of a long and bitter history.

There is no doubt that youth became visible and began to attract attention as a “social problem” in the middle of the last century, which is also approximately the same time that the so-called “sociology of youth” emerged. But what still remains overlooked is the fact that old sociological models of society from the 1950s became inadequate by the end of the century. The stage on which The Beatles began performing (schools, sports halls, youth clubs, and youth festivals) is another “minor stage” next to the main stage, and the fact that is exists, as

⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 128.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

well as what happens there, is not without social importance. Sociological models need to take into account the fact that, ever since The Beatles, society can no longer be presented as social world with a single stage, but must instead be viewed as a world comprised of two sub-worlds – the world of serious games and role-players and the world of play with social actors who have no roles and who therefore are alone in the position of being able to *invent* new social roles. Modern sociological systems theory may provide the means to substantiate the claim that a world without play is not merely dull; but in fact incapable of social change and thus simply vanishes.

From a systems point of view, the world that is located on the main stage may be defined as the world of *communications*, and the other much less visible but no less important sub-world may be termed the world of *messages*. Unlike communications, messages do not lose their meaning when they cross system boundaries, and they are capable of traveling through time and penetrating all types of communication barriers. This is the why the ideological propaganda of both superpowers East and West remained unsuccessful, as recent studies have begun to reveal.

Communications, regardless of how well constructed, cannot exit the system that has produced them and be instantly understood by the enemy system. It would thus appear that, as far as systems theory is concerned, political propaganda directed to the enemy is sociologically meaningless and inefficient. Messages, on the other hand, especially when stored in an appropriate carrier, can be sent to any point in time and space without losing their intrinsic meaning, and it is always possible that they be decoded and understood in the future. Moreover, a message can be introduced into a human mind, thereby bringing unconscious things to awareness and even motivating and guiding human action.

It may be suggested that The Beatles learned the art of “propaganda,” which secured for them a loyal mass audience whose minds were readily won over to their message, during their work in Hamburg. On the one hand, as they themselves stated, they “grew up” in Hamburg and acquired, so to speak, their knowledge of real life, or rather of what life had become after the war. Life in Hamburg presented itself to them in its full variety, combining its most frightening, uncivilized, and ugly aspects with its pleasures, warmth, and artistic impulses. It was also here, where the recovery from one war was being channeled through the beginning of another, that The Beatles, aided by the fact that they did not understand the language, became penetrating observers of the distortions that the system imposed upon life. Their inspiration to become defenders of the life-world, their understanding of permissiveness and non-exclusion in respect to morals, should thus be expected to have come from this period at the beginning of their careers that they spent in Germany.

On the other hand, it was their hard work in Hamburg that made it possible for them to acquire in a remarkably short period of time the experience that turned them into fine professional musicians. They learned from life how to gain and construct their *own audience*, which became the basis of their astonishing “commercial success.” But unlike what they did in Hamburg, their subsequent career was not merely oriented to “giving the audience what

they want.”⁴⁹ The Beatles applied quite different principles in their post-Hamburg period, namely, they wrote their songs for each other and for themselves as much as they wrote them for “the other.” That is why their songs sound so very true, coming as if from one and the same heart and reaching out to another. None of their fans perceived The Beatles as being “commercial” or felt themselves to be “consumers.” Such terms were rather ways in which the system sought to ascribe a meaning to the incomprehensible phenomenon that was The Beatles. For their true fans, buying a Beatles’ record or listening to their music was a need.

Most importantly, however, the four boys entered a world in Hamburg that had a large “Not for children!” sign above the entrance. It is known from the biography of their Hamburg-period that George was expelled from the country for being too young to work, and that this event made them aware of the fact that they were involved in illegal activity, however good they were as musicians. The problem for the world at the time was that there was no place for children in the world created by adults because there were no children’s roles. The rules of the game on stage are such that every new-comer, whether it be a nation, an ethnic group, a gender group, or an age group, must create, introduce, and shape their own roles, that is, the roles they can play that suit them best. Borrowing someone else’s role so that one can play on stage is both physically and socio-psychologically difficult, leading to feelings of injustice, exploitation, discrimination, and stress. But the point is not to put children into “adult shoes,” not to revive child labor, for example, but rather to create new non-adult roles that had been previously, and unjustifiably, reserved for adults, such as when good Party members and old experienced composers wrote songs for teenagers.

The Beatles Phenomenon from a Socio-Psychological Perspective

It is indeed an enigma that The Beatles’ songs were taken to be “empty” in respect to social content and incapable of even approaching something that qualifies as a social protest while at the same time being feared as possessing a potential to corrupt both communist and capitalist youth.⁵⁰ The Beatles neither criticized politics nor organized protest movements against either the communist or the capitalist systems. The efforts to judge by the content of their songs or find evidence that they contain statements that could easily be interpreted as being on the left were not successful. It was said, for example, that Paul’s line *I’m back in the U.S.S.R. You don’t know how lucky you are boy*, although a parody of “Back in the USA,” nevertheless “left the anti-communists speechless” and made certain observers declare that The Beatles

⁴⁹ This aspect of the group’s Hamburg-experience is evidenced by Paul’s words: “We had to actually invite the audience in, because we would be playing to a completely dark and empty club. The minute we saw someone we’d kick into ‘Dance in The Street’ and rock out, pretending we hadn’t seen them. And we’d perhaps get a few of them in. We were like fairground barkers: see four people - have to get them! It was good training... Eventually out of this, we built a little audience. We would grab two people and do anything they wanted - our whole repertoire” (*The Beatles Anthology*, p. 47).

⁵⁰ It is interesting to note that the controversial issuing of a Beatles’ album by a state company in East Germany was justified by press reporters with the claim “that beat, like jazz earlier, was a protest music in the West” (Ryback, 1990, p. 216).

were “an integral part of the revolutionary milieu.”⁵¹ Paul himself, however, considered it to be “a hands-across the water song” written for the kids out there who needed love. It was neither intended, nor understood as a celebration “of the enemy in the midst of the Cold War, at a time when America was at war with the Russian-backed Viet Cong.”⁵²

Thinking of “You”

The Beatles’s songs did not contain any overt protest against the Cold War or any of its symbols and attributes, such as the Berlin Wall. But the fact that they pretended not to see the Wall that divided East and West and, moreover, drew no distinctions between children in either camp may be viewed as a protest against all types of walls, including the one erected in people’s minds by the Cold War. Indeed, in a world that was divided into two hostile camps, each of which had its own ideology, worldview, and understanding of what is just, promoting universal supra-political human values could not help but be seen as social protest. Something that apparently helped their “protest” reach people’s minds was that their songs were written neither in Bob Dylan’s style, which has been described as “me talking to myself,”⁵³ nor in the rock style “filled with mourning and self-pity” that was dominant at the time.⁵⁴ The Beatles’ songs were clearly conversations with another and messages with a particular address.

In an effort that could be described as content analysis, a Beatles fan once counted how many hundreds of times they used the word “you” in their texts, which is by far one of their most frequently used words. The Beatles’ messages follow a clear communication model by being directed from a sender (me) to a receiver (you) who is in charge of decoding the message not so much on the basis of what s/he knows but what s/he feels. It is not surprising that there were many Beatle fans who believed that one or another of their songs was written especially for them.

A well-known technique from media analysis proposes the use of redundancy in order to ensure that the message will penetrate the “noise” and be received. It is also well known that easy to remember rhymes and musical sounds facilitate the reception and memorization of the message. It would appear that The Beatles were masters of using similar techniques, and that the latter should be viewed as part of the secret of their success. From a socio-linguistic point of view, their “yeah, yeah, yeahs” and the high lexical predictability of their texts would appear to be perfectly legitimate if the goal was that the message reach out to a huge audience, and especially to young minds. Such verbal ornaments are typical for what Basil Bernstein has termed “language with restricted code.” Although this is a type of language particularly used in communication with children and in fairy tales, it also has a place in everyday life and in personal encounters where people are not in roles and meet each other as

⁵¹ Turner, 1999, p. 150.

⁵² Ibid., pp. 150-151.

⁵³ Bordowitz, 2004, p. 129.

⁵⁴ Belz, 1972, p. 126.

human beings.⁵⁵

Putting Love Back where It Belongs

It is interesting to observe that such language and such techniques have become known in modern times as characteristic of propaganda, while propaganda itself is considered to be an invention of totalitarian politics. However, propaganda is not a new invention but rather is a systematic description of the principles practiced consciously or unconsciously by all primary socializers whose task it is to take care of children. The problem is that when such socialization techniques are misplaced, such as when their scope of implementation is extended and they become used for the education and socialization of adults, they become means of social repression, perhaps even becoming responsible for large-scale social disasters with monstrous social consequences. In other words, they then become an example of the proverb that the way to hell is paved with good intentions. Such developments can be difficult to comprehend, especially when one of the most important rules of the process of primary socialization is, as Berger and Luckmann maintain, that everything learned should be mediated with love, while the process of learning and the acquisition of role-specific languages in the process of secondary socialization relies instead upon reason.⁵⁶

Political propaganda directed at children as an appeal to reason rather than an expression of love may produce harmful socialization results akin to confusing love relationships with the professional roles of adults through coded language. It may be said in this respect that the politics of totalitarian states have largely used the methods of primary socialization as the only methods of socialization, which predictably resulted in the production of standard, loving, fearful, obedient minds who have no choice but to rely on the Party for the satisfaction of all their needs. The Beatles returned love to “where it belongs,” that is, to the process of primary socialization, to the world of children who need an escape from a frightening reality along with a love that demands nothing in return. It should perhaps have been expected that as the members of the band themselves grew up and their lyrics became more sophisticated, they never again “recruited” their audience from the age group that was initially roughly identified as between 6 and 16 years of age.

Along with many social psychologists and symbolic interactionists, Maslow was also convinced that the relation of man to his society is such that the cause of a person being emotionally ill or “basically thwarted” is “sickness in the society.” Families are not the only place to look in order to determine whether a child is frustrated and thwarted, and the absence of physical punishment is not the only thing that makes a child feel safe and happy. One must also look at society or, as it is sometimes termed, “the social system.” Maslow wrote that “The ‘good’ or healthy society would then be defined as one that permitted man’s highest purposes to emerge by satisfying all his prepotent basic needs,” such as physiological needs

⁵⁵ Bernstein, 1972.

⁵⁶ Berger and Luckmann, 1967.

and the needs for safety, love, and belonging.⁵⁷ Insofar as these needs are mainly unconscious and people are generally incapable of articulating them, they may remain unacknowledged. We can nevertheless detect them and judge their intensity by the pathogenic and psychotic reactions that they cause when they are threatened or thwarted.⁵⁸

It is true that the children who became the main driving force of Beatlemania in Western countries grew up in affluence, and that all their most basic physiological needs were satisfied. But what they nevertheless lacked, and which their parents could not provide, was *freedom from fear*, or something that “money can’t buy.” Maslow observed that the need for safety is especially acute in young children, and that their reactions when it is threatened are much more clear and evident. Beatlemania can be explained from this perspective as the psychotic reaction of threatened children who were growing up at the beginning of the 1960s in an unreliable, unpredictable, and unsafe world in which the future was unknown and everything was in flux. Insofar as the internalization of such a world is impossible from a socio-psychological point of view, these children may well have experienced themselves as being “lost,” abandoned, lacking identity, or not knowing who they were. Berger and Luckmann argue that this type of situation is a clear indication of unsuccessful socialization, one consequence of which is great difficulty, if not the impossibility, of growing up.⁵⁹

If The Beatles found themselves enjoying an enormous popularity that brought them a great deal of trouble and made them, to use their own words, “more popular than Jesus,” it was precisely because they appeared at the end of 1963 and the beginning of 1964 as the only people in the world who did not fear – neither from, nor for the system. Everyone knows that parents who fear are bad examples for children, and one may assume that it will be difficult for them to gain their children’s respect. However, when this common knowledge is translated into the language of Mead and social psychology, it implies that such parents cannot become “significant others” for their children, regardless of how much they love or care for them. It thus would appear that the superpower crisis at the beginning of the 1960s had dramatic socio-psychological consequences by virtue of the fact that it created a socialization vacuum and deprived children of “significant others” who could have given them an ordered world that can be understood, loved, and internalized so that they may identify themselves with it.

The Beatles as Significant Other

Taking this social context into account, The Beatles cannot be viewed simply as a commercial rock group. They rather adopted the then-vacant role of primary socializers or “significant others” that children all over the world unequivocally bestowed upon them, which they

⁵⁷ Maslow 1943, p. 396.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ “Once there is a more complex distribution of knowledge in a society - Berger and Luckmann wrote – unsuccessful socialization may be the result of different significant others mediating different objective realities to the individual” (Berger and Luckmann 1967, p. 167). This is especially the case when “a certain competition exists between reality-definitions, raising the possibility of choosing between them” (*ibid.*, p. 168).

bravely carried and did not abandon. The Beatles offered the young candidates for socialization a sense of what was most lacking in the 1960s, namely, trust and security. All that young people had to do was “call” and whatever they needed would be sent by “mail.”⁶⁰ They were also reassured that they were not alone, that there will be always somebody to hold their hands, who will be there for them, “here, there and everywhere,” someone who “will always be true” even when away. The Beatles won the “unconditional love” of their fans by giving their audience nothing less than unconditional love:

If you need somebody to love, just look into my eyes,
I'll be there to make you feel right.
If you're feeling sorry and sad, I'd really sympathize.
Don't you be sad, just call me tonight.
Any time at all, any time at all, any time at all,
All you've gotta do is call and I'll be there.
If the sun has faded away, I'll try to make it shine,
There's nothing I won't do
If you need a shoulder to cry on I hope it will be mine.
Call me tonight, and I'll come to you.
Any time at all, any time at all, any time at all,
All you've gotta do is call and I'll be there.

This love was not a teenage “boy-girl love,” as is normally assumed. As Maslow argues, this type of love would have in fact been impossible in principle since the need for love comes only when the other prepotent needs are satisfied. This was instead the love of a friend whose only purpose was to help the child grow up in a world that was torn by visible and invisible, hot and cold fronts, where there was not much space for children.

The Cold War as a world war in which both adversaries possessed nuclear weapons created a paradoxical situation in which it was impossible for both systems, each of which claimed to offer the only reliable definition of reality, to reproduce themselves as social opposites. What made the 1960s so eventful and gave them the status of the most enigmatic period during the twentieth century is connected with the fact that society was confronted with the phenomenon of unsuccessful socialization on a previously inconceivable mass scale. In this atmosphere The Beatles were met as “saviors.”

⁶⁰ *If there's anything that you want, / If there's anything I can do, / Just call on me and I'll send it along / With love from me to you.*

I've got everything that you want, / Like a heart that is oh, so true ,/ Just call on me and I'll send it along / With love from me to you.

I got arms that long to hold you / And keep you by my side. / I got lips that long to kiss you / And keep you satisfied, oooh.

This phenomenon can be illuminated from yet another theoretical perspective that should be capable of explaining how and why a pop group comprised of four boys who were complete strangers to their fans could become more dear and significant for an entire generation than any one else in their parents' world. Berger and Luckmann's socialization theory does not provide us with ready-made clues in this regard, but it does allow for such clues to be constructed. In a somewhat marginal comment, the two authors observe that it may be possible for the definition of reality produced by the significant others to be challenged by previously unnoticed social agents, namely, "the less significant others" who "function as a sort of chorus." They assumed that a dialectical relation exists between the significant others and the "chorus" concerning reality-maintenance, and that the "chorus" under certain conditions may "affect the identification offered by the significant others."⁶¹ Furthermore, it is possible to challenge their claim that the significant others always (should) occupy "a privileged position" in the processes of reality-maintenance and reality-confirmation.⁶² For example, there is sufficient empirical evidence for and no theoretical constraints against assuming that "less significant others" may take the place of the "significant others" under especially dramatic circumstances and thereby play the role of primary socializers for an entire generation of young people, albeit with the help of the media. By the end of the twentieth century the image of parents holding the hands of their children as they introduce them to life not only became overly romantic but also perhaps basically false. Parents are no longer the most important source of knowledge about the social world, and most parents in the age of the communication revolution and knowledge society face great difficulties in playing the role of significant others insofar as one who is older or with more experience is no longer the one who knows best. It would be no exaggeration to say that teen and pre-teen children socialize with each other and are better identified by the music they listen to than by who their parents are. From this point of view, what happens on the "lesser stage" of a given society, which more than any other social actor is in charge of primary socialization, is clearly not without importance.

This hypothesis also suggests a possible explanation for why The Beatles, after existing as the group we know for approximately eight years, created the impression that the bond that held them together was beginning to weaken. The Beatles grew up together with their audience, and as they themselves became individuals, the meaning of what they were doing together as a group became obscured. Growing up with your audience and "holding their hands" as they become persons was something that had not been done before by any musician or band. But such a band, however successful it might be, has to split up eventually because individuals acquire voices of their own and do not merely sing in a choir.

Rebels with a Cause: Learning Cooperative Behavior

If The Beatles' music was indeed used as a socialization tool, it should reveal something of

⁶¹ Berger and Luckmann, 1967, p. 151.

⁶² Ibid.

the quality of *symbolic interaction* in Mead's sense of the term, whereby one talks to another as one talks to oneself and one addresses the other as one addresses oneself. No one has ever argued, not even socialization theorists, that singing, poetry, and fun are to be excluded from primary socialization. Such can be the case, however, if the form of social life to be realized is reminiscent of Plato's *Republic*, in which there was no place for "socially dangerous" poets as well as any thing that was seemingly without purpose or reason.

My position is that an examination of The Beatles' lyrics indicates that they employed a symbolic interactionist method for socialization that produced role-players capable of cooperating with others and participating in teamwork. This observation is important because it reveals a contrasting particular pattern of socialization that promoted individualism, competitiveness, and a hostile attitude towards the other which became especially widespread during the Cold War. To use the language of game theory, it would appear that The Beatles prepared children for cooperative games in a world whose reality was most comprehensively grasped by the models of non-cooperative games and whose only god was "Agon."

The Beatles' lyrics promoted a cooperative game in the best traditions of symbolic interactionism and coded its rules in their own poetic way. It should thus be no surprise that a clear parallel can be found between their own understanding of the production and the functioning of a cooperative mind and that of the symbolic interactionist George Herbert Mead. Mead argued that one of the basic skills that people should acquire in the process of socialization is the ability to take the position of the other, or see the world through the other's eyes. The child needs to exit the stage of play and learn the basic rules of participating in a game in which partnership and the possession of a bi-cameral "I-me" social self is the prerequisite. Mead maintained that society was teamwork, and that one can become a good member of society only when one has learned to orient his/her actions towards the actions of others and is aware of the fact that things look different from different observation positions.

The Meadean rule could be stated in poetic Beatle form as follows:

Try to see it my way... Think of what you're saying. You can get it wrong and still you think that it's alright... Think of what I'm saying. Try to see it my way, only time will tell if I am right or I am wrong... While you see it your way... there's a chance that we may fall apart before too long.

This is accompanied by the assertion that mutual understanding is in fact possible, and that this "method" does work regardless of where the people come from: *We can work it out and get it straight... We can work it out, We can work it out.* Moreover, the speaker states that, *I have always thought that it's a crime not to try to understand, to go on fussing and fighting,* to insist on your own interpretation of reality as being the only one possible or the only one that is just and correct. The repetition of the request and the insistence that one try to take the position of the other recalls the familiar use of language with restricted code from earlier Beatle songs and creates the impression of redundancy. But since this is done with the purpose of ensuring that the message gets through, it should be viewed as part and parcel of

the socialization strategy itself. In another song, *There's a Place*, the mind is presented as a “place” where one can “go” and find the things another has said about oneself (“the things you said, like I love only you”). This is yet another form in which Mead’s notion of the structure of the Self or individual Mind finds poetic expression in simple and unsophisticated language. In John Lennon’s “model” of the Self, just as in Mead’s, the “I” and the “me” (the internalized attitudes of others about oneself) are in dialogue with each other. And this is what makes a human being a social being and that makes thinking a process in which the “I” has an interaction partner and is never alone (*And there is no time when I'm alone*). The understanding that words of others addressed to you do not “vanish” but remain a part of you is also present in other songs, such as Paul McCartney’s *For No One* (*there will be times when all the things she said will fill your head*).

The range of The Beatles’ genius becomes even more evident when we realize that we can find in their texts various perspectives in addition to that of socio-psychology. For example, one can detect a macro-sociological perspective in *Everybody's Got Something to Hide except for Me and My Monkey* that puzzles systems theorists even today. Lennon’s song is a reflection of the fact that *everybody seemed to be paranoid, everybody seemed to be tensed*, except John and his wife.⁶³ It presupposes an observation position that is somehow either “above” or “below” the world as a whole while at the same time being neither inside, nor outside, but both. Niklas Luhmann’s sociological systems theory describes such a position, which is the only location where it is possible to observe the world as a whole, as “god’s privilege.” This is the position of someone who, while being a part of the social world, still finds himself outside of it, where in Lennon’s words: *Your inside is out, and your outside is in. Your outside is in, and your inside is out.* From a sociological point of view, the existence of such an observation position is a necessary prerequisite for the objective observation of the modern world, without which no transition to post-modernity can take place. But the social sciences can provide only partial perspectives that can never be brought together in an a-centric and functionally differentiated society in order to comprise a meaningful whole.

Social Change without Political Form: The Beatles as Trojan Horse

It is noteworthy that Luhmann, who addresses this issue in his *Observation of Modernity*, makes a reference to an article by Ranulph Glanville and Francisco Varela that has a title borrowed from a Beatles’ song, “Your Inside is Out and Your Outside Is In.”⁶⁴ In some of his

⁶³ Turner, 2002, p. 165.

⁶⁴ See Luhmann 1992, p. 214. The article in question, which was completed in the summer of 1979, addresses the relationship between “the Arithmetic of Closure” and the Theory of Objects. Glanville writes that “the paper’s title comes from the track ‘Everybody’s got something to hide except for me and my monkey’ on the 1968 “White Album.” Upon completion of the paper, Varela, the famous co-author of the theory of autopoiesis, suggested that all other references which supposedly indicated a relation to acknowledged predecessors and influences should be deleted. “I propose,” Varela wrote, “that we use no references other than G Spencer Brown and the Beatles. This, I believe, accentuates the elegance of what we are saying in the poetic dimension which is the most convincing for this kind of kinky logic.” The paper was presented in 1980 at George Lasker’s “Applied Systems and Cybernetics” conference in Acapulco and was published in the conference in 1981. See Ranulph

early works Luhmann discusses art as a peculiar systems medium capable under certain conditions of transforming the entire system into its medium, or into a medium for its own form. The artist or the poet is thereby capable of taking a distance from the social world and seeing it as a whole. But Luhmann was unable to locate the position of the poet, and in his later works he describes art as merely another social system that, as such, provides only a one-sided perspective of the world. The story of The Beatles reveals, however, that art may be social without taking a systems form, that it may keep itself politically neutral and still introduce social change, that it may play a role as a systems medium in the construction of social selves by virtue of its incomprehensible inside/outside position, and that it may even come to motivate and guide people's actions by making them aware of their condition.

All things taken into account, The Beatles may indeed be said to have had more to do with the collapse of the communist systems in Eastern Europe than any other group or human being. But they did it their own way – not through social movements and violent revolutions, but rather through a “revolution in the mind” insofar as what was wrong were “the people” and what had to be changed were their “heads.”⁶⁵ Lennon most clearly expressed this position in *Revolution: You tell me it's the institution. Well you know. You better free your mind instead.* Lennon admits that *we all want to change the world*, but he will not give his support to *people with minds that hate*. There were certainly not many people who could comprehend Lennon’s ridiculous logic: We can struggle and win against the system not by hating it, but by loving people.

It is indeed astonishing to see that the position held by Lennon, the musician and songwriter, is virtually the same as Luhmann’s, the sociologist. They both appear to have believed that social movements, or any other form of criticism or protest against the system, are pointless. But while Luhmann does not seem to suggest a solution or show how things can be changed precisely because he considers people to be out there in the environment of social systems and thereby unable to bring about any social change, Lennon had a “plan” and apparently viewed himself as being in a position to do something about it. Just like Luhmann, who has been harshly criticized by radical social movements as an “anti-humanist” and a conservative supporter of the Establishment,” Lennon believed that a “change in the constitution,” criticism of the institution, and violent revolution do not bring about social change. The grounds for his conviction that it is senseless to expect that “criticism” or, worse, “violence” can change the system do not reside in some sort of conservatism or pacifism, but rather in a particularly sophisticated philosophical view that he apparently shared with Luhmann.

The point is that there are systems principles that make it impossible to conquer the system. One cannot fight the system from the outside, but has to get “inside” it. When one is “inside” the system, however, one cannot struggle against it because one has thereby become “the system.” To struggle against the system would then mean to struggle against oneself. In other words, how could people who were socialized in a given system, for whom the system is the

2002, p. 71.

⁶⁵ Turner 1999, p. 169.

world, struggle to destroy it? For this reason, neither Derrida, nor Luhmann could see how social change can be brought about when, to use Derrida terms, there is no “Trojan Horse” within the system. But Lennon apparently was of a different opinion. And it seems that he was right. The communist regimes in Eastern Europe could not in fact be changed by political reforms from the top down. If they nevertheless collapsed, it was because The Beatles constructed a Trojan Horse that was beyond the means of scholars, scientists, or politicians.⁶⁶ Poetry does not need to be politically engaged in order to bring about political and social change.

The Beatles not only revolutionized the record industry, made important musical innovations, helped to change the status of art and of artists, and “reflected” the “consciousness of the growing counterculture of the era.”⁶⁷ They also helped change the social status of youth and introduced an important innovation into the social structure of the world, which is now once again supplied with a second stage. Most importantly, however, they promoted social revolutions in both East and West and did no more and no less than what they had promised to do. An early Beatles song written by Paul and John together, that for Paul remains “one of his favorite Beatles tracks,” begins with the word “imagine” and deliberately evokes “the beginning of a children’s fairy tale.”⁶⁸ This song perhaps says it all:

So I’m telling you, my friend,
That I’ll get you, I’ll get you in the end,
Yes I will, I’ll get you in the end, oh yeah...

Well, there’s gonna be a time,
Well I’m gonna change your mind.
So you might as well resign yourself to me, oh yeah.

The children of Cold-War-Eastern-Europe grew up and “resigned themselves,” but they resigned themselves to Lennon’s global world that haunted their imagination, not to capitalism as a better reality. They failed to identify themselves with the communist world and, much as their peers from the West, grew up with dissident minds. The unsuccessful socialization of an entire generation on a global scale may well lead to dramatic change caused by the need of what Berger and Luckmann termed “identity maintenance.” If the world

⁶⁶ One is reminded at this point of the so-called “Project Troy,” which brought together many bright American scientists and scholars in a combined effort devoted to “getting the truth behind the Iron Curtain” and to developing “psychological warfare tactics for use throughout the world” (Needell 1999, p. 3). It is difficult to believe, but the final project report to the Secretary of State in February 1951 contained questions to which only the Beatles seemed to have the answers: “What is the nature of the people to whom the United States’ messages are and ought to be directed? What ultimate effects are to be desired? What sort of messages ought to be sent?” (*ibid.*, p. 4). It thus will appear that the credit for “ensuring the survival of freedom, democracy, and the American way of life in the postwar world” as well as for the development of “alternative means to prevail in the struggle against world communism” should deservedly go to the Beatles (Needell 1999, pp. 4-5).

⁶⁷ Friedlander, 1996, p. 100.

⁶⁸ Turner, 2003, p. 33.

does not correspond to the “map in the head” of hundreds of millions of people with global minds, then the world should be changed. Can this revolution in that “place” which Lennon called “mind” in fact mark victory for the world as a whole that fought in the Cold War – that most costly, truly global, and mass war in which people of all ages, races, classes, and both genders had equal shares?

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“Love and Peace or Else”: U2 and the Development of Social Consciousness inside and outside the Framework of Rock

Visnja Cogan

Rock and popular culture have had a tremendous impact on youth since they emerged. It seems like an obvious, simplistic and reiterated observation, but one cannot deny that it is a fact. Whether one talks about folk music or rock music, their power was almost unimagined before they appeared. In the 1950s, rock was seen as entertainment, but also as a powerful force when it came to freedom. The mass movements of the 1960s created by folk and rock music were a natural consequence of what music could do for a generation, of the voice it could give that generation. Rock’s leftist bias was also a natural consequence of its origins “as music by outsiders – by blacks in a white society, by rural whites in a rapidly urbanizing economy, by regional performers in a pop-music industry dominated by New York, by youth lashing out against the settled assumptions of pre-rock pop-music professionals (Rockwell, 2002).”

Rock music was the symbol of change, may it be social, sexual, or political. Rock is a blend of blues, gospel, hillbilly, and boogie, among others (Hatch & Milward, 1987, p. 73). However, rock followed in the footsteps of other musical traditions both in terms of genesis and political awareness. Blues, jazz, folk, and some traditional music pieces gave politics a voice in song before rock. For example, American artists such as Woodie Guthrie or Pete Seeger can be said to precede rock in bringing social awareness to music.

In blues, some songs are openly political like Billie Holiday’s *Strange Fruit*, written by Lewis Allen in 1938, “an anguished reprisal of the intense racism still persistent in the South” (Soulwalking, n.d.). Many radio stations banned the record. However, the jukebox industry allowed it to become a rather large, though controversial, hit. That same year, Holiday also sang for a short while with the Artie Shaw’s band, one of the first instances of a black female singer singing in a white band. As music is often a vector of unity, the integration of black and white musicians in that context is perhaps not surprising. Even before the civil rights movement in the States, however, songs and artists had an impact in the political field. In U2’s native country Ireland, for example, traditional music was used to convey the sense of

dispossession felt by the Irish at their loss of rights at the hands of the British crown, for instance in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Irish patriots who wrote rebel songs and sang them during meetings also used traditional music. One of the prime examples is that of Theobald Wolfe Tone and the United Irishmen.¹

Nowadays, the spirit of the 1960s has almost disappeared, leaving in its wake only remnants of a legendary era. Although there are many artists who still defend causes such as Aids, poverty, and voting rights, mass movements such as those seen in the 1960s, or the mega-events of the 1980s, do not seem to mean as much to young people who seem more interested in popular music as entertainment rather than for what it can do for them and others in a social or political way.

Some observers as well are rather dubious as to the real power of music. In Lawrence Grossberg's words: “On the one hand, so much activity is attempting to explicitly articulate rock to political activism; on the other hand, this activity seems to have little impact on the rock formation, its various audiences or its relations to larger social struggles (Grossberg, 1992, p. 168).” Grossberg also believes that the popularity of such bands as U2, REM or Midnight Oil depends on a “perceived radical disassociation (p. 168)” between the political content of their music and “their emotionally and affectively powerful appeals (p. 168).” It is indeed rather difficult to assess the real impact a band like U2 has on their fans other than musically or emotionally. However, my research has led me to believe that U2's power is much greater than one may at first believe.

This manuscript addresses the influence that U2 may have, or may have had, more specifically on their fans, and more generally on society, by charting the evolution of the band's social consciousness throughout their career. Firstly, what was the influence of the mega-events U2 took part in the 1980s on the band itself and on the fans? Secondly, what kind of influence has U2's image overhaul in the 1990s had on the band's career and on the image of a band with a social consciousness? What were the reasons for the conscious shift that U2 made, and in what way is it linked to their political side? Thirdly, U2's singer Bono has disassociated himself from U2 when it comes to social struggle. Has he created a new kind of political and social struggle through his involvement with DATA and Africa, a new model for other rock stars to follow? Ultimately, despite their reluctance to be branded a political band, can U2 deny the influence they and their music have had on more than just one generation? Finally, what impact has popular culture had on politics, considering in particular the interest politicians have taken in popular culture and music, and also by mentioning the relationship that U2 have had with Bill Clinton.

¹ The United Irishmen were an Irish revolutionary organization influenced by the French Revolution and founded in 1791 to fight against British rule. When the British government tried to silence the group, it became a secret society with a military structure. Theobald Wolfe Tone (1763-1798) was one of the founders. He was captured in 1798 during a battle of the 1798 Rebellion, court-martialed and found guilty of treason. He committed suicide before his execution.

U2 and the “Mega-Events” of the 1980s

Reebbee Garofalo coined the term “mega-events” to designate all the rock and pop concerts of the 1980s and 1990s that gathered a number of artists for a social or political cause. From Live Aid, to the Amnesty International Conspiracy of Hope tour, to the Mandela Tribute, and others, mega-events were made possible through advances in media technology. In Garofalo’s words, Live Aid was “an unabashed celebration of technological possibilities (1992, p. 15). It was no Woodstock, and one may find it difficult to compare both events. “If Woodstock represented an attempt to humanize the social relations of mass culture, Live Aid demonstrated the full blown integration of popular music with the “star making machinery” of the international music industry (p. 15).

Live Aid was organized to collect money for the starving population of Ethiopia. The Irish singer Bob Geldof was one of the instigators of the event, along with former Ultravox singer, Midge Ure, after they had put together the Band Aid single “Do They Know It’s Christmas?” When Bob Geldof asked U2 to take part in that single, their manager, Paul McGuinness, advised the band to say no, thinking that nothing would come out of it. But the band wanted to do it. Bono would sing, and Bob Geldof had one line in mind for him: *And tonight Thank God, it’s them instead of you.* Reportedly, it made Bono cringe because, despite his religious beliefs, he did not want to be associated with God all the time. But he sang the God line anyway.

Band Aid started a chain of events that would lead U2 to become a band with a social consciousness, a reluctant political band. Live Aid and subsequent events would expose them to the world as champions of social causes and injustice. It had already started with the album *War* in 1983, an album Bono called “the first apolitical political record (Denselow, 1989, p. 170). *Sunday Bloody Sunday* was “not a rebel song,” a comment Bono made each time U2 played the song live. It was a song about surrender, but was not perceived as such by the public. For instance, *Sunday Bloody Sunday*, was played over and over again in the Sinn Fein offices in Dublin. In Bono’s words, “the record was obviously being seen as a Republican anthem, a call to man the barricades. I think the real point of the song went over their heads (Denselow, p. 170).” In fact, the whole *War* album bore the mark of politics. It talked about the Polish trade union Solidarnosc, about refugees and nuclear disasters. The title itself was a political cry. However, U2 did not want to be put into a box and branded as a political band. That could well be why many people were confused.

Bono Does Woodstock

Band Aid and Live Aid were for a good cause. U2 could not but be part of it. They stole the day at Live Aid and may have acted more in the spirit of Woodstock than people realize. The set list originally comprised three songs, *Sunday Bloody Sunday*, *Bad* and *Pride (In the Name of Love)*. U2 only played the first two. During *Bad* Bono had something on his mind. During the song, the singer climbed down from the stage, and, as was his habit, started looking for

female fans to dance with. He hugged the girls and danced with them, and millions of people were witness to this extraordinary display of communion. It was participatory and communitarian. Suddenly, the physical distance between artist and audience was erased. When Bono hugged and danced with those girls, he hugged and danced with the whole audience and he made Wembley Stadium into a small place, where everyone was included. It also meant that U2 could not play *Pride* as *Bad* took most of that time.

Conscience rock, if it existed before, was born that day for U2, and it was born with millions of witnesses. Bono, however, was not pleased. If anything, he felt that he had made a mistake and felt bad about it. He thought that he had gone overboard with this display of affection. He thought that he had forgotten what the day was about. For everyone else, it was different. An Irish sculptor subsequently made a statue called “The Leap” about Bono leaping into the audience. This assuaged his fears. The band also issued one of their first socially conscious statements:

U2 are involved in Live Aid because it's more than money, it's music; but it's also a demonstration to the politicians and policy-makers that men, women and children are lying bellies swollen, starving to death for the sake of a cup of grain and water. For the price of Star Wars, the MX missiles offensive-defense budgets, the deserts of Africa could be turned into fertile lands, the technology is with us even if the technocrats are not. Are we part of a civilization that protects itself by investing in life.... or investing in death?

One of the Live Aid acts people still remember is U2. Mass culture was used to convey a message that said that people cared, a message that raised awareness of the issue, and more concretely, which was an appeal to raise funds. It certainly raised Bono's consciousness. In September 1985, he and his wife, Alison, traveled to Ethiopia for a month to work for a humanitarian organization. His fight for Africa originates in that trip. From then on, U2 participated in some, but not all, of the “conscience rock” recordings and mega-events that ensued. Later in 1985, Bono took part in the Artists United against Apartheid, a collective of musicians gathered by Bruce Springsteen’s E. Street Band guitarist, Little Steven, to make an album called *Sun City*. It was named after the big entertainment complex built in South Africa to entice big name acts to come and play, despite the 35/206 UN resolution of December 1980 that encouraged artists, academics, and sports personalities to boycott the country. U2’s singer wrote the song *Silver and Gold* about a South African prisoner, which made it on to the album, and he also took part in the recording of the single *Sun City*, along with Bruce Springsteen, Lou Reed, Bob Dylan, Pete Townshend, and many others.

The following year, U2 were asked to take part in the Amnesty International Conspiracy of Hope tour, which was organized to celebrate Amnesty’s 25th Anniversary and also to try and raise awareness in America about the issue of political prisoners. The tour was a success as 130,000 people attended the concerts, \$3-5 million was collected, and sixty per cent of Americans heard about the tour. People were asked to sign petitions to free prisoners of conscience and were recruited as volunteers to write to the prisoners. Fans were also urged to

write postcards that they then put into letterboxes with the inscription “Set them free.” The then director of Amnesty International, Pat Duffy, stated that U2’s involvement in the Conspiracy of Hope tour resulted in a doubling of membership in Amnesty in America in a short period of time. Indeed, some 200,000 members in the U.S. were added to the AI rolls. Some commentators also felt that the trend toward conservative Republicanism by young Americans was also reversed (Garofolo, 1992, p. 15).

However, U2 did not always want to be associated with the mega-events they took part in. Music is, after all, the lifeblood of the band and remains the reason for U2’s existence. U2’s reluctance to be too closely associated with politics is obvious in the following extract of an interview by Rolling Stone magazine in 1988 with U2 band member The Edge.

Rolling Stone: Two terrific stadium appearances – at Live Aid in 1985 and at the final Amnesty International show in New Jersey in 1986 – played a big role in establishing U2 as a major-league band. Do you sometimes worry that U2 has gotten too closely identified with those types of benefit shows?

The Edge: [...] I think we realized in the last couple of months that you can’t continue to be involved in charity events. What we are, first and foremost, as a rock’n’roll band. If we forget that, people are going to stop listening. So, at the moment, my feeling is that I don’t really want to do any charity shows for the moment. I think it would devalue anything else we’ve done so far. [...] I don’t feel we need to be in some way virtuous or whatever. When you reach the stage we’re at, you have to learn to say no a lot more. I mean we could do charity events solidly for the next 10 years. But I don’t think it would really do any good. Amnesty International is the one charity we really feel we can support because its aims are so basic. You know, who can argue with human rights? It’s fundamental.²

The importance of music in U2’s life is evident in The Edge’s statement. They are a rock band and they play music in the most artistic sense of the word. That the songs’ lyrics are sometimes political in nature does not necessarily mean that U2 are delivering a message.

Many rock musicians have dealt with political subjects in their songs, without being automatically branded a political artist or band, or carrying the very burdensome title of band with a message. Throughout the 1980s, U2 carried that burden. Many people believed that they *were* a band with a message. Bono again refuted that idea in 1987 during a press conference in Madrid. A journalist asked: “Your music is music with a message – do you see yourselves as the inheritors of Dylan’s title of ‘Music with a Message?’” To which Bono replied:

² U2 have been big supporters of Amnesty International, going as far as printing the address of the organization on every LP since *The Joshua Tree*, adding the address of Greenpeace from *Achtung Baby* on. On the latest release, there are also addresses to support the Burma campaign and DATA.

As the writer of the words, I write about things the way I see them. I never set out to change the world, more to change my own world. Rock’n’roll is a noise that has woken me up and it’s good that, if along the way, it wakes other people up. But I feel that we mustn’t fall asleep in the comfort of what you call our messages (Scanlon, 1987).

U2: A Postmodern Band or an Icon of Lost Values?

Is it because of the postmodernist sensibility that U2 have been made into something they did not wish to be: the voice of a generation? Or is it because of the all around ‘coolness’ of the 1980s, the all-around cynicism in rock music, the belief that rock’n’roll had lost its rallying power and its power as a potentially oppositional force or form of resistance? Indeed, some observers would regard rock’n’roll as a musical vehicle for disrupting established values, whereas others, who perhaps would be the heirs to Theodor Adorno’s Frankfurt School, would see music as manipulated by market forces and therefore devoid of any oppositional and therefore transformational possibilities.

On another level, a postmodern society, one accepting the blurring of cultural barriers and blending of everything, denying the notions of origin or end, refusing to even consider solutions, while celebrating ambiguity and the superficial, may have been the reason U2 became the voice of sincerity, perhaps ironically, a reminder of what is genuine. The band’s music may therefore have appeared even more authentic and their image of honesty and integrity may have been strengthened by the historical era in which they appeared.

Throwing the title of “band with a message” at U2 was relatively easy when, in the 1980s, there were very few rock musicians around who dared to mention anything of a political nature, whether in Ireland or abroad, or who more simply dared to be “authentic.” In part, U2 were seen as having depth and a handle on social struggle because they came from Ireland - and they never failed to mention that fact. They had written some of the most popular songs of the decade, they had become rock icons by the late 1980s, making it onto the cover of Time Magazine in 1987, they were the authentic rock band *par excellence*, and they projected an image that was extreme in a lot of ways. They were a serious rock’n’roll band, they took their craft seriously, they never smiled in photographs, almost all of which were in black and white. They struggled not to have an image, and they also tried to convince themselves and others that they were not consciously trying to build an image of what they were at the core - which was, of course, impossible. The image they had was that of an Irish rock outfit with clear leanings towards the political left. In fact, most of U2’s political songs were written in the 1980s, whose topics ranged from Ireland (*Sunday Bloody Sunday*, *Running to Stand Still*) to Martin Luther King (*Pride (In the Name of Love)*), to South America (*Mothers of the Disappeared*), to South Africa (*Silver and Gold*), almost always dealing with oppression and human rights and becoming more international as the decade wore on. However, the songs are merely denouncing a situation without offering a solution or calling for an uprising.

U2's Image Overhaul in the Nineties

U2 decided to change their image in the 1990s. From black and white photographs showing an unsmiling, serious band in the 1980s, the new image showed the U2 members laughing and cross-dressing with colorful backgrounds adorning the record sleeves. They had decided to step completely away from the image of "conscience rock." Indeed, the concept faded into the background as U2 turned to using irony as a weapon against themselves and others. They also used seduction as a tool of their new image. This may seem unlikely now, but U2 were not thought of as sexy in the 1980s. They were the band with a social consciousness. Suddenly, in the early 1990s, Bono was voted the sexiest male in a music magazine, a title that would have been impossible to think of earlier on. And above all, U2 did the reverse of what other acts do. They used seduction when they were already established and famous worldwide in order to pull crowds from a younger generation than their own. They were suddenly cool.

The reasons for this shift are complex. They can be found mostly in the myth that had emerged in the 1980s. U2 indeed were the ultimate band with a message in the eyes of many of their fans. They were seen almost as superheroes. Therefore it was not surprising that some fans saw in the songs more than was intended. After all, if U2 were interested enough in an issue to write about it, they could also deliver a message, however veiled.

The end of the 1980s began a difficult period for U2. Their album and film *Rattle and Hum* were heavily criticized for being too close to the roots of rock (selling 10 million copies hardly seemed to matter). Their very last concert of the decade at the Point Depot in Dublin, on 31 December 1989, was a goodbye to the old U2. Bono warned that U2 "[had] to go away and dream it all up again," a declaration that for some foretold the end of the band. It was just another beginning. They had decided to deconstruct the myth, upon which ashes the new U2 would be born. A more colorful U2, revealing a sense of humor was reinvented for the 1990s. Still, its destiny was to reenter the political arena by the side door.

Politics reared its ugly head again with the war in Former Yugoslavia. U2 were in the midst of their *Zoo TV* tour and were obviously enjoying it. Enter Bill Carter, an American filmmaker and journalist who persuaded them to establish a satellite link with Sarajevo during the *Zoo TV* concerts to try and raise awareness of the situation there. U2 made the link eleven times during the tour, the last two taking place in Wembley Stadium in August 1993. Sarajevans would be broadcast talking about the situation in their town and country. They felt that they had been forgotten by the European political powers and one of them thanked U2 for their involvement, saying that "U2 have given Sarajevo a window into the world, and we pray that some light shines through." The band had been intent on ridding themselves of the Good Samaritan image that followed them around and had almost succeeded. But Larry Mullen observed, "With the Sarajevo linkup, U2 has set its image back five years (Flanagan, 1995, p. 279)." The band had plunged once again into political controversy. The British newspapers found another reason to castigate U2 for their involvement in another political cause when everybody thought that they had forgotten about saving the world. But not everyone was convinced that they had made a mistake. The Italian tenor Luciano Pavarotti apparently

pestered Bono about writing him a song – the song that would become *Miss Sarajevo* - about a real-life beauty contest in the besieged city that had been organized as a protest against the war.

By the time U2 had made the album *Pop* in 1997, however, their “political agenda” was rather empty, at least on the surface. On the song front, they had written *North and South of the River* with Irish singer Christy Moore in 1995, a song as much about Dublin as it is about the sectarian divide in Northern Ireland. *Pop* contained a political song, again about Northern Ireland, - one that did not want to be a political song. *Please* became a single, a song that echoed in both communities, North and South.

By 1998, however, U2 were fully back on the political front with one of the most politically motivated actions that they had ever taken. They supported the “Yes” campaign in the Good Friday Agreement referendum on Northern Ireland in May of that year by appearing alongside the Northern Irish band, Ash, at the Belfast Waterfront Hall. The image of Bono welcoming John Hume and David Trimble on stage and holding their joined hands above his head bore an uncanny resemblance to Bob Marley doing the same during a peace concert in 1976 in Jamaica with Edward Seaga, the then Prime Minister of Jamaica and Michael Manley, the leader of the opposition and former Prime Minister - where the warring Kingston gangs pledged to stop fighting, albeit briefly.

In 1998, Ireland was back on the agenda for U2 who, like many, believed in the Good Friday agreement. The Omagh bombing that same year shocked everyone, including Bono, who wrote one of the most poignant and despairing songs of U2’s career, *Peace on Earth*, included in the 2000 album, *All That You Can’t Leave Behind*.

In 2004, *How to Dismantle an Atomic Bomb* was released. Although it was a very personal record, one or two songs deal with Bono’s fight against poverty and AIDS. *Miracle Drug* and *Crumbs from Your Table* are testimonies to the issues. U2 clearly had not abandoned their political side. The Edge confessed that: “We’ve grown up being a political band. We never saw a need to separate religion and politics from everything we write about and care about. We have always been well aware that steaming in on any issue was liable to get us into trouble, or just come off as uncool (Illey, 2004).” The Edge’s remark is typical of U2’s legendary contradiction. They do not want to be a political band; they reject that notion, yet after a career of twenty-five years, they may have finally come to terms with the idea. This change of heart may be explained by maturity, but also by Bono positioning himself on the political arena in his own name and not in that of the band.

Bono and Africa: A New Form of Political and Social Struggle?

Bono has clearly disassociated himself from U2 when it comes to his political and social struggle. The choice he made to do so was the result of two factors. Firstly, he wanted U2 to focus again on the music and also he was aware that if he fought for his beliefs within U2 that

he would be castigated again for his actions. Secondly, as a citizen and a celebrity, he was freer to be more efficient in his struggle. In fact, he did more for Africa through the foundation of DATA (Debt Aid Trade Africa) by raising political consciousness among the people in power than by acting within U2 and the restricted framework of rock'n'roll.

For example, he told Robin Denselow in 1989, “There is an environment in which social responsibility and awareness grows, and music can contribute to that (Denseslow, 1989, p.170). In February 2002, in an article entitled “Can Bono Save the World?” he told *Time Magazine*:

I'm tired of dreaming. I'm into doing at the moment [...] U2 is about the impossible. Politics is the art of the possible. They're very different and I'm resigned to it now [...] When you sing, you make people vulnerable to change in their lives. You make yourself vulnerable to change in your life. But in the end, you've got to become the change you want to see in the world (Tyrangiel, J., 2004).

Rock is not necessarily connected anymore to politics or to political commitment for the singer, as illustrated by the fact that he has given back U2 its music as an art form. Rather Bono seems to see rock as a force that cannot change the world, whereas politics can and must. Indeed, he may have come to terms with the limits of rock even as an eye opener. However, I doubt that he would ever subscribe to the idea of rock as mere entertainment or fun. He indeed confessed a few years ago, in the 2000 Irish television program “From a Whisper to a Scream” that it was a matter of ‘life or death’ for him when he started playing in U2.

Bono’s involvement in politics follows the path taken by U2 in the 1990s. In other words, the members of the band did not want to be seen as a political band again, and the U2 front man, acting on his own behalf, probably protected the band to a certain extent from further accusations of being morally uppity, allowing them to breathe creatively, while still retaining the aura of a socially conscious act. There were rumors that the other members of U2 were disgruntled by his involvement and that the Elevation Tour of 2001 was cut short because of Bono’s commitments elsewhere. The singer admitted on the BBC in December 2005 that his ‘other job’ had created tensions in the past and that he was even afraid that he would be thrown out of the band because of it. However, Bono is as committed to U2 as the rest of the band is.

The singer’s identification with social causes is no longer a source of conflict in the band, and it seems that Adam Clayton, Larry Mullen and The Edge are proud of what Bono is trying to achieve. “Bono is very good at figuring out what he wants and how to get it,” says Adam Clayton. “He has absolute dedication to achieving his goals. There are certain things you think it might be prudent for him not to do, but he’s a grown-up. He knows his business”

(Rees, 2004, p. 220). Bono’s identification also stems from a very exacerbated sense of duty, brought on by his faith. His belief in God has spurred him on, but he is adamant that:

There is something very uncomfortable about a rich rock star being photographed with poor, starving kids. In that sense, I wish it wasn’t me. I don’t blame people for being cynical. I’m sure it’s not all altruistic. There must be some ego involved. There’s a sense of duty, too. And I have the sort of personality where I believe I can always find a solution (Rees, 2004, p. 220).

Bono has clearly seen and experienced the dangers of trying to forge mass movements via charity rock concerts. As Simon Frith and John Street point out, there are two pitfalls when it comes to using popular music to organize mass action. Time scale is the first one as “the power of popular music is by its nature momentary (Garofalo, p. 80).” The novelty and shock value wear off quickly. The idea of collectivity and the power that popular music has to mobilize an audience and what becomes a shared identity and experience through the individual purchase of a record or a ticket concert is the second point, but Frith and Street wonder if “this identity has any political substance (p. 80).’

What Influence?

It may work better to act on an individual basis, like Bono is doing, than when a group of rock and pop artists gather together and make a record or play a charity concert. However, even if many listeners derive pleasure from their music without necessarily adhering to their viewpoints or even without being aware of them, Roy Shuker points out that “A variety of examples can be adduced to illustrate that many listeners do indeed have their ideological horizons both confirmed and extended by association with political rock, which can also have practical benefits (Shuker, 1994, p. 235).” (The Amnesty International Conspiracy of Hope tour, for instance)

This trend was evident in recent interviews with U2 fans. The majority of those interviewed expressed an interest in humanitarian and social issues. Further, they say U2 has developed or confirmed these sensibilities in them through the songs or through actions taken by the band, either collectively or individually. Some of the fans told me that they had discovered some issues pertaining to world problems thanks to U2 songs. Others said that *Sunday Bloody Sunday* had opened their eyes to the conflict in Northern Ireland, something they knew very little about before their exposure to U2. One of them, a singer of the now defunct U2 tribute band Apolo-j, told me that he shared U2’s philosophy of peace and reconciliation. However, some of the fans were reluctant to give U2 full credit for their social consciousness. They tend to say that they share U2’s ideas even before they had discovered the band and that U2 has not necessarily changed their minds, but rather has simply confirmed their beliefs. This does not mean that they are all politically or socially active however, although I found that many were supporting causes.

Not every fan would be conscious of the content of every political song or would care for that matter. Some of them (although they are in a minority) told me that what they care about is the music first. U2's so-called message hardly matters to them.

What about Bono then? Does he have an influence on fans, the political sphere, society? Undoubtedly yes. He was voted one of 100 most influential people by *Time Magazine* in 2004. The Edge has had reservations as to his involvement but is very proud of what he has achieved:

Even though I have winced on his behalf, I've had more times when I've just been so proud of him and blown away with the success of what he's done. Who would know that someone who stopped his formal education at 16, and had been writing songs and touring the world as a singer, can get stuck into the body politics and be listened to on the highest levels? (Iley, 2004).

U2 have undoubtedly had some influence on their fans, but perhaps Bono may have an even stronger influence on the politicians and the social movers and shakers that he meets through his fight against poverty and AIDS. In May 2002, he went back to Africa, visiting Ghana, Uganda, South Africa and Ethiopia with the then American Minister of Finance Paul O'Neill to convince him that the African continent "can and does put Western aid to good use (Foster, 2002)." The latter was openly critical of the aid programs set up against poverty in Africa. He said that it was a waste of money because it did not generate a long-term economic development. But O'Neill came back in a different state of mind. The mere fact that Bono was able to convince a politician like O'Neill to listen to him was in itself an achievement.

Bono's efforts paid dividends as his involvement in various campaigns undoubtedly influenced the decision by the United States and the European Union in June 2005 to erase the debts of 18 poor countries to the level of €40 million. Within 12 to 18 months, a further nine countries will see their debts erased to the level of €11 million. As well, he is constantly encouraging people to take part in the campaign to "Make Poverty History."

U2, Popular Culture and Politics

Although governments have traditionally kept their distance from rock music, seeing it as a "dirty' category of social practice" (Bennett et al, 1993), popular culture has had an impact on the political field and has touched politicians' consciousness. For instance, politicians have learned how to use the popular culture platform to gain a young electorate. For example, U2 became involved in former U.S. President Bill Clinton's election campaign in 1992. Clinton used MTV as a platform to reach out to young voters. Also, during the American leg of their *Zoo TV* tour that same year, in an ironic gesture, U2 invited Bill Clinton to phone a radio show called Rockline, which they were guests on. The then Governor of Arkansas answered the invitation. Subsequently, U2 became involved in a MTV campaign called "Rock the

Vote,” encouraging young Americans to cast their vote with the slogan: “We’re not telling you who to vote for, but we’re asking you to use your vote.”

There is no doubt that arts can have a positive impact on politics as shown by U2 manager Paul McGuinness’s involvement in the Irish Arts Council, an organization which is the state’s representative and consultative body. Its role is to promote the arts in Ireland. Paul McGuinness was a nominated member for twelve years, between 1988 and 2000, and was instrumental in nominating the very first popular music officer of the Arts Council in 1988, renowned Irish saxophone player, composer, and writer Keith Donald.

Conclusion

Despite the success, the big sales, the awards, U2 will always remain a very particular outfit, almost a peculiarity in the world of rock and politics, an “apolitical political band” at the fringe of politics, but not at the heart of it, simply because they have always refused to be categorized, and they have always refused to deliver a message, except one of peace. Throughout the years, however, they have gained a kind of respectability that many rock bands would envy, and Bono might have created a new kind of political involvement for rock stars, one, where ego is balanced by a real commitment to and knowledge of the cause that he is defending.

In April of this year, Bono confessed to Robert Hilburn of the *Los Angeles Times*:

When we started getting behind social causes, Paul [McGuinness], our manager, warned us there might be a backlash of sorts. He said, 'Musicians are supposed to describe the problems of the world, not fix them.' And that is the way it's supposed to be. But we have a unique power in this ridiculous thing called celebrity, and our job isn't finished when we write songs that grow out of concerns (Hilburn, 2005).

Post Scriptum

Bob Geldof did it again. Live 8 took place on July 2, 2005, in London, Philadelphia, Tokyo, Berlin, Paris, Rome, Moscow, and Toronto, as well as Edinburgh on Wednesday, July 6. The mega-event of the 21st century highlighted the plight of the poor of the world, ahead of the G8 summit in Gleneagles that took place on July 6-9. Raising awareness of the issue was the concert’s main concern. U2, among others, headlined the London concert. The aim was “to call for complete debt cancellation, more and better aid and trade justice for the world’s poorest people (www.live8.com, 2005).” Live 8 was the biggest mega-event ever staged. It was only the starting point for the Long Walk to Justice that is calling on world leaders to act after the G8 summit. Despite their *Vertigo* tour commitments, U2 agreed to take part. U2 and Bob Geldof have led parallel struggles when it comes to the poor of this world.

During the *Vertigo* tour, Bono called on people to take action against poverty, “to end this stupid, stupid, stupid poverty” as he put it in Dublin on June 27, 2005. Recently, despite Bono’s earlier decision not to mix the band in his political causes, the gigs have become political rallies at times, with U2’s most political songs in the foreground. With songs like *Love and Peace or Else*, *Sunday Bloody Sunday*, and *Bullet the Blue Sky*, the giant screen lit up with the word “coexist” in red, the “c” in the shape of a crescent moon, symbolizing Islam, the “x” in the shape of the Star of David, symbolizing Judaism, and the “t” in the shape of a cross, symbolizing Christianity. This was a message of peace and reconciliation, a very strong reminder that U2 may not be a political band, but that they are a band committed to social ideals, whose social consciousness has developed over the years, and who have reached a place where politics can coexist with their outlook on life.

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John Adams, *Klinghoffer* and *The Transmigration of Souls* Musical Responses to Terrorism

John Anderson

Editor's note:

While music, in this case opera, has often been used as a tool for state building, as John Anderson points out, he also suggests that it may generate other possibilities, including the creation of reflective public space. As the author notes, opera and other forms of musical expression may mirror the complexity of issues in the intermingling of public and private lives – a landscape that public administrators cannot always access through conventional management methodologies. Not all human conditions, intertwined as they are with individual lives can be addressed by simply asking citizens whether they are for or against a particular issue anymore than a complex world can be neatly and definitively divided between enemies and allies. The civic space created by music perhaps allows us to reflect on this complexity without necessarily resolving the difficult issues of loyalty, history, and nationality. The value of this reflective space for public administration is that it may momentarily free both citizens and administrators from habitual thinking, allowing us the grace of observing public life in all its emotional depth, rather than merely critiquing it for what it should be. From this broader, often provocative view, innovative and perhaps more effective solutions to social problems might emerge, those that are cognizant of the possibilities in human relationships rather than only the limitations. Is it possible for music to stir more than hatred? Does music contribute to democratic governance, for example, by enhancing social healing and the improved civic space it might engender? Do Adams' operas accomplish this healing, or do they merely solidify the thinking of both sides of a conflict? Victor Frankel in his book "Man's Search for Meaning" (Beacon Press, 2000) reports that those Jews who survived the horror of the concentration camps and were able to carry on with their lives after World War II found some way to make meaning from events from which their losses could not be recovered. Does Adams' work help this process? Is the ability to create space for a deeper and more transforming reflection the test of validity of art that takes on political dialogue?

Memory Space: Musical Room for Social Healing?

On the 19th of September, 2002, the New York Philharmonic opened a concert with the premiere of a new work by John Adams entitled “On the Transmigration of Souls,” a work they had commissioned to pay tribute to the victims of the 11th September attacks on the World Trade Centre. In a work of reflection and remembrance, described by the composer as a “memory space,” the piece combines orchestra, several choruses, taped noises, and the recitation of the names and the last words of some of those killed. Recoiling from the notion of a requiem, Adams expressed the hope that his work would not just remember the dead, but also reflect “the change that takes place within the souls of those that stay behind, of those who suffer pain and loss and then come away from that experience transformed” (Adams, Nov. 5, 2004).

While the piece aroused mixed critical responses, for some the very choice of Adams to write such a piece was problematic, given his earlier engagement with the subject of terrorism in the controversial opera “*The Death of Klinghoffer*” (1991). Here the composer retold the story of the 1985 hijacking of the cruise ship *Achille Lauro* by Palestinian gunmen, but in a way that allegedly contributed to a justification and humanization of the terrorists who brutally killed the wheel chair bound, elderly Jewish holidaymaker Leon Klinghoffer.

This paper explores the way in which the music of John Adams responds to terrorism and looks at some of the controversies surrounding his work. It represents a reflection on how the musical and the political can interact in the modern world, engaging his work on the level of political dialogue.

Should Opera Be Political?

Anthony Arblaster points to the activities of some modern opera producers who give classic works a political setting and are met with the response “keep politics out of opera,” while Terry Teachout, the music critic of *Commentary*, offers the blanket dismissal that “great art is never political” (Arblaster, 1992, p. 1). Indeed, self-conscious political art may rarely be great. However, it would be very strange if artists responding to the world simply excluded the political from their vision. Yet very rarely in opera can any direct political meaning be assumed, even where words create an opportunity to propagate a message.

Plato may have believed that certain types of music were harmful for young people while others elevated them, but there is little evidence of such a direct effect. One person may listen to Tchaikovsky’s 6th Symphony and be stirred, but another might just see lush and emotional overindulgence, while my fourteen-year-old daughter would be bored rigid. Equally, when it comes to political messages, what one listener hears may be very different from what the composer intended. Is the first movement of Shostakovich’s 7th Symphony, for example, about the fascist invaders or about oppressors nearer home?

Context Matters

In opera, the central importance of contextualization must be expressed. The events of the days are often the backdrop to the personal triumphs and tragedies of individuals. When was a piece of music written? What were the political circumstances of the time? What peculiar circumstances enabled a work to be understood as political or for it to stimulate political thought or even action? Upon which groups of people did it have an influence – the masses or the elites, for example? To what extent was its political impact very much a passing phase in the longer term-reception of the work? The *Risorgimento* operas of Verdi, for example, presumably no longer stimulate political responses among Italian operagoers.

Whether the work of John Adams falls into the category of great art is partly a matter of taste and in part dependent upon historical judgment, but that several of his works are in some sense political cannot be doubted. He is sometimes described as a minimalist, but this is a label Adams would reject and one that does not adequately characterize his greater use of more traditional techniques and (as the more cynical might suggest) his preference for music where something happens.

In the early phases of Adams' career, he focused on developing a style that precluded political engagement, but in the early 1980s the composer turned his attention to opera with a public theme. As he later suggested, "if opera is going to have any future at all as a living art form, it has to take hold of the psychological themes and undercurrents of our present lives" (Adams, 2002). His first opera *Nixon in China* (1985) tells the story of President Nixon's historic visit to the Peoples' Republic of China, but is almost light-hearted, on occasion comic in nature, with music to match. Yet there is also an underlying reference to a "clash of civilizations," for although the tone is often affectionate and respectful of Nixon's achievement, it is also sensitive to the ways in which the American leaders felt out of their depth in a strange country – witness Pat Nixon's longing for home and familiarity. The political preferences of Adams and librettist Alice Goodman may come through in the rather negative characterization of both Henry Kissinger and Madame Mao (Adams, 1995).

Far more controversial, however, was Adams' second opera, *The Death of Klinghoffer* (1991) (Adams, 1992). Adams and Goodman reject the description of this work as a "terrorist opera," preferring instead to describe it as an exploration of the suffering of both Israelis and Arabs.¹ However, their portrayal of the terrorists as being very "human" and their alleged position of moral neutrality towards the use of violence by those involved in the Middle East conflict seemed to invite political attack (Adams, 1992).

¹ Although the focus of the paper is on the composer and librettist, director Peter Sellars was also intimately involved in the first production of the opera.

Klinghoffer – “The Terrorist Opera”

On 7th October, 1985, four Palestinians took over the cruise ship *Achille Lauro* as it embarked upon a Mediterranean cruise. According to some reports, the Palestinians never intended to seize the ship, but instead planned to use it to launch an attack on the Israeli port of Ashdod. The plot was accidentally discovered, however, and in a panic they took charge of the ship. Directing the ship to sail towards Syria, the gunmen demanded the release of fifty Palestinians in Israeli prisons and threatened to start killing the passengers if their demands were not met. As the *Achille Lauro* neared Tartus, Syria refused to get involved, while the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) denied having anything to do with the hijacking that had been carried out by members of Abu Abba's Palestinian Liberation Front, a radical offshoot of the PLO. The hijackers then murdered Leon Klinghoffer, an elderly Jewish American, and dumped his body over the side. Klinghoffer appears to have been singled out because he was in a wheel chair and could not be moved to the upper deck, where the other passengers were being kept, and because of all 500 people on board he exhibited some signs of resistance, reportedly biting the hand of one of the hijackers.

Once it became apparent that no one would come to their aid and that their demands would not be met, the hijackers returned to Port Said and gave themselves up to the Egyptian authorities in exchange for a safe conduct out of the country. They were permitted to join Abbas and other Palestinian representatives on a flight for Tunisia that was hastily organized by the Egyptian authorities. The flight was intercepted by U.S. fighters, who forced it to land in Sicily where the hijackers were arrested by the Italian authorities, although the rest of the group were allowed to fly to Tunisia, much to the annoyance of the U.S. administration. Somewhat later, the four hijackers were tried in the Italian courts and were sentenced to terms of 15 to 30 years, although one disappeared when on parole. Abbas was arrested after the overthrow of Saddam Hussein and died in American custody, reportedly of a heart attack (Cassese, 1989).

The Opera

Because operas are not generic, their power lies in what is provoked around the particular storyline, characters and emotions, it is necessary therefore to give some thought to the plot, lyrics, and relationships of the Adams' opera.

The opera, as currently structured, opens with two choruses of the “exiled Palestinians” and the “exiled Jews.” (The filmed version, however, made by Penny Woolcock in collaboration with John Adams, opens with the widowed Marilyn Klinghoffer spitting in the face of the man who killed her husband.) Serving as the voice of the crowd or of the people, as operatic choruses often do, the first chorus tells of the catastrophe of 1948, when Jews fleeing the holocaust entered the land – “*my father's house was raised in 1948 when the Israelis passed over our street.*” As the chorus tells the tale, the music gathers pace and the levels of dissonance increase, ending with a raging exclamation that “*our faith will take the stone he broke and break his teeth.*” This is followed by the Jewish chorus, a more subdued love song

about the promised land and a determination never to go through the horrors of the Holocaust again, accompanied in the film version by footage of the Holocaust and scenes of the Jewish newcomers entering the villages from which the local Arabs have fled or been evicted.

Act I

The first act takes up from the point where the hijackers seize the ship and separate the Jewish, American, and British passengers from the rest. A series of arias set out the hopes and fears of the various actors; the ship's captain urges calm and offers a discourse on the solitude of the sea going life, the half-terrified Swiss grandmother first expresses gratitude that "*at least we are not Jews*" and then horror in her own attitude. The first officer claims that they did not resist because they initially thought there were twenty terrorists and they did not want to risk passengers' lives.

At this point, we meet the leader of the terrorists, Molqi, who seeks to project more confidence than he is feeling and claims that there is a bomb in the engine room, but who also wants to stress the justice of their cause claiming that "*we are soldiers fighting a war, not criminals...men of ideals.*" He authorizes the preparation of food while a second Palestinian, Mahmoud, expresses sorrow for the hostages and their excessive love of life – "*we want to die.*" The captain appears to develop a relationship with Mahmoud, as the terrorist sings of his love of popular Arab radio stations, but also of his determination. When the captain suggests that a peaceful solution might be found if the two sides talked, Mahmoud responds that he would rather die than sit down with his enemies. This is all intermingled with the *Sprechstimme*² style singing of a rather unsympathetic character. An Austrian woman has managed to lock herself in the lavatory and is eating carefully divided chocolate, whilst expressing her preference for dying alone. As this is happening, the man the hostages christen "Rambo" torments them with abuse and (in the film version) takes the pins out of grenades, making a few individuals hold onto them with the catches down. As the first act ends, it also has become apparent to the Palestinians that their outside world, that of the PLO and Syria, wants nothing to do with them.

Act 2

Act 2 starts with a chorus telling of the wandering of Hagar and her son Ishmael after their expulsion by Abraham's wife Sarah, the intent perhaps being to show how close the two sides of the conflict really are. As Syria fails to respond, Molqi becomes more agitated and moves the passengers to the upper deck, leaving Klinghoffer on a lower deck where he asks the Palestinians why they have to "*kill innocents?*" and why "*there is so much anger in you? You pour gasoline over women passengers on the bus to Tel-Aviv and burn them alive. You don't give a shit.*" But he picks the wrong terrorist to talk to, and Rambo responds with an anti-Semitic and anti-Western outburst:

² Sprechstimme is a technique halfway between singing and speaking employed by a number of modern composers including Arnold Schoenberg, Alban Berg, and Kurt Weill.

...you are always complaining of your sufferings but wherever poor men are gathered you find Jews getting fat...America is one big Jew...Where English is spoken you will find perversion and all kinds of filth not practiced by stealth late at night but on the street during the day.

At this stage, we get the only moment of light relief as an empty headed cruise entertainer sings “*I must have been hysterical*” and talks of the friendly terrorist Omar who gives them cigarettes and is obviously uncomfortable with Rambo’s brutality. Yet Omar sings almost lyrically of his desire for martyrdom, and Adams suggests that this aria should “feel like a truck loaded with TNT driving straight into a Marines’ barracks” (Adams, 1992).

Politics as the Backdrop to Individual Tragedy

As the story unfolds, we hear Marilyn Klinghoffer telling how she copes with her own painful cancer, and how Leon has coped with paralysis, as she tries to convince herself that he has been taken to the ship’s infirmary. But as the music builds, Leon is murdered and tipped into the sea to the accompaniment of the “aria of the falling body.” Molqi reappears to say “*American kaput*,” while Mahmoud warns that another person will be shot every fifteen minutes. The captain warns them that by killing they have lost any sympathy the outside world might have for their cause, but Molqi simply tells him to report that they have killed another passenger, a woman. In fact, this is not true and the opera simply fades away as the four men surrender to the Egyptian authorities and the captain takes Marilyn aside to tell her of Leon’s death. She responds with haughty resentment, attacking the captain for having embraced the men who killed her husband, and also attacking the wider world for not caring about the fate of an individual, and not any individual, but the particular individual with whom she had shared her life. And so the opera, built around a public event, ends with the focus on private tragedy.

Opera as Reflection

Klinghoffer is an unusual opera in many ways, especially in dealing with very contemporary events rather than with the actions of historic rulers or mythical figures. Indeed, many have questioned whether it is an opera at all. Librettist Alice Goodman, for example, prefers to speak of it as a “secular oratorio.” Along with Adams, she sees it in the tradition of the Bach Passions, “with a series of alternating choruses and solo arias in which events are described and reflected on rather than enacted” (Christiansen, 2003, p.44). Here the captain plays a role equivalent to that of the Evangelist in Bach’s works, offering a perspective on the unfolding tragedy (Christiansen, 2003). This is indeed the most obvious parallel to Bach. However, having the characters simply reflect on events does not work for the filmed version, where images of individuals and events are reinforced by close ups and individual characterizations which make them more or less sympathetic, and where the key events are enacted, not just described.

Yet it is less the musical style of Adams – which evokes a mixed response from listeners – than the content which strikes the listener or viewer as profound. Several themes stand out: the emphasis on the suffering of both peoples, the characterization and humanization of the terrorists which creates individuals rather than types while abstaining from moral judgment, and, perhaps less remarked on by the critics because of its non-political aspect, the tender and caring relationship of the Klinghoffers.

From the outset, an attempt is made to establish that there is suffering on both sides, with the opening choruses of exiled Palestinians and exiled Jews in the recorded version lasting for exactly the same length of time (8 minutes and 33 seconds). Yet, because the focus is on the hijackers and their motives, perhaps inevitably the dominant emphasis is therefore on the suffering of the Palestinians. Indeed, the original version did not have the matching choruses, but instead a paired set of choruses contrasting the suffering Palestinians with the rather comfortable home life of the Klinghoffers back in America as they discuss their forthcoming cruise with friends. As the scene is set, the message seems to be that although the Holocaust explains why a Jewish homeland had to be found, this should not have required that others lose their homes. According to Adams, the opera is

not only about a brief, violent incident from the recent news. It is about religious and social intolerance, about a struggle over land that is as old a story as the first pages of written history, and how the elderly and infirm cope with disease and dying (Adams, Nov. 18, 2004).

It is in this context that Adams wants to explore the actions of the Palestinians who seized the *Achille Lauro*.

Terrorism is evil and everyone who experiences it suffers immeasurably. But there are reasons why a terrorist behaves the way he or she does, and we would be foolish and self-deluding not to question why... We look into the minds and souls of the Palestinians and see what might have driven them to produce a generation of young men easily willing to give up their lives to make their grievances known (Adams, Nov. 18, 2004).

The Terrorists: Should Opera Judge?

In an attempt to accomplish his vision, Adams presents the terrorists as individuals, with differing characteristics despite their common commitment to a single cause. In the film version, Molqi, their leader, is less certain than he appears and is partially driven to kill Klinghoffer by a desire to exhibit strength. Rambo is bitter and anti-Semitic, inspired by a hatred of both the West and Jews. His feelings come in part from experiences, but perhaps more centrally from the mythology about these *others* that have been fed to him from a very young age. Mahmoud is more sensitive and willing to engage with the captain at a human level – but the death of his family in the camps of Sabra and Chatila has embittered him and leaves him unable to envisage any compromise with his enemies. The young Omar comes

across as almost mystical and doubtful about what he and his colleagues are doing – hence the film’s depiction of him in later life as having joined the fundamentalist camp.

All the terrorists are painted as human beings who have suffered and who are responding in what seems to be the only way they know how. As Mahmoud notes, they have been brought up with guns as toys and in context where violence is a way of life. Of course, these are artistic depictions, with no relationship to the character of the real world figures, but the key thing is that their ideas and views are simply presented rather than judged by Adams and Goodman – a stance that provoked outrage from several critics.

The Captain as the Mediator of Suffering

The other compelling aspect of the opera is the way in which the humanity of some of the other characters is presented, although occasionally they veer into stereotypes. The captain plays a key role as both commentator and intermediary between the worlds of the hostages and their captors, seeking to avoid provoking the terrorists and simultaneously to prevent them killing. In particular, he seems capable of engaging with Mahmoud, of sympathizing with his suffering while rejecting his solution. At the very end of the opera, however, Marilyn Klinghoffer, perhaps foreshadowing Adams’ critics, attacks the captain for embracing the terrorists and treating as human the men who have brutally murdered her husband. For Adams the opera

...treats the murder of Leon Klinghoffer as the tragic event it was. In that sense, I saw him very much as a sacrificial victim and his murder was not all that different from the crucifixion that is at the heart of the Bach Passions. Both Jesus and Leon Klinghoffer were killed because they represented something that was suspect and hated (Nov. 18 2004).

The Reaction

From the outset, *The Death of Klinghoffer* proved controversial. It premiered in Brussels during the first Gulf War, and the police feared the opening night might be subject to a bomb attack. While there was a very muted critical response, with some finding the opera rather dull after *Nixon in China*, there was growing criticism by Jewish communities on both sides of the Atlantic, reinforced by an attack from one of Klinghoffer’s daughters. In particular, it was charged that Klinghoffer was presented unsympathetically as a vulgar Jewish bourgeois, while the Palestinian case was forcefully and one-sidedly presented by the libretto (Christiansen, 2003, p. 46). This criticism was complicated further by the fact that librettist Alice Goodman was in the process of converting from Judaism to Christianity and would later be ordained as an Anglican priest. For many critics the opera was “naïve” and “politically incorrect” (Earbox, Nov. 18, 2004), and Samuel Lipmann writing in *Commentary* argued that:

Where Klinghoffer is concerned the pretense of not taking sides, of “even-handedness,” is just that – a pretense. For in treating the murder of

Klinghoffer as a ‘death’, and in viewing the incident through the lens of moral equivalence, the opera for all practical purposes endorses the claims of the Palestinian assassins (in Teachout).

Following a handful of performances in San Francisco, both the Los Angeles and Glyndebourne opera houses backed down from proposed productions of the opera and over the next ten years the music of the opera was mostly heard in the context of concert performances of the choruses and of selected arias.

A revised and shortened film version of the opera was being made for Channel 4 in Britain when news of the 11th September attacks came through. Adams’ first reaction was to cancel the production, but a decision was made to continue, with participants suggesting that it was now even more important to explore why people adopted such extreme measures in pursuit of their cause. Nonetheless, it quickly became apparent that the work retained the power to evoke strong emotions, and the Boston Symphony Orchestra decided to drop a concert performance shortly after the attack on the World Trade Centre. Although Adams attacked this decision as censorship, the Orchestra felt that it was not the best time, especially as a member of their chorus had lost her husband in the attack – an example perhaps of the complexity of political events as they intersect the suffering in individual lives.

Post 9/11 America was clearly not the right time to explore why terrorists do what they do, and distinguished musicologist Richard Taruskin led the charge against the Adams, denigrating the opera and suggesting that artistic freedom always has limits. Writing in the *New York Times* at the end of 2001, Taruskin seemed to foreshadow the ideology of the Bush Administration’s War on Terror, suggesting that *Klinghoffer* traded:

...in the tritest undergraduate fantasies...if terrorism is to be defeated...the only way to do that is to focus resolutely on the acts rather than their claimed (or conjectured) motivations, and to characterize all such acts, whatever their motivation, as crimes. This means no longer romanticizing terrorists as Robin Hoods and no longer idealizing their deeds as rough poetic justice (Dec.9 2001).

Taruskin noted that the first version of the opera, with its contrast of exiled Palestinians and bourgeois Jewish home life, set up “the vastly unequal terms on which the conflict of Palestinians and Jews would be perceived throughout the opera.” Responding to Adams’ comment that European audiences never had a problem with the opera, Taruskin suggested this was because the 1991 version “catered to so many of their favorite prejudices – anti-American, anti-Semitic and anti-bourgeois.” Leaving aside the libretto, Taruskin went on to claim that even the music was problematic and that the Bach Passions comparison was deeply problematic, for in Bach’s works the words of Jesus are accompanied by “an aureole of violins and violas that set him off as numinous” but, he says, in Klinghoffer the numinous and timeless tones accompany virtually all the utterances of the choral Palestinians or the terrorists, beginning with the opening chorus.

Why should we want to hear this now? What is called for is self-control. That is what the Boston Symphony Orchestra laudably exercised...There is no need to torment people stunned by previously unimaginable horrors with offensive "challenges" like "*The Death of Klinghoffer*"...Censorship is always deplorable, but the exercise of forbearance can be noble (Taruskin, 2001).

For Adams, the response of both the Boston Symphony Orchestra and Taruskin was simply unacceptable. He rejected the notion that "audiences only want comfort and familiarity during these difficult times" and likened Taruskin's attack to being bombed by a B-52 (Guardian, Nov. 18, 2004). For Adams, the position adopted by Taruskin and what he perceived to be the policy of the Bush Administration – that you could combat evil without understanding its causes – was simply inadequate.

Not long ago our attorney general John Ashcroft said that anyone who questioned his policies on civil rights after September 11th was aiding terrorists; what Taruskin said was the aesthetic version of that. The goal of a terrorist is to disrupt and destroy the internal fabric of a society. The real fabric of American society is not all those flags you see on people's cars...it's in the Bill of Rights and in our constitutional form government. To stifle conversation or dialogue is exactly the response a terrorist would dream of (Adams, Earbox, Nov. 18, 2004).

Some supporters of Adams tended to see Taruskin as proposing a new McCarthyism where self-censorship and state policing of the arts became more acceptable. The incident was similar to when Aaron Copeland's "Lincoln Portrait" was withdrawn from the National Symphony program in 1953 after Senator Busbey attacked the composer's leftist leanings. (Pollack, 1999, p. 452).

***Transmigration* as "Memory Space"**

Given the controversy surrounding *Klinghoffer*, it was perhaps surprising that the New York Philharmonic invited Adams to produce a response to the events of 11th September, 2001. Although, to avoid giving offence, they invited a group of 9/11 widows to comment on the propriety of the work before the first performance. The response to the piece was mixed, with critics divided as to its musical quality and some finding it difficult to separate a judgment from their emotional response to the event being commemorated.

The Transmigration of Souls is written for chorus and orchestra, while a tape provides the noise of the city, along with texts taken from the homemade signs left at Ground Zero (sung mostly by a children's choir) and from mobile phone conversations from one of the doomed planes (sung by the adult choir) (Adams, 2004). Adams describes the work in terms of "its transcendental sense of humanity... a kind of American version of what Schiller is getting at

in the ‘Ode to Joy.’” The first performance shared the billing with Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony.

For Adams, the aim was to create the sensation one has on “going into a large, old cathedral where the listener is alone with their thoughts in a sanctified place” (Stearns, 2002, p. 8). This is very definitely not a requiem, but what Adams calls a “memory space...where the listener sits for half an hour in the company of the dead and experiences a sense of something other worldly” (Conrad, 2004). The piece opens with street sounds, while a young boy repeats the word “*missing*.” The orchestra and chorus join him. Gradually they articulate words and phrases that emerge as “*remember*” and “*you will never be forgotten*.” In this opening section, the words and music float slightly disconnected from each other as individuals try to deal with the immensity of what is happening to them. The children’s chorus picks up the voices from the doomed flight – “*I see water and buildings*” – and refers to little things about the individuals – “*a silver ring...his middle finger... his two front teeth.*” The names of some of the missing are repeated, their dates of birth, the color of their hair, with plaintive calls to “*come home.*” Then the orchestra blurts out a series of anguished chords before the voices return to articulate the grief, the fear, and the impossible hope for a miracle and survival. After a period in which names and cries of despair or hope are recited, the orchestra rises to a crescendo with the choruses singing out “*love*” and “*light*” very loudly, as if in an effort to convince themselves that something good can come out of the tragedy, that the horror can be overcome or transformed. Then the music subsides, more names are read out, and we return to the sounds of the street.

Overall, *Transmigration* is a restrained work that does not engage with the rhetoric of post-9/11 public discourse in America. Indeed, it does not mention the word America or offer any judgment on the event at all. In many respects this ambiguity was the problem for some critics, who saw it as another example of Adams’ unwillingness to offer moral judgment on terrorism or his alleged assumption of moral equivalence in *Klinghoffer*. Thus *Commentary*’s music critic Terry Teachout asked how the orchestra could have come to choose “the composer of so morally obtuse an opera” to write a piece in memory of the victims of 9/11. Accusing Adams of borrowing effects from better composers, Teachout blames the failure of the piece on the “inherent limitations of Adam’s musical language,” but his real problem is political, because the work is ethically neutral (Adams, 2002). Yet perhaps it is also because Teachout sits on the other side of the American political fence from Adams. As suggested above, making a judgment on this work is difficult for all sorts of reasons, but the key point is that the music engages with a political event but, because of its focus on creating a “memory space” for those who grieve, offers no substantive response to that event – unless, as the critics suggest, the very absence of comment does indeed convey a political message.

Social Healing as Public Dialogue or Musical Context?

At one level, the controversy surrounding Adams’ work represents little more than a storm in an East Coast teacup. Opera by and large remains an elite pre-occupation. Sitting through *The*

Death of Klinghoffer is probably not going to change the mind of those with strong views on the Middle East conflict. Moreover, despite engaging political subjects, Adams remains skeptical about the value of political art:

I don't think art has much power to effect political change. I think if you really want to change the world, feed the starving, stop war, and promote equality among people, you are better off using your energies doing social work (Earbox, Nov 18, 2004).

Here he agrees with his collaborator Peter Sellars who believes that art plays only a marginal role in bringing about social change.

I think if it (music) does (change society), it's only in a very abstract spiritual sense. I am not convinced that Beethoven's Ninth has saved lives. Let's not forget that the Nazis listened to it all during the years of the Third Reich. I am tempted to think that the case for the moral power of art is often confused with noble sentiments, with preaching to the converted. And I don't like preaching...what I don't like is art that scolds the public by taking the side of the oppressed. That's a quality in Brecht, for example, that I often find very suspect (Earbox, 2004).

In certain respects, the critics are right. Just as appeals to keep politics out of music tend to come from conservative thinkers unwilling to recognize that music emerges in specific social and political contexts that help to shape the music's construction and reproduction (Norris, 1989, p. 7), Adams' seeming "ethical neutrality" does in fact take sides. While he condemns the means used by the terrorists, he does suggest that they might have a just cause or at least genuine grievances. In *Klinghoffer*, two of the Palestinians are presented sympathetically. Equally, there are scenes in the filmed version that seem to compare Israeli police actions to those of the Nazis in Central Europe, and thus the film reinforces the extremely negative portrayal of the Jews that is common in much of the Muslim world.

This returns us to the issues of context raised at the beginning of this article. *Klinghoffer* is a work written in a context where the balance of opinion tends to be pro-Israeli. The composer and librettist could be seen as attempting to influence debate in the United States, to push for a more balanced approach to the Middle East conflict, one perhaps closer to the European position. While not necessarily anti-American or anti-Semitic, a European view tends to treat the Palestinian cause (if not always the violent methods of struggle) more sympathetically.

Having said that, it is worth noting that context continues to matter, as was evident in the 2005 Edinburgh Festival production of the opera which followed soon after the 7th July London bombings. Perhaps as a consequence, the production gave a somewhat less sympathetic portrayal of the Palestinians than was apparent in the Woolcock film.

Opera as a Vehicle of the State

As Adams says, it is doubtful that music has the direct capacity to affect political change, although of all musical forms opera, which brings together words, music and emotion, has perhaps the best chance of affecting our understandings of the complexity of current events. Whatever the composer's intent, for example, Nabucco's "*Va piensiero*" voiced the cry for justice of the Hebrew slaves. Verdi's Italian audiences responded fully conscious of which people needed justice more immediately. In the nineteenth century, opera could often make a significant contribution to political developments because of its role in a nation-building process where the educated middle classes were central. Here the operas of Verdi, Glinka, Mussorgsky, Smetana, Wagner and others could contribute to "imagining the nation." Through the use of vernacular languages, the retelling of national histories, and the definition of "us" and "them," opera served to create new national mythologies that would shape the thinking of active political constituencies.

Sometimes the message was more or less directly liberationist, as in Verdi's operas of the 1840s which repeatedly returned to the theme of foreign oppression, albeit set in historical contexts that would not offend the censor. In Russia, the role of opera was more ambiguous, as in the case of Glinka's *A Life for the Tsar* (1836), which for the first time turned the ordinary people into the key protagonists - but at the same time promoted an official state centered ideology in which their lives only gained meaning through service to the monarchy. Mussorgsky's *Boris Godunov* (1872) also retold Russian history and, like Glinka, he creates cardboard villains in the form of the Jesuit dominated Polish army. His depiction, however, of the Russian people is often less than heroic. The opera starts and ends with the people, but they are less a united community than an anarchic mob, one easily swayed by the last person who speaks. Yet central here is the notion of the people as political participants, not simply the loyal subjects of Glinka's earlier work. What is important to both works is the combination of human tragedy and political debate. *Boris Godunov*, a Macbeth-like flawed monarch, struggles with his own inner demons within the context of the role of the people in forming a new political order.

Opera could successfully make a political contribution in the late nineteenth century because the political constituency was relatively small and, from a variety of perspectives, engaged in one specific political project – nation building. Modern opera lacks that potential. Its audience is a much smaller part of a wider political constituency that is influenced by a greater variety of media. Modern opera composers generally have less effect – as Adams has pointed out. Milan virtually closed down for Verdi's funeral. Thanks to changes in society and the nature of modern audiences, such reverence is not likely for a modern composer.

Klinghoffer is an overwhelmingly somber opera, presenting real life tragedy but without songs that will send the audiences out singing a "catchy tune." In many respects the stage, and even the film, version has the impact of a documentary. We watch, we listen (perhaps appreciatively of Adams' musical gifts), we are moved, and we respond intellectually as we debate the emerging artistic and real-life tragedy, but then we move on. *Transmigration* has

much the same effect, though here it is unclear whether it is the music or the memory of the event that moves us, and in many ways this is a consciously a-political work more concerned with the fate of those left behind.

In the contemporary world, opera has to compete with popular music with its much larger audience, and several authors have discussed the ways in which American bands responded to the 9/11 tragedy, developing both “patriotic” and “critical” perspectives that have a much greater impact upon public opinion than opera (Healey, 2006). Realistically opera cannot hope to make a contribution comparable to these bands, let alone one on par with the visual images that predominate in contemporary culture. Both documentary film-maker Michael Moore and John Adams, for example, are asking us to reflect on the subject of terrorism and political responses to terrorism, but there is little doubt which has been the more influential of the two, although both have been controversial. Thus, while Adams clearly is engaging with a political theme, with the impact of terrorism on both individuals and communities, in *Klinghoffer* he has not written a work that will change many minds – though it may reinforce the liberal *imaginaire* because, unlike Verdi, his domestic community is not the one most affected by the injustices he portrays and therefore the impact must always be second hand.

In the post-9/11 political atmosphere, when the community had experienced terrorism for itself, an opera that appears to humanize terrorists would appear to have even less chance of influencing public debate. Whether it should, is another matter. Whether there are other purposes to music that the opera expresses – those that may influence the creation of more reflective civic space – is somewhat overshadowed as well by how political Adams’ play became, whatever his purposes.

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Beyond the Fife and Drum: Northern Protestant Working Class Cultures

Paul Burgess

Working Class Protestant Identity: Music as an Expression of a Complex Phenomena

This paper promotes the view that identity in Northern Ireland - while perhaps primarily fashioned in some respects by ethnicity – pivotally carries the undeniable impression of class sentiment and lived experience in class terms. It is therefore the peculiar nature of this articulation between class and ethnicity in this society that bedevils policy initiatives and impedes progress toward a shared solution (which must ultimately take the form of a political agreement).

Ruane and Todd (1991) have noted that existing interpretations have consistently located the origins of conflict in purely cultural terms. This interpretation then seeks to offer resolutions in cultural terms through "education, exhortation, and the reconciliation of traditions" (p. 28). As can be evidenced (Burgess, 2004), the cultural panacea has proved attractive to a broad range of actors, from academics to politicians and policy makers. This has often been represented as the belief that the promotion of cultural pluralism in a sectarian environment offers the most direct form of intervention. This analysis has been supported by British public opinion, informed as it is by the popular media who have promoted a wholly subjective rendering of the situation which represents "the inevitable descent into atavism of a politically infantile people prone to religious fanaticism (Coulter, 1995)." However, what may seem to many an essentially ethno-religious conflict, in fact equally draws on the material foundations of sectarianism that can be located in class and socio-economic experience. Expressions of Working Class Protestant cultural identity rarely, however, escape the limitations and misrepresentations of triumphalism. The author therefore seeks to compliment aspects of this paper with reference to his songs as written and performed by his band *Ruefrex*¹. This collection of songs aims to address the lack of contemporary musical representation in the

¹ See *Editor's Note* on the author at the end of the article.

area of Protestant cultural traditions and identity, through words and music. The soundtrack – which is musically and lyrically relevant to the Protestant experience in Northern Ireland – additionally holds relevance for all who have lived with and through The Troubles and their legacy.

Diversity within the Cultural Monolith

In the introduction to Rory Fitzpatrick's *God's Frontiersmen: the Scots-Irish Epic*, the author establishes his intention to explode the myth of a monolithic Ulster Protestant community. His assertion is that this over-simplistic caricature portrays the community in question:

...as if they were destitute of features, emotions or even intelligent life, without existence in time, a monolithic whose only purpose is to be the granite against which the national aspirations of an Irish people are dashed.
(Fitzpatrick, 1989, p.1).

A challenge to this crude stereotyping also informs the central premise of this paper, so it is perhaps appropriate here to consider some of the sources of and reasons for these caricatures.

Firstly, we would do well to consider the role the media have played in representing “The Troubles”² and the simplistic categorization of the main protagonists in the conflict. Distance, unfamiliarity, and a need to reach a large audience in a rapid and accessible way have all contributed to the re-enforcement of collective stereotypes. The role of the Arts and popular culture in the Troubles should not be underestimated as a factor in determining monolithic misconceptions. Cinema representation and theatrical performance often reduce the depiction of this community to its lowest common denominator.

If we speculate for a moment on the experience of the Protestant community over the past twenty years, we begin to recognize a frustration born of negative self image and limited cultural expression. The debate has been raging for some time now, concerning the credibility of the Protestant community’s claim to a valid artistic expression. There exists a most negative analysis – enjoying recent popularity – which posits the comparison of this community to that of white South Africa. The argument, over-simplified, goes that no morally bankrupt state can ever produce work of great or enduring artistic merit.

This remains a particularly dangerous and damaging impediment to Protestant cultural expression and identity. The situation is exacerbated by the limitations of cultural definition and classification by those institutions charged with promoting and celebrating cultural and artistic talent. Once again their agenda is informed by cliché, and their value system, essentially middle-class and out of touch. The up-shot of this ensures that expressions of Protestant cultural

² “The Troubles” refers to the period of violent conflict in Northern Ireland beginning with the Civil Rights marches in the late 1960s through the 1998 Good Friday Agreement. During the Troubles, more than 3,000 were killed, most of them civilians.

identity, particularly among the working class, remain founded in historical or triumphalist dogma.

What Is Protestant Culture?

Interestingly, in a recent series of residential focus groups held with working class Protestant communities from Northern Ireland, a plenary session invited each participant to offer one word in response to the question “*What is Protestant culture?*” Answers are listed below.

Heritage	Where we come from &
12 th of July	why we are called Protestants in the first place
Don't know	Flags and emblems
Traditions	Identify with your community
British	Birthright
Anything Protestant	Bands and parades
Music	Bible
Things I have in common with people I identify with.	World War I and II
The need to have a common cause & fight against something	Whatever I want to be
Something you know when you are knee high.	I don't think there is one – or not that I can identify with
Hard working	Changing
Faith	Faith and community
	Protesters
	Standing up for what is right despite the cost
	Being who am I not what you tell me I should be
	Excellence, brainpower, standards of decency, doing what is right.

(“Norn Buzz” Residential, Boyne Valley Hotel Drogheda, Ireland. Focus Group facilitated by Community Dialogue. 19-20th November, 2005.)

In the world of academia and research, it can also be noted that ethnic studies concerning global social groupings tend toward analysis in terms of monolithic blocks, where in reality little or no shared cohesion actually exists. And those who seek to comprehend the Northern Irish conflict with recourse to established political or social theories, reduce a myriad of complexities to the apparent certainties of an Irish nationalist, Marxist, supremacist or integrationist analysis. To effectively do this, proponents of whatever established coda begin by anchoring their analysis firmly within the *two traditions* model. The vagaries and apparent contradictions of the Ulster Protestant community do not fit easily into accepted theoretical prescriptions, and this has led to a frustration for traditionalists who may sometimes over-simplistically represent facts in order to fit theories. Perhaps more dangerously, in the face of this futility, the integrity or legitimacy of the Protestant case fails to be granted its fullest and fairest representation in the political scheme of things.

The Wild Colonial Boy

Well I'm the Emerald Isle's own son,
I was born on stateside, Wisconsin.
And your troubles sound like Hollywood,
they sound real good to me.

The rush to be Irish now is on,
the queue is standing ten miles long,
and would-be green men stand in line,
to swap their stories tall.

Well I have traced my past right back,
I've even checked and double checked,
and I'm as sure as ever now that I'm a leprechaun.

And I know that if I get my chance,
that I can jig, and reel, and dance,
cuz in between the killing that's what all us Irish do.

AND NOW A WORD FROM OUR SPONSOR

*"Eat up all our TV dinner,
open up your wallet wide,
and let your green be seen."*

A people cannot live that way,
or so the songs and leaflets say,
and all this time we're trying hard,
to keep the niggers³ down.

What with collection time and all,
with charities, functions and balls,
it really gives me such a thrill,
to kill from far away."
(Burgess, 1985)

Weber (1978) has argued that the basis for meaning in society revolves around the individual's need to understand the world and his or her place in it as a meaningful construction. Subjective perceptions of this world order and attitudes about actions are

³ The use here of what would normally and rightly be adjudged an unacceptable term, is deliberate. Artistic license permits that the opinions and language used here are presented in the first person, i.e., those of a hypocritical and voyeuristic "armchair terrorist." The device is commonly used, most notably in Randy Newman's "Redneck" and "Christmas in Cape town."

derived from referral to collectively constructed symbolic systems or structures. Weber realized that perhaps the most important form of symbolic structure resided in religious representations. In doing so, he observes that the central tenets of this are salvation, redemption, and prophecy. Religion remains an important social support for communities as it offers an alternative rationale (albeit one based on faith) for the apparent senselessness and chaos of human existence. Therefore, the symbolic expression of concrete aspirations will often take religious form (particularly in fundamentalist societies or those where church and state are closely related), despite changing, innovative social systems.

Despite this however, many cultural theorists (Swidler, 1986; Wuthnow, 1987), have rejected the central importance of *meaning* in cultural analysis. Swidler arguing that culture be seen as “a tool kit of symbols, stories, rituals and world views, which people may use in varying configurations to solve different sets of problems.” This analysis, however, denies the collectively constructed meaning system as catalyst in incidence of concrete social action. If we lose the importance of symbolic structures in relation to actual events, we also fail to understand why communities embrace meaning systems that are centrally informed by symbol and ritual.

There has been some interesting work carried out by Clare Mitchell, University of Dublin, in this area. Her article “*Protestant Identification and Political Change in Northern Ireland*” (2003) demonstrates the responsiveness of national and religious identifications to political change among Protestants in Northern Ireland. It begins by theorizing identification as a process of working out our ideas of self, others and place. Subsequently, it proceeds to outline how the recent Good Friday Agreement (1998) has changed the political landscape from the perspective of a variety of Protestants. Then, based on a narrative analysis of interview data collected in 2000, the article maps the main directions of change. Three responses are highlighted, as people come to accept, reject, or ignore political developments after the Agreement, and their differing relationships with British national and Protestant religious identifications.

White Church, Black Mountain

I was born at the crossing of the white church
In the shadow of the black mountain
Where the walls bleed broken bottles
And the barbed-wire binds the fountain.
I grew up with the promise of the chosen
Shouldered the banners of the certain
Was cut down by the falseness of prophets
Abandoned by the truth everlasting.
Laughed in the faces of the fallen
Was banished to the valley of not knowing
Mad dogs, King Rats, Butchers
Sheebeens of wickedness and of self-loathing.

I was born at the crossing of the white church
In the shadow of the black mountain
Where the wild things burn their young
And the sparks rise up to heaven.⁴

Bell (1985; 1987; 1990) has published widely on the forms of Protestant/Unionist Loyalist identity in Northern Ireland. He has noted the distinction between the Orange marching bands (particularly the so-called "Kick-the Pope" bands), the Orange Order and variations within that organization (the more authoritarian and socially elite "Black"). He contends that the often hostile and certainly triumphalist forms of ethno-religious culture expression here are actually informed by social class factors. The inflexible gender bias of these institutions can be seen as advancing aspects of working class male culture, as can the displays of symbolic aggression and the heavily emphasized territoriality demarcating ethno-religious boundaries. Therefore Protestant/Loyalist cultural expression, says Bell, manages at one and the same time to be both sectarian yet specifically working class in idiom. Therefore, while social class may be shown as representing an ontological reality in cultural form, there are, of course, other factors acting upon community identity in Northern Ireland. Class culture and ethnicity inter-relate to produce distinctive forms of community allegiance. What is certainly clear in this context is that the juxtaposition of class and ethnicity is a false one.

Days of Heaven (Rites of Passage, Shankill Road, 1969)

A burned out pub, a playground for the bored,
a Cyclops skylight offers sanctuary.
A boy peeps through the corrugated iron,
from the safety of his world within a world.
Far away from sirens in his shell,
days of heaven, nights of hell.

Little fortresses of common love,
footballs burst on glass-topped backyard walls.
"Johnny 7," "Hunts" and "Hide 'n Go."
"Best prices paid for copper and for lead."
But with darkness the stones and rubble fell,
days of heaven, nights of hell.

A generation built from red-bricked streets
all proud, and hard, and honorable men.
One same purpose, that of right and wrong,
family and jobs their main concern.

⁴ Shankill ('Old Church') was otherwise formally "the white church of the crossing" (ecclesia alba de vado).

Another side the newsmen seldom tell,
days of heaven, nights of hell. (Burgess, 1998)

So perhaps it is the Protestant/ Loyalist/ Unionist communities of the North, who continue to feel this negative, over-simplified cultural and political stereotyping most acutely. Throughout the duration of the present conflict in Northern Ireland, the world has been repeatedly given a one-dimensional image of this culture, which does little to reflect the diversity of opinion and aspiration within the Protestant communities.

Protestant cultural traditions and identity have floundered on a network of paradoxes and contradictions. A confusion of loyalties founded on issues such as the Presbyterian involvement in the United Irishman Movement, to threats of insurrection against the British in order to stay British. Political and community leaders often underplay these complexities. Deprived of easy access to their birthright of a traditionalist Celtic culture (witness the rise of Celtic images and themes in wall murals) – which now seems the sole domain of Nationalists – victory, betrayal, guilt and fear are often portrayed as the Protestant identity's strongest themes.

Playing Cards with Dead Men

The Church of Ireland Primate, Archbishop Robin Eames, has said he is gravely concerned about the peace process in the North. He was very concerned that the removal of alienation on the part of one section of the community there was being done "at the terrible expense of alienating another." Speaking to reporters during the Church of Ireland General Synod in Dublin, he referred to Dr. John Reid's description of Northern Ireland as "a cold place for Protestants."

Many Protestants believed this to be true, including clergy with whom he had discussed it, he said. That was the perception, and in Northern Ireland perception quickly became reality.

To keep us down in days gone by
you played the orange card,
and European fields of war, like sheep,
we'd rush to guard.

Six county men have looked to you
in past and present strife,
six county men again have found
you're betting with their life.

*"And you're playing cards with deadmen
but you're losing every hand,
you cheat my people past and present,*

we'll live and die upon this land."

You've used our home, a testing ground
for ballot box and gun,
you've raised our wages, bought our souls,
we're learning one by one.

You've dealt us all the Erin deal
now come and count the cost,
you've gambled with democracy,
you've gambled and you've lost.

*"And you're playing cards with deadmen
but you're losing every hand,
you cheat my people past and present,
we'll live and die upon this land."*

(Burgess, 1998)

This overwhelming feeling of futility and insignificance was tellingly emphasized in the aforementioned recent series of residential focus groups held with Protestant communities.

A Republican had the following image of the peace process: "*Unionists are running away, Republicans are biting at their heels, Republicans don't know where the process is going but wherever it is will be good for Republicans.*" Protestants are a marching culture. Republicans can hit your buttons and get you marching in a direction that suits them. How can you focus on your own agenda instead, not on that of Republicans? They have moved on and you don't figure in their agenda. They don't give you a second thought. They don't need to. They get all their concessions from the British government. Should you consider what lies within your power to change rather than focusing on them? ("Norn Buzz," 2005).

The Ulster Protestant culture has much that it can rightly take pride in, through a heritage which easily slips the shackles of these limiting and negative representations, which so many seem so readily willing to accept. However, influential policy making bodies in Northern Ireland often appear to have a vested interest in the oversimplification of cultural identification. Maurice Hayes, former Chairperson of The Cultural Traditions Group, describes Cultural Identity as

...the set of values which define a community, which is an amalgam of shared historical experience, attitudes to each other and to intruders, political and economic structures, religion, folk-lore, and ethnicity (Hayes, 1990).

The Way Forward: Understanding the Duality or Recognizing the Complexity?

Rather than seeking to promote an understanding of Protestant or Catholic reality, it is important to speculate how the practice of difference might be used in developing any kind of reality of co-operation and co-ordination. Rather than providing new predicates for Protestants, say that Protestants are one thing or another, the complexity described above makes it more difficult to generalize about them. However, in that openness there are new paths through which to reach out and communicate.

One of the most notable tendencies of modern politics has been the re-enforcement of oversimplistic, binary interpretations of government and its opposition. Political opponents become governments in waiting and when in power, this situation is reversed with the outgoing government swapping oppositional roles. Therefore, issues can become polarized in oversimplistic form, with the general public encouraged to fall into one or other of these binary camps which represent an agreed line on the issues of the day.

Such binary opposition has some historical precedents – most famously of all in the greens and blues of ancient Byzantium – but by and large in the past such divisions have been associated with civil war and temporary schism, lasting only until one side achieved undisputed hegemony. What is peculiar about the modern system is that a binary system is institutionalized not only in forms of parliamentary life but also in the media that structure reporting and argument into binary forms (Mulgan, 1995).

This approach to politics represents then antithesis of those modernist philosophies that forged traditional political thought. The actual political process becomes less relevant to the electorate, with an associated cynicism and lack of confidence that renders participation unattractive. The political process in effect becomes incapable of objectively criticizing the very system of which it is a part.

Cultural Change – More Representative of Citizens than Politics

Changes of culture and social behavior are now as likely to express or reflect the wishes of the populace as political representation. The passing of laws and the appeal to sovereignty are rendered obsolete and impotent – more reactive than proactive – in the face of cultural change. Formal politics is by-passed by an increasing number of citizens. One is reminded of Ulrich Beck's enigmatic observation that "political modernization disempowers and unbinds politics and politicizes society" (1992). What then fills this vacuum? Appeals to religion, ethnicity, culture, ritual, and symbolism now appear to be the order of the day. And, as I have argued, the refusal of policy makers to engage with the political realities of Northern Ireland (be they in terms of the constitutional question or socio-economic inequalities) facilitates a flawed analysis of the conflict. Despite efforts by the Northern Ireland Office to move the citizens of

Northern Ireland away from political interpretations and toward cultural/ethno-religious solutions, this analysis still remains contrary to that perceived by the major protagonists. It nonetheless continues to (mis)-inform cultural expression and community identity initiatives.

Sectarianism in Northern Ireland is endemic, all pervasive, and knows no class boundaries. However, it remains a statistical truism that most sectarian crime has been carried out *on* working class people *by* working class people *in* working class communities. Over forty per cent of all deaths in the Troubles have occurred in West or North Belfast. Areas of greatest socio-economic deprivation correspond also with the highest proportion of violence. Forty-five per cent of the Province's unemployment and sixty-five per cent of the violence are in these areas.

It is therefore not unreasonable to hope that those engaged or genuinely committed to the process of reconciliation through the promotion of cross-cultural understanding, might review these clearly limiting "tribal" designations and instead focus on those attributes which define communities clearly in terms of a unifying class identity.

The underlying problem will remain the same, finding a political dispensation that can satisfy two separate ethnic communities sharing so little common ground. Thinking Protestants know that change must come, and are ready to argue the case for continuing strong British ties within any all-Ireland power-sharing structures that might evolve from the north-south bodies. But it is true that at present, before the shape of Northern Ireland in the new millennium is clearly defined, too many Protestants and Catholics still believe they can have peace without political sacrifice...If violence can be avoided in the long transition to a new Northern Ireland and some form of class politics eventually replaces the sterility of the unionist-nationalist conflict, the many architects of the peace process will have been fully vindicated. They opened doors that seemed to be permanently barred (White, 2000).

Flowers for All Occasions

The tests had come back positive, it rained all that April day,
They could stay and face the banns or they could leave and run away.
Now her Mother's found the letters, there was nothing more to say.
In a gown one size too big, she swore her youth and life away.

There were flowers for all occasions,
As the bridesmaids gathered 'round,
Confetti, petals, broken dreams lay scattered on the ground.

Midnight snacks became a nuisance, morning sickness came and went,
She worked hard to fix the spare room, he worked hard to pay the rent.
While she labored in the ward, he kept his panic stricken seat,
Sweater pulled on inside out, odd shoes on different feet.

There were flowers for all occasions,
And cigars and smiles and sighs.
He's got his daddy's temper, he's got his mammy's eyes.

The child was not to know his father, who would die one winter's day,
In a dark and stinking alleyway, always the innocent who pay.
And the clergy sang it out, their damnation and their prayers,
And police and politicians blame sectarian affairs.

There were flowers for all occasions,
As they shouldered heavy grief,
Sickly sweetness filled our senses, they had kept the service brief.

There were flowers for all occasions,
Floral tributes to the dead.
Orange lilies, shamrock green,
Bloody scarlet poppy red.
(Burgess, 1982)

An Emerging Identity of Alienation

In the final analysis – and examining the relevant academic literature and media commentary (McCann, 2001; McKay, 2000) – one can detect a shift in the identification of Northern Protestants. Once they were identified, and identified themselves in terms of modernity, triumph, and rationalism; increasingly they are identified and identify themselves in terms of tradition, defeat, and associated emotions such as confusion, alienation, fatalism, resentment, fear and cognates such as anxiety and paranoia. More than one author has claimed to detect self-pity and a predilection for victim hood:

It is important to state very clearly that my suggestion that defeatism may be symptomatic of attempts to develop a protestant collective identity is not to deny that it has a basis in reality. The stories of the “forgotten victims” who took part in the “Long March” are harrowing. Moreover, recognizing that Northern Protestant supremacism had a material basis also entails a sequel that some of the authors whose work I have reviewed seem reluctant to concede; i.e., that emergent defeatist identifications amongst northern protestants also have a material basis in the collapse of heavy industry, in the break-down of neighborhoods and in constitutional, political and legal reforms implemented in Northern Ireland in the last thirty years (Finlay, 2001).

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<http://www.ruefrex.force9.co.uk/>

*All Poems / Lyrics Copyright Paul Burgess / Ruefrex

Paul Burgess is drummer/songwriter for the group that won international recognition for its songs written during the sectarian Troubles in Northern Ireland. The band was determined to break sectarian molds, playing both Protestant and Catholic ghettos in Belfast's working class districts – both the Shankill Road and Turf Lodge. They were featured in the BBC Northern Ireland documentary “Cross the Line,” which aired in July 1980. *The Wild Colonial Boy*, written by Paul Burgess, was critical of the IRA. The song helped bring the band fame and an international presence, but it also set them in the center of controversy. Their music and the political history of the band can be accessed at <http://www.ruefrex.force9.co.uk/>

The Politics of Aesthetics

Andrew M. Blasko

Editor's note:

Andrew Blasko's paper is not strictly about music. It was invited because it is a new and thoughtful discussion of an old dilemma – what is the relationship between government and the Arts? Not everyone agrees that music should be made subject to the purposes of the state – benign or otherwise. Even those who see a relationship are cautious about articulating the rules of engagement. As Blasko chronicles, art, aesthetics, and by extension here music, can be more powerful than fear in forming bonds and sealing loyalties, especially when they are institutionalized as they were in the Stalin years. Art has served the purposes of the State on many occasions in history, but can the State serve the purposes of aesthetics? Blasko's discussion of the avant-garde under Stalin points to a danger when Art aligns its purposes with power. It is not only art as a "commodity" that can be appropriated, but also the aesthetic processes by which individuals make meaning through art. Artists may have boundaries and loyalties, but art and music perhaps do not have the same horizons as nations since they interact with the broader and less "rational," more complex, sensory and emotional plethora that is humanity. Do they then create a different space in which citizens interact and make meaning irrespective of governments? Does this mean that art and music are by their nature subversive and therefore antithetical to the State?

The Politics of Aesthetics

An examination of the role that art and aesthetic activity have played in the affairs of state can be useful in shaping a framework for a discussion of the more specific issue of the interrelations between music and political life. There are in fact a number of outstanding examples in this regard in recent political history, particularly concerning experiments prominent during the twentieth century at building to various degrees new types of societies

in a rather large number of countries. These range from Goebbels' pioneering efforts in Germany, which have shaped the development of both propaganda techniques and the advertising industry, to what may be termed revolutionary opera in China. Some of these have emphasized the performing arts; others rhetorical and communication skills, including public speaking; others music, such as the youth movements of the 1960s; others literature; and yet others painting and the plastic arts. The latter was perhaps especially the case in the Soviet-style societies of Eastern and Central Europe.

Within this range of examples, the following discussion will focus on the manner in which the Russian avant-garde aesthetic movement gradually coalesced with the centrally planned construction of Soviet-style society in the efforts to build a new way of life and a new type of human being in accordance with the developing practice of the Communist-led revolution.

The Larger Historical Picture: We're not Them

Terms such as "Post-Modernism," "Post-Totalitarianism," or "Post-Communism" are often used today to describe the most characteristic features of our societies. "Post-Cold-War" is perhaps a better term to use to gain an understanding of the situation in which we now find ourselves after the way intellectual and cultural life developed over at least the last 40 to 50 years.

The Cold War was an "internal war." The very visible face-off of military forces during the Cold War period was only a sign of a deeper division between the two opposing camps. The two hostile parties were so divided on basic social and cultural issues that they would do everything in their power to create a world that was "different" from that of the enemy. They were driven specifically not to integrate with each other but to resist the influence of the "enemy" other in every way possible, and especially to root out the "enemy influence" as it was perceived to exist "within." This is particularly true in respect to philosophy that was one of the principal combatants in the Cold War by virtue of its mission to secure the "front line" in the area of "ideological struggle."

Because of such divisions, neither society in both camps of the Cold War, nor intellectual life as a whole, in particular philosophy (especially in Soviet-style society), developed during this period from what could be said to be their "internal" principles. Rather, the spirit of conflict with the opposing camp drove them. Society and thought on both sides of the hostile divide were powered first and foremost by a desire not to resemble the "enemy." The United States, during the Cold War, ceased in practice to be most concerned with the principles of Jeffersonian democracy and instead became obsessed with being an "anti-Marxist" society.¹

¹ A number of appropriate examples immediately come to mind: McCarthyism, one major aim of which was to emasculate the power of left-dominated organized labor; the formation of the AFL-CIO; foreign aid in general and the Marshall Plan in particular; the fashion in which West Germany was created; the organization of the U.S. as a war economy, a still dominant if somewhat diminished orientation whereby important sectors of the economy and important areas of the country, such as Massachusetts and California, suffered greatly from the restriction of military budgets during the 1990s.

Most important in respect to intellectual life was that it became in practice impossible to discuss a whole

In the totalitarian society that was the Soviet Union, such tendencies were even more pronounced than they were in the comparatively open societies in the West. Anything and everything that could be ascribed to “bourgeois” influences was rejected, including music, fashion, even hairstyles.² This was carried to the point of rejecting “assistance” of all kinds from those in the West who wanted to be “friends” and perhaps build bridges between Soviet-style society and Western democracies, something that was, in hindsight, clearly self-defeating for those who had wished to maintain themselves in power. This was especially true of artists and intellectuals who did not toe the line of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, such as Sartre, as well as the advocates of “Western Marxism” or “Euro-communism.” In many such ways, the Soviet Union ceased being primarily a “Marxist” society, instead becoming obsessed with creating an “anti-anti-Marxist” world.

An examination of aesthetic theory, one of the most unique and yet typical aspects of Soviet-style Marxist philosophy, may make it possible to more clearly identify and better understand central ideas and tendencies in the theoretical foundations of Soviet-style society, particularly those concerning the formation of the sphere of the “taken-for-granted” that underlies meaningful perception, thought, and action. This, in turn, may help us better understand those basic values that formed the fabric of the perceptual and social reality that was Soviet-style society. If it is also eventually seen how Soviet-style aesthetic thinking and activity developed in specific opposition to the “anti-Marxist” world, the former may provide a key to seeing how Soviet-style society as a whole developed as an “anti-anti-Marxist” world. Hopefully, this will serve to begin an accounting of the gains and losses suffered by both opposing camps of the Cold War so that the first steps can be made in moving intellectual life, and especially philosophy, forward once again.

Aesthetics and Social Loyalty

What positive insight can be gained from a consideration of aesthetics in specific reference to Soviet-style society? For many years it has been almost too easy to argue that it is quite inappropriate in respect to the totalitarian regimes of the former communist bloc, if not

range of ideas that had become identified as “communist” ideas, such as social democracy, or even national health care. This was a rather marked change even for intellectual life in the U.S., which has always been rather conservative. A comparison with the 1930s and 1940s, when what could justifiably be called a working class ideology was a prominent element in the arts and certain other spheres of intellectual life, is revealing in this regard.

Western Europe was “anti-Marxist” too, only to a lesser degree. The fate of Italian governments (the aim being to exclude Communists from national government) is one sign of this, as was the fact of “tolerable” fascism in Spain and Portugal. Another such indicator is the level of military production and the defense posture in a country like “neutral” Sweden, where a company such as SAAB (originally founded to guarantee the production of aircraft for the military) has become an important social and economic factor.

² Even the value of specific foreign languages was determined by the political orientations of the respective countries in which they were spoken. English, for example, was singled out for special treatment in certain countries, being considered as the “language of the enemy” before being considered as the “language of Shakespeare.”

strikingly misdirected, to expend much effort in analyzing the field of aesthetics. Because of the view of “Socialist Art” that is most common among observers, it has been the easiest thing to claim either that aesthetics simply did not exist in Soviet-style society as a serious branch of philosophy, or that Soviet-style art never amounted to much more than an exercise in political didactics because of its particular aesthetic orientation. But it is the very nature of aesthetics, often traditionally defined as the science dealing with the nature, creation, and appreciation of beauty, which provides more challenges and perhaps has more promise for revealing the nature of the paradoxical reality that was Soviet-style society than any other area of study.³

Whatever sympathies or animosities one may have had toward the former communist world, perhaps the last thing a Western observer could say about society there as a whole, especially in respect to relationships between people and the power structure, was that it was “beautiful” in some sense. However, more clear-eyed non-Soviet observers are also often struck by the fact that, for very many years, very many of the people living in Soviet-style societies, particularly Russia, accepted as normal, and often with more or less sincere enthusiasm, a way of life and a type of social reality that the observers themselves viewed with a host of negative evaluations. It cannot be denied that the Party leadership, their social and economic policies, the political orientation of the government, and the very fabric of society commanded deep respect and loyalty from the vast majority of citizens, especially citizens of the Soviet Union, for much of the Stalinist period. Indeed, it was not until sometime after 1956, when the process of “de-Stalinization” quickly gathered speed following Khrushchev’s famous “secret speech” at the XXth Party Congress, that serious questions began to be raised among certain segments of the population, the intelligentsia in particular, about the nature of Soviet-style socialist construction.⁴

In fact, the loyalty and admiration of the population at large did not begin to waver to a significant degree until well into the Brezhnev years, when such factors as corruption on a growing scale and the perceived unfavorable comparison with the West in respect to the availability of consumer goods, brought on the growing vapidly of social values. It was almost as if the people there were living in a different reality than what we on the outside saw. It would thus seem to be obvious that their very perception of reality had to have been basically different in some sense from what was accepted by outside, “objective” observers. Ideology has often been described as a pair of glasses that people wear by which reality is

³ A valuable work in this regard is Anders Åman, *Architecture and Ideology in Eastern Europe. An Aspect of Cold War History* (New York, Cambridge, MA, and London, 1992) originally published as *Arkitektur och ideologi i stalinstiden Östeuropa. Ur det kalla krigets historia* (1987). This book is a well-documented and illustrated study of the application of Socialist Realism in architecture and of its overall significance in respect to the worlds of both politics and art. It addresses in detail key aspects both of Soviet-style aesthetics in general, and also of the history of its development. A recurrent theme concerns the way that Socialist Realism in architecture was defined *in explicit opposition* to the ideas and styles that were dominant in the “enemy camp” consisting of anti-Marxist states.

⁴ The undesired (from the Party’s view point) effect of “de-Stalinization” on social and intellectual life is discussed in an insightful and accurate fashion by Leszek Kolakowski in *Main Currents of Marxism*, vol. 3.

seen in a particular, different way. In respect to the Soviet-style communist world, the question might then be: What kind of glasses were prescribed and worn so that the actual quality of social life and of the human condition were seen to be other than what we in the West could see?

The absence of free political activity and a ubiquitous police apparatus in Soviet Society were not the glue that held society together. It would certainly be a mistake to underestimate the mark that these factors left on society, but neither should we be overly zealous in taking them to be more than they were. They do not and cannot explain the unmistakable fact that the vast majority of the population of Soviet-style society for significant periods of time sought to be loyal citizens who were quite willing to “play by the rules” in forging their personal lives and public careers. If we wish to understand and explain the nature of Soviet-style society, we must search for those mechanisms by which the meanings and values perceived in social reality became more or less identical with those of the originally Bolshevik-led program – the mechanisms by which a type of society and a type of human personality substantially different from Western democratic society was created.

Perceptual Cognition and the Aesthetic Dimension of Social Reality

One of the most representative modern views of aesthetics, initiated by Baumgarten in order to correct the omissions and limitations of modern philosophy, emphasizes the importance of sensory and perceptual cognition as a complement to conceptual cognition.⁵ An examination of aesthetics and art may create important opportunities for bridging the gap between conceptual and perceptual cognition in respect to the formation and organization of social reality. Conceptual knowledge, in this regard, may be judged to be of secondary importance in comparison to the ways in which reality is perceived. That is to say is that an examination of what can be called the “aesthetic dimension” or “perceptual dimension” of social life may reveal those values and principles upon which the organization and formation of the sense and perception of social reality is based, whereby the relations of power in a given society become the implicit, taken for granted, more or less unquestioned elements of daily life.

A study of this aesthetic dimension may provide a way to grasp how the meaning and organization of social reality in a given society is inseparable from the ways in which people in that society perceive reality – so much so that individuals may live within a world whose values, principles, and significance may be radically different from what an outside observer is capable of seeing using commonly accepted analytical tools, procedures, and methods. As

⁵ See Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten, *Meditationes philosophicae de nonnullis ad poema pertinentibus* (Halle 1735), for his original presentation of the discipline of aesthetics. It may be expected that philosophy will continue to have the honor of dealing with this “clear but confused” body of non-cognitive knowledge as long as the latter escapes thorough conceptualization, thereby not becoming differentiated from philosophy as a separate science.

Boris Paramonov presents an interesting view in this respect in a discussion of Viktor Shklovsky entitled “Communism as a Work of Art” when he repeats the latter’s statement that art provides an awareness or perception of life as an image, not as cognition. See Boris Paramonov (1998) “Kommunizm kak proizvedenie iskusstva.” Referenced online at <http://www.svoboda.org/programs/RQ/1998/RQ.16.asp>.

social values become “internalized” in this way, the fabric of society is rewoven and the meaning of social reality is changed.⁶

I do not wish to suggest that social reality is reducible to the way in which it is perceived. However, the meaning of social reality as it is actually lived cannot be grasped by an outside observer unless he/she is aware of the values and principles around which it is organized, unless he/she grasps the sphere of the “taken-for-granted” that is the basis upon which all meaning and significance arise, including the sphere of deliberate, reflective thought and action. Some general awareness of cultural differences or of structural differences in society is not sufficient for this purpose. What is required involves, among other things, a grasp of the aesthetic values, taken in a general sense, by virtue of which the perception of reality takes concrete shape. This is particularly true in respect to revolutionary programs to create a new type of society insofar as the possibility of success demands that people come to literally see and experience social reality in a revolutionary new kind of way. Changing the substance of social reality goes hand in hand with changing the perception of social reality.

Within this context, I propose that aesthetics may be used as a social science in order to uncover the ways in which non-cognitive types of knowledge serve to organize the perception and meaning of social reality, particularly in cases of societies that are markedly different from that of the observer. I would further suggest that an adequate analysis of the aesthetic dimension of Soviet-style society is especially useful because of the Post-Cold-War circumstances in which we now live. In addition, the many obvious and manifest differences between Soviet-style art and aesthetics and those that have been commonly accepted in the West provide a starting point that is both convenient and potentially fruitful for a comparison of anti-Marxist society with anti-anti-Marxist society.

A number of important general questions arise at this point in respect to Soviet-style, anti-anti-Marxist society, including the following: First, what important values at the heart of Soviet-style society, which served to determine its manner of functioning and its eventual fate, are revealed through an examination of Soviet-style art and aesthetics in particular? Second, what role did art and aesthetics play in establishing relations of power in society, and can we find precedents in the history of aesthetics? Third, how did aesthetics and art serve to formulate and control the perception of social reality in Soviet-style society? Fourth, what role did Soviet-style aesthetics, especially Socialist Realism, play in the development of Soviet-style society as anti-anti-Marxist society?

⁶ Both the Communists and the Fascists recognized this. On the one hand, the Bolsheviks placed primary importance on art and aesthetics, not on ideology, in educating the population in “communist” values from the earliest days of their regime, as is evidenced by Lenin’s decree on “Monumental Art,” one of the very first actions of the new “October” government. On the other, no less a figure than Mussolini maintained that ideology (conceptual thinking) is a “luxury, and for intellectuals only,” and he was explicitly aware that addressing people on the level of ideas could not strike to the heart of the matter in the reorganization of society. Much the same is true of Goebbels, who often suppressed the release of motion pictures that he judged to be overtly political in content. Indeed, perhaps more than 90% of the films produced in Germany under Goebbels’ control were of an entertaining, rather than overtly propagandistic, nature.

The Avant-garde: Art by Formula

This avant-garde tradition not only developed the main concepts, values, and views that later became dominant in the Soviet-style tradition of art and aesthetics, but it also promoted the view that art plays a leading role, side by side with political activity, in any process of social transformation by virtue of its unique power to educate the population in a new view of society and in new social and moral values. The views that later became typical of the Soviet-style tradition incorporated the views, values, and ideas of avant-garde aesthetics to such a degree that Soviet-style social reality cannot be adequately understood without addressing its aesthetic dimension. This point merits attention in and of itself as the main topic of a separate study.

My assumption in this regard is not that so-called “good” works of art, which correspond to Western criteria and whose value is beyond question, but rather those works that were created according to the approved Soviet formulae and which often challenge our abilities for aesthetic appreciation, provide a type of valuable insight into the inner workings of Marxist society that is surprisingly at variance with much of accepted aesthetic theory. The best example is undeniably Socialist Realism, which both stands upon the values and achievements of the aesthetic avant-garde in Russia, and also seeks to develop a kind of aesthetics that rejects much of what modern European culture assumes to be self-evident about art.⁷

The ultimate reference point in respect to the basic ideas of “socialist art” was also the ultimate goal of every communist party program, namely, to overcome social inequalities based on social classes by means of the creation of a new type of human being, the new “socialist man.” This new type of human being can be represented as a statistical norm with supposedly equal abilities in every kind of artistic and creative endeavor, a “collective” personality in which the power of creativity would be harnessed to the reproduction of the

⁷ The fact that Socialist Realism dominated the sphere of art and creative expression in the communist countries has led many Western commentators to ignore Soviet-style aesthetics in general, judging it to be ambiguous, unsophisticated, significantly self-contradictory, overtly ideologically bound, and didactic. Examples of these undeniably negative traits are amply provided by such authors as N. L. Leizerov, *Obraznost' v iskusstve*, Moscow, 1974; A. G. Dubrovin, *Kommunisticheskoe mirovozzrenie i iskusstvo sotsialisticheskogo realizma*, Moscow, 1977); and I. S. Kulikova and A. Ia. Zis', *Marksistiko-leninskaia estetika i khudozhestvennoe tvorchestvo*, Moscow, 1980). A valuable Soviet examination of an inherent theoretical ambiguity within Socialist Realism is Iu. B. Borev, *Estetika* (Moscow, 1975).

However, precisely because Socialist Realism is so challenging for many views of aesthetic theory commonly accepted in the West, an unbiased examination of it may help define issues of central importance regarding the formation, functioning, decline, and collapse of Soviet-style society. It could be argued that the otherwise vague principles of artistic creation and expression as related to creative thought and creative activity in general in Soviet-style society took final, clear shape in the process by which Socialist Realism became established as a dominant policy in Soviet social and cultural politics, particularly in the ways whereby it took up the Russian traditions of avant-garde aesthetics and art. For example, a discussion of how Marxist society was organized so that its reproductive potential was emphasized at the expense of its creative powers could easily take Socialist Realism as its legitimate point of analytical departure, and it could make explicit reference to the way the ground for this was prepared by avant-garde aesthetics.

ideologically specified conditions necessary to realize the ideal of communism.⁸ That which emerged as the most representative type of Soviet-style “socialist aesthetics” is directly connected with this “totalized idea” of equality, which rejects the value for aesthetic satisfaction of contrast, theme and variation in aesthetic activity.⁹

Eliminating the Differences between Art and Politics

One important element of the Bolshevik-style technology for building a just society was the elimination of the difference between creative and uncreative spheres of activity, and, on the other hand, between the various spheres of creative activity themselves. In this spirit, it was argued that salvation from the viciousness of capitalism could be found only in standardization, in the uniformity of the products of practical activity, and in the “technologizing” of thought and aesthetic criteria.¹⁰ This planned construction of standardized relations to every type of spiritual and material production was to be accomplished through the social organization of activity on the basis of an “ideologized” philosophy that would fulfill the role of a supra-empirical criterion of truth, social usefulness, and social significance.¹¹ The implementation of this program would have far reaching consequences for the quality of life in Marxist society, or rather, in anti-anti-Marxist society, in that it undermined traditional standards of professionalism and creative endeavor, not least of all in intellectual life and in the scientific disciplines.¹²

⁸ F. V. Konstantinov, ed., *Osnovy marksistko-leninskoi filosofii* (Moscow, 1978), is a standard presentation later prepared for an international audience of the Soviet view concerning Marxist philosophy as a whole, including the general role of art in the creation of a new “socialist” human being.

⁹ The dominant opposing non-Marxist views in this regard are perhaps best expressed in Santayana’s hedonistic theory of aesthetic forms. See, for example, George Santayana, *The Sense of Beauty: Being the Outlines of Aesthetic Theory* (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1896) and *What is Aesthetics?* (New York, 1904). The examination of Marxist society in this respect raises the question of whether it is possible to build a notion of beauty, not to mention a society as a whole, on standardization, uniformity, and a set of equal interchangeable elements which, nevertheless, avoids what Santayana referred to as “aesthetic monotony” or “aesthetic fatigue.” Indeed, this raises the question whether such “fatigue” is to be avoided at all in a “socialist type” of aesthetic experience (not to mention the corresponding type of social reality), even though Santayana, for one, viewed this as one of the main goals of artistic design.

¹⁰ A broad and uncritical discussion of these points, which is typical of official views until virtually the end of the Soviet period, and which also contains numerous references to the literature, may be found in S. D. Bezklubenko, *Priroda iskusstva* (Moscow, 1982), chapters 1 and 2.

¹¹ Because Bolshevik-style thinking presents the communist theory of history as expressing the absolute objective truth of social reality, the type of connection mentioned here between the empirical world and an ideal world which is the source of aesthetic meaning and value makes it possible to present the empirical standards of party ideology as supra-empirical aesthetic criteria. A representative Soviet-era discussion of how this issue lies at the center of the theory of reflection that was developed in Soviet philosophy, which aimed in part to develop the idea that it was possible to reflect that which did not yet exist in the real world, is found in A. A. Andreev, *Khudozhestvennyi obraz i gnoseologicheskai spetsifika iskusstva* (Moscow, 1981), pp. 15-35.

¹² A separate topic of discussion is my contention that the “standardization” of creative activity, along with the suppression of imaginative diversity that resulted from this on a broad scale in society, served to transform Soviet-style society from a society capable of innovation and creativity in public life to one primarily capable of the reproduction of existing norms and standards. This severely restricted its ability to develop in the fashion anticipated by the leadership and compete successfully in the international arena.

Finally, the very nature of Soviet-style society may be sought in its works of art, if not taken as a true picture of reality, then as expressing the values and the principles that governed social life and indicated the goals society was directed to achieve.¹³ However, substantial obstacles to this approach arise when Western aesthetic criteria are simply accepted as universal and applied uncritically to the evaluation of Soviet works of art. What seems more important in this case is to try to understand what in fact were the guiding rules for the creations of Soviet-style art, including the types of moral, ethical, and aesthetic criteria they both expressed and were expected to meet.

Soviet Beauty: Not Bourgeois

If the two blocs of the Cold War, viewed from the perspective of ideology, may be considered as not having shared one and the same set of Cartesian “clear and distinct ideas,” that is, conceptual knowledge, were they also divided in their perceptual knowledge? Is there any sense in which the peoples of especially the Soviet Union were educated to see the beautiful and the pleasurable where no one from the West would even consider that it might exist?

Non-Soviet observers have often viewed the aesthetics of Socialist Realism as perhaps the least sophisticated area of Bolshevik-style philosophical thought. In spite of this somewhat prejudiced opinion, and regardless of the lack of consensus in Western philosophy concerning the nature of aesthetic experience and the determination of aesthetic value, a more objective observer might be able to appreciate the extent to which aesthetics was an “active combatant” in so-called “socialist construction,” perhaps even more closely related to ideology and the construction of the social environment than was science itself. Indeed, given the importance of aesthetics, it was not by chance that “bourgeois aesthetics” was recognized as being one of the primary “enemies” of the proletariat before many areas of science were.¹⁴ This attitude was prominent not only under the early Bolsheviks, but also throughout the Stalinist period, and until the end of the Brezhnev years as well.

Perceiving the “Taken-for-Granted”

The point of discussion of most concern at the moment involves the way in which the perception of reality that defines an individual, along with the social group of which he is a

¹³ A degree of inspiration in this regard could be taken from Hegel’s *Lectures on Aesthetics*, one central thesis of which is that beauty and truth can be understood only in terms of their systematic coherence insofar as both are Idea. If art itself really is both the Idea and a form of knowledge of the Idea, both Truth and a mode of knowing Truth, if it embodies the beliefs and morals of a given society in which the aesthetic judgments are rooted, and if, moreover, art constitutes the subject’s identity (concepts which dominate Hegel’s aesthetic theory), then there cannot be a more appropriate starting point for the discussion of Soviet-style society than art taken as the expression and knowledge of its highest governing principles of social reality and social life.

¹⁴ Nor was it by chance that a primary element in Gorbachev’s policies of *glasnost* and *perestroika* was the relaxing of controls over artistic expression, especially insofar as these policies represented a program of “democratization from above.” Relaxing the controls implicitly recognized that the transformation of social views and social practices presumes the corresponding transformation in aesthetic views and artistic activity.

member, may be more or less deliberately chosen and implemented by that agent who has authority over the horizon of perception and consciousness. Of particular interest are the basic ways in which art and aesthetic activity may play important roles in this process.

When speaking of authority over the horizon of perception and consciousness, I in no way have in mind the commonplace (and commonly abused) notions of propaganda and political indoctrination. I view these as relatively simple ideas that do not touch upon the actual process whereby the possibilities for perceiving and thinking become situated within a world horizon, one that defines the location of any possible consciousness. Not only do these notions not indicate the process engaged here, they are incapable of doing so because they take the process for granted, thus concealing it even as their own activity reveals it.

Indeed, “taking something for granted” is one of the key elements in the process whereby the horizon of perception and consciousness is defined and established. The “taken-for-granted” establishes the framework for all possible discourse insofar as it serves as, so to speak, the fabric of communications or the “least common denominator” of all possible meanings. Authority which takes on the structuring of reality will not allow any discrepancy from the “taken-for-granted” in a given moment of intended communication or discourse to become meaningful and, thereby, an actual instance of discourse unless it is prepared for and/or presented in such a way that it can be drawn into the taken-for-granted context. That is not to say that it must in fact be situated within that context, but it must at least be seen to be related to that context so that the interlocutors can ascribe meaning appropriate to the context to it. Even the possibility that the intended communication be misconstrued or perhaps eventually seen as incomprehensible in respect to the taken-for-granted demands that it initially be seen to have a relevance to that context. No discourse is possible, not even the discourse of misunderstanding, if an intended communication cannot at the very least be misconstrued as lying within the horizon of the taken-for-granted.¹⁵

Being Vested in the Senses: Aesthetics, Reciprocity, and the Other

A human subject engages Otherness, which is radically transcendent and cannot be reduced to the ontological state of possession by the subject, by virtue of the fact of his/her embodiment or inherence in the sensible.¹⁶ It is the fact of such inherence that creates the possibility for a human being to perceive and be conscious.¹⁷ Inherence is not a question of an “internal”

¹⁵ An analogous situation holds true for perception as well, although this issue will not be discussed here. Suffice it to say, that an object which is perceived emerges against the background of the taken-for-granted insofar as it is perceivable only to the extent that a possible meaning can be ascribed to it. Even for it to emerge as a perceived object means that it has already been ascribed an “assumed” or “categorical” meaning.

¹⁶ A useful discussion of the complex relations between the concepts of intentionality and transcendence in respect to the work of Husserl and Heidegger is Rudolf Bernet, “Transcendence et intentionnalité: Heidegger et Husserl sur les prolégomènes d'une ontologie phénoménologique,” in *Heidegger et l'idée de la phénoménologie* (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1988, pp. 195-215).

¹⁷ These questions are focused upon and discussed in an insightful fashion in Paul Crowther, *Art and Embodiment. From Aesthetics to Self-Consciousness* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993). Of immediate relevance to the theoretical outline of the present study are pp. 1-11, where the basic terms and framework for the study as

subject “gazing upon” an “external” world. Rather, subjectivity, as the synthesis of perception, cognition, and praxis, emerges from and resides in the *reciprocity* that occurs between embodied beings. Neither is there subjectivity outside of such interaction, nor is there an exclusively private sense of self-consciousness. That which any subject considers to be most his/her own is always constituted through and defined in the orientation to Otherness, including the complex of physical and social circumstances (such as language) in which subjects locate themselves and are located by forces that they do not control.¹⁸

Furthermore, not only do perception and consciousness not occur without Otherness, I maintain that our inherence in the sensible creates the possibility that the historical “nature” or “essence” of subjectivity, that is its possibilities for perception, action, reflection, and communication, can be deliberately created and manipulated through the creation of a determinate Otherness in order to elicit a determinate subjectivity.¹⁹ Indeed, the approach I adopt proceeds from the premise that it is precisely our inherence in the sensible which makes it possible for those having authority over the horizon of perception to deliberately create the historical nature or historical “essence” of subjectivity through manipulation of the “ontological reciprocity” that defines the inter-relationship between subject and Otherness.

Such manipulation of the reciprocity between subject and Otherness on the basis of control over the concrete possibilities of perception and cognition enables a “supreme agent” to project his intentional organization upon a world with such power and thoroughgoing efficiency that the relationships to Otherness of a mass of human subjects are forced to emerge within more or less clearly and narrowly defined parameters in specific periods of time.

The “supremacy” of such an agent is determined to a great degree by his/her control of the power structures in society, including political and social authority, which extends to control over entry into and egress from the community in question. The power thus controlled makes it possible for the intentionality of that agent to be brought to bear upon other subjects with a virtually irresistible force through the mediation of the Otherness that has been created under his/her dominance.²⁰

The fact that an agent is able to utilize the power structures in society to project with a high

a whole are presented. In respect to the transcendence of Otherness, Crowther notes that this may indicate that not only are embodied beings finite, but that it is always possible to perceive more, discuss more, and do more than is the case at any particular moment. As Crowther himself observes, the view he develops is substantially in the spirit of Merleau-Ponty’s *Phénoménologie de la perception*.

¹⁸ This view is articulated at the very beginning of Crowther’s introduction to the above work.

¹⁹ Otherness may be spoken of in this regard as the ontological environment or medium of subjectivity that enables consciousness to appear in a specific instance of historical space and time.

²⁰ It is impossible for reflection, thought, and knowledge to be effective means for exercising such force because they do not address the actual, unitary originality of the ontological reciprocity but instead take it for granted. They arise by virtue of the very ontological reciprocity whereby conscious (perceptual) intentionality becomes bound with the sensible world in which it is embedded. One of the strong contributions of phenomenology after Husserl is that it generally opens the philosophical examination of conscious existence to the consideration of factors other than cognition in the establishment of the original relationship between the subject and Otherness.

degree of efficiency his/her intentionality upon the world so the world is increasingly organized in accord with his/her intentional aims (or the aims of the group of which he/she is the controlling, or at least representative and executive, member) means that the agent in question comes to exercise control over the possibilities of other subjects for perception and cognition. As human beings, we normally have the experience of the relative independence (of the autonomy of their intentionality) in respect to the sensible world in which they dwell, and we do not assign themes to our dependence upon that which we perceive and experience. Of course, both autonomy and dependence always work together in determining and identifying the essence of both subjectivity and objectivity at a particular moment and also throughout the duration of “subjective” existence. But their roles are not constant, and they may indeed vary within a considerable range of latitude.

Losing the Autonomy of the Senses: Force is not the Glue that Binds

When a high authority is in effective control of the possibilities of perception and cognition, including access to and egress from society, the ontological reciprocity of embedded subject and sensible world can be oriented by social factors more or less beyond the control of the subject in such a way that the *ontological dependency* of the subject upon the sensible world is maximized. This results in the subjugation of the subject’s possibilities for perception and cognition to the agency of force in society. Further, this does not have to be a process of which the subject is aware in order for it to be effective and efficient. On the contrary, the impression of the perceptual and cognitive autonomy of the subject may not only easily accompany an increased subjugation to social and political power structures, as is readily suggested by the development of pop culture, mass marketing, mass media, and mass advertisement in advanced Western countries, it may actually facilitate it.²¹

The phenomenon of totalitarian society demonstrates a high degree of perfection in this process. A truly totalitarian society does not rely on force and violence as the glue that binds it together. These factors are present to some degree in any society, and totalitarian society is particularly efficient in maximizing them and using them with brutal efficiency against those elements of society whom are judged, for whatever reason, to exist outside the parameters of acceptability. However, force and violence do not command the loyalty and subservience to authority that are essential for the very functioning of totalitarian society as such. The combination of fear and loathing that is a universal result of a brutal exercise of violence, not to speak of the lack of initiative and suppression of motivation that may accompany it, is not able to account satisfactorily for the agency of that violence itself.

For example, it may be assumed that fear of punishment was one element driving the behavior

²¹ A related matter involves the widespread dissemination of the view that we now live in an age characterized by the “end of ideology,” which often serves to effectively remove a tool that can be useful for an examination of a particular situation.

Another recent and very pertinent example is the manipulation of public fear as a vehicle for the acceptance of aggressive government policies, particularly foreign policies that can be based upon factual evidence only with a great degree of difficulty.

of the SS camp guard or NKVD executioner, but, perhaps more than anything else, the soldier who stood on the train platform at Birkenau and selected those arriving who would be sent to their immediate deaths was likely driven by a sense of “mission” and loyalty to a “higher cause” – even if this involved a degree of rationalization of his actions. Much the same holds true for the NKVD officer who executed Polish military prisoners in Khatyn Forest, apparently believing he was following the course of History and not because he was afraid of what his superior might otherwise do.

And if those who commit such unspeakable acts of bestial violence on a mass scale are not motivated by something akin to belief in a higher moral or historical cause, then their actions are driven by an absence of belief in anything at all. The choice in this regard is not between action based on fear of power and action based on principle, but between action based on principle in some sense and action based on a lack of any principles whatsoever. However, the latter state of affairs is self-destructive in the highest degree and can in no way serve as a solid foundation for a stable society. Indeed, a widespread absence of belief in some sort of moral standards, however loosely defined, destroys the possibility that the social formation in question can long survive. The point in this regard is that the extremes of brutality and violence in totalitarian society are of such a magnitude that those who carry them out cannot possibly be motivated solely by fear. Their active and willing commitment and participation is necessary for the system of terror and murder to operate. The question rather concerns the source of this commitment and choice.

And not only the elite of dedicated extremists in totalitarian society, but ordinary citizens too must, at the very least, willingly cooperate with the structures of power and authority if society as a whole is to more or less efficiently function. Not even the smallest social units, such as the family, can long be held together if the only force for doing so is fear. A society can function in a normal and stable fashion only when its members implicitly believe in and accept the standards of behavior and, more importantly, the parameters of perception and consciousness that it demands of them. This is first and foremost a question of the horizons of possibility for perception and cognition. In other words, totalitarian societies function efficiently to the extent that their members internalize the horizons of perception and cognition which they mandate, such that they are implicitly accepted as the “normal” parameters of everyday existence. This transforms everyday existence into the glue that holds that society together.

Art and Aesthetics: A Fusion of the Sensuous and the Conceptual

The embeddedness of the individual in the sensible world makes it possible for the “character” or “value” of the object to influence and determine to varying degrees the “character” or “value” of the subject. The autonomy of the subject within the process of ontological reciprocity cannot be reduced to zero, particularly in respect to the multiplicity of subjects. However, at any given moment within a given society, forces seeking to create the ontological dependency of the subject on the object can significantly reduce this autonomy.

The paramount example of this reduction of autonomy is totalitarian society.

The greatest possibilities for maximizing the reduction of the cognitive and perceptual autonomy of the embedded subject are found at the non-reflective or pre-reflective levels of conscious life. There is always an abyss between our fundamental reciprocity with the world as embedded subjects and our attempts to express that reciprocity explicitly at the level of reflective discourse or in theory. Consequently, theory cannot be the most effective tool in constructing the emergence of a particular, determinate relation to otherness because it is unable to bridge this abyss. Art and aesthetics have unique power in this regard. The power of art as a fusion of the sensuous with the conceptual means that art is charged with semantic and conceptual energy.²²

However, this fusion also means that, under certain conditions, the same energy can be directed in a deliberate fashion in order to create a determinate type of reciprocity between the subject and Otherness. This process is intensified as the cognitive energy is more extensively and consistently brought to bear across the full ranges of the conceptual and the sensuous through power exercised by those who control both access and egress from the community and also the possible perceptions and possible cognitions of individuals. The point in question can be stated as follows:

State Manipulation of Self-Perception

The agency in which power is concentrated is capable, under certain circumstances, of “reversing” the cycle of expression/externalization, recognition from the Other, and self-recognition through the Other. The result is that the projection of a determinate self-recognition by the Other *before the actual fact* of self-recognition by the Other is capable of forcing the emergence of such a manipulated “self-recognition” in fact by the “self.” This means that the subject/self then emerges as a “virtual Other,” that is, the self becomes the “Other” in respect to himself by virtue of the action of the actual Other (the agent of power) upon him, whereby the self-identity of the subject is replaced with the identity the Other desires him to possess. This may be viewed as the constitution of the “self” as a virtual “Other” through the intentional power of an actual Other who is in command of the horizons of possible perception and possible cognition. In other words, this is an instance of “reversed” or “subverted” ontological reciprocity.²³

²² Crowther speaks of this fusion as the “concrete particular” and refers it to Hegel’s discussion of art as a mode of self-understanding that lies “half-way between the concrete particularity of material phenomena, and the abstract generality of pure thought.” See Crowther, p. 5. See also Crowther, Chapter 7, especially pp. 122 ff. However, I would add here that not only might art be the expression of that which is fundamental in the human relationship with the world; its power can also be utilized to drive the creation of that relationship. In the latter case, it is as if the Spirit is driven to become self-conscious in a determinate way through the deliberate presentation (by the agent of power in a society) of an Otherness of a determinate type.

²³ These ideas can be fruitfully discussed in relation to certain of the basic concepts in the dialectical philosophy of Sartre’s later period, such as *practico-inerte*, *passivité*, and *sérialité*. For Sartre’s primary presentations of these concepts, see *Critique de la Raison dialectique*, tome I, p. 363 ff. and p. 546 ff., and tome II, p. 300 ff. More suggestive for the present discussion, however, is his exploration of totalization in a given society through

When ontological reciprocity is subverted in such a manner, the object becomes “forceful” and “powerful.” It is the object that now embodies the “power/energy” of a “Supreme Agent” such that when it “shows itself as it is,” the “self” does not “receive” its truth, but the object instead forces its “truth” upon the “self.” This is not what is often considered to be the usual case, in which the “object” is viewed as being resistant to the action/intention of the subject. When ontological reciprocity is subverted in the fashion described, it is the “truth” of the “object/other” which drives the “constitution,” or “emergence,” of the “self.” The “truth” of the object thereby becomes the “truth” of the subject as well.²⁴

This is a situation in which the “other/object” has to overcome the “resistance” of the “self/subject,” which is the same thing as saying that the “truth” of the “other/object” has to overcome the “truth” of the “self/subject.” What may be spoken of as the hermeneutic circle is thus made to function not from the perspective of the subject or self, but rather from the perspective of the “empowered object/other” that has become dominant in the “ontological reciprocity” between embodied subject/self and Otherness. The relative autonomy of the subject is thereby reduced to ontological dependence, and it is the “object/other,” which now appears as both the mediation and the medium of the intentional power of the “Supreme Agent,” that has become ontologically dominant and autonomous vis à vis the subject/self. The generation of a specific semantic and conceptual energy by the totalizing agency of power in society, and that agent’s objectification of such energy as overwhelming power in the ontological environment of the subject, transforms the ontological reciprocity between subject and object into the ontological subjugation of the subject to the agency of power. This subjugation is mediated by the empowered object that has been endowed with the

the agency of a single absolute sovereign. This may be found in tome II, livre III, section B, “La totalisation d’enveloppement dans une société directoriale; rapports de la dialectique et de l’anti-dialectique.” Of particular interest are Chapters 1-3, “Singularité et incarnation dans la praxis souveraine,” “Incarnation du souverain dans un individu,” and “La totalisation d’enveloppement, incarnations des incarnations.”

The emphasis in the present study differs significantly from Sartre’s insofar as it attempts to establish a theoretical framework for investigating how dialectical deviation, alienation, and, especially, the power of the practico-inert may be *deliberately* fostered and utilized on the ontological level by the agent of power, at least for specific periods of time, for the purpose of creating a perceptual and cognitive realm of a determinate character such that the aesthetic elements of conscious existence come to subdue thought and reflection to the power of the Other which they embody.

²⁴ This notion differs in an important fashion from the tone of Heidegger’s discussion in the “Introduction” to *Being and Time* of the significance of capturing the meaning of an object “when it reveals itself on its own as it reveals itself on its own.” The case of subverted ontological reciprocity does not concern the emergence of Truth, which is a constant theme throughout the body of Heidegger’s work in all of its various stages, not least of all in such essays as “The Essence of Truth” and “The Origin of the Work of Art.” Quite on the contrary, the aim of subverted ontological reciprocity is the forceful imposition upon the subject/self of what may be referred to as a determinate “truth substitute” through the action of an object/other which has been endowed with the aesthetic power of the agent of power. The concern of subverted ontological reciprocity is the “truth” of the object precisely as it may be forced upon the subject, not the Truth as it emerges through the ontological reciprocity between subject and Otherness. This ironically compares with Heidegger’s notion of the “thinking of Being” as it is first presented in “On the Essence of Truth” insofar as “Being” forces itself in the condition of subverted ontological reciprocity upon the subject in such a fashion that the possibility for the emergence of “opening” is itself subverted and the state of truth as concealment is maximized. Being now indeed assumes primacy over There-being, but not at all in the fashion for which Heidegger eventually calls.

overwhelming force of the agent of power.²⁵ In such circumstances the agent of power is not compelled to exercise force (terror) directly over the subject insofar as the object, which he has endowed with his power, exercises power in his stead. Indeed, this minimizes the need for the exercise of force in that the domination of the subject by the object serves to restrict the possibility that acts of perception and consciousness may emerge with a significance that is at variance with the preferences and/or requirements of the agent. This heightens and reinforces the efficiency of the social control that has already been established.

The semantic and conceptual energy with which the object has been endowed thereby works to entrap the subject in a world that has been more or less deliberately designed to serve the purposes of the agent of power. The power of the object does not enable the subject to be engaged in the bringing forth truth, but rather plunges the subject into a relationship of submission to the object and therefore to the agent of power. This binds the subject's horizons of perception and consciousness to the power structures in a given society so that he/she internalizes those structures, becomes subject to them, and undergoes a marked reduction in the ability to experience acts of perception and consciousness at variance from them.

The Aesthetics of Stalinism

Being the Mayor of Tirana is the highest form of conceptual art. It's art in a pure state.

Edi Rama, politician and visual artist

The first politician in the twentieth Century to utilize the aesthetic character of power in society was Josef Stalin. This fact emerges against the background of a brief examination of developments within the Russian avant-garde artistic movement, including their notion of the role of art in social transformation.

Reviving the Human Project by Tapping the Unconscious

The fundamental spirit of Russian avant-garde art movements of the final years of the Empire and the early Revolutionary period, which Western observers typically consider to have been stamped out by Stalin with no consideration of their value, can be succinctly stated, and without over simplification, as “the demand that art move from representing to transforming

²⁵ When the object/other that has been empowered by the agent is considered as an art-work, as Boris Groys does in *The Total Art of Stalinism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), then the aesthetic characteristics that Heidegger promulgates in “The Origin of a Work of Art” are stripped bare in respect to their utter disregard for social relevance. The case in question represents a type of creation in which truth is not at work, i.e., a type of creation that originates neither Being nor truth, even though a world emerges. William J. Richardson, *Heidegger. Through Phenomenology to Thought* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1963) provides perhaps the best available examination of the relevant issues in Heidegger’s work as a background for the present discussion. See in particular Part II, Chapter II, Part III, Section A, Chapter V, and Part III, Section B, Chapter 1.

the world.”²⁶ In fact, it constitutes a reformulation of Marx’s “11th Thesis on Feuerbach,” although the avant-garde did not receive its initial inspiration from political events. The avant-garde was rather motivated by a reaction to the destruction of the traditional world by so-called “progress,” especially through the effects of technology.

The great figure of the early avant-garde was Kazimir Malevich, whom history has honored not only for his paintings, but also for his founding of Suprematism. Aside from the abstract, non-objective geometric patterns that characterized the style of this movement, Suprematism expressed a theoretical view concerning the dynamics of European society and culture that would have consequences for decades to come.

Very succinctly stated, Malevich and those around him maintained that the coming of modern society and industry had destroyed the world in which men had lived for millennia, and which could be spoken of in a very real sense as a divine work of art. In a manner rather reminiscent of Nietzsche, these artists declared that both values and god had been killed by progress. Human beings had come very close to the “zero point” at which matter would become nothing since the values and the gods that had made the world real were dying if not already dead.

The question then became what to do to resurrect mankind. The answer turned upon the subconscious mechanisms that had once been in a “divine harmony.” Malevich argued that it is the unconscious that in fact rules the world, and he saw the duty of the artist to reside in uncovering these mechanisms, consciously controlling them by the strength of his/her own will, and thereby creating a new harmony within the technological world. Indeed, the artist rules the world because s/he rules the unconscious that dominates the consciousness. That is to say that the artist can logically and technically manipulate the unconscious in order to create a new world and a new human being.²⁷

“Suprematism” thus sought to replace god with the analyst/artist and use the technology of art to stop further progress. It would heal the destruction that had been wrought by technology by reconstructing human beings and, through them, the world.²⁸ It could thus be said that the

²⁶ Boris Groys, *The Total Art of Stalinism. Avant-Garde, Aesthetic Dictatorship, and Beyond* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), p. 14. Grays provides one of the most insightful discussions of the Russian avant-garde movement as well as its connections with Bolshevism and Socialist Realism.

²⁷ Ibid. p. 19. Marko Stamenkovic comments that “Questions of power have always been an important issue in contemporary art debates,” but he does so in reference to the need to organize resistance to established institutions. The unique character of the avant-garde, in contrast, did not turn on protest against and critique of the structures of power, but rather on the stated aim of seizing and controlling power in order to drive the realization of their project to radically reconstruct human beings themselves and society as such. See Marko Stamenkovic, “Mikropol” [exhibition review], *ArtMargins*, 10 March 2005 (referenced at www.artmargins.com) for the above remark.

²⁸ Groys 1992, p. 16. Within this context one should keep in mind an observation of Sergey Tretyakov concerning Futurism: “What guided Futurism from the days of its infancy was not the creation of new paintings, verses, and prose, but the production of a new human being through art.” See S. Tretyakov, “From Where to Where?”, A. Lawton and H. Eagle (trans. and eds.), *Russian Futurism through Its Manifestoes, 1912-1928*

spirit of the Russian avant-garde emerged from the destruction by technology of the unity of the world that had been created through god's will. It was thereby characterized not by nihilism as such, but rather by an awareness that what was already dying should be finally destroyed, the effort to neutralize the destructive effects of technology, and a search for new means to make order out of the chaos that had been ushered in by modern development.²⁹

But the “absolute zero” of which the Suprematists spoke, where a “new humanity” would be cleansed of all previous images and prepared to be created anew, was achieved not by art, but rather by the revolution and the widespread destruction of the civil war. As the writer and critic Andrei Bely dryly commented, “The victory of materialism in Russia resulted in the complete disappearance of all matter.” By 1920, Suprematism no longer had to prove the point that matter had become nothing.

Indeed, it could be said with a certain justification that the unique situation in Russia after the revolution both confirmed the “aesthetic intuition” of the avant-garde, and also provided the latter with a singular opportunity to translate that intuition into reality. The majority of the avant-garde in fact declared their loyalty to the new state. In turn, they were offered key posts in the centralized administration of cultural life. However, their willing acceptance of political power derived not merely from opportunism and a certain desire for personal success, but rather was consequent to the very essence of the avant-garde artistic project, as it had developed after Suprematism.³⁰

The avant-garde artist, who faced the chaos and destruction of the “new world” created by technology, and for whom the world itself was the material upon which he/she worked, aimed at nothing less than to rework the world as a whole. But such an artist required the absolute power of politics over the world for this purpose, and an aesthetic discourse was consequently formulated in which every artistic decision was also a political decision.³¹ That is to say that questions of aesthetics were to be evaluated in terms of politics, and political decisions were to be evaluated in terms of their aesthetic consequences.

Artists as Social Engineers

The first generation of avant-gardes, emanating from Malevich and the other Suprematists as well as the poet Viktor Khlebnikov, could be described as rather contemplative in orientation in light of their emphasis upon the manipulation of the unconscious through the formulae and lexicon of art. The second generation, however, including Alexander Rodchenko, Vladimir Tatlin, the other Constructivists, and such theorists as Boris Arvatov, developed a program

(Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988), pp. 206-207. The latter provides a collection of important texts in translation with an introduction and analysis.

²⁹ Groys, 1992, pp. 14-15.

³⁰ Ibid., pp. 20, 21.

³¹ Ibid., p. 21.

beginning in 1919 in which art would directly conquer the material of the world. It was they who began to use the term “engineering” in reference to art more than a decade before Stalin described the writer as the “engineer of the soul.” They repudiated mimetic art because they took it as their duty to create the world, just as a machine creates reality, not merely to reflect it in images.³²

More importantly, the Constructivists believed that they alone were qualified to lead the aesthetic-political “recreation” of Russia. They initially had a clearer idea of their aims than the Bolsheviks, whom they accepted as a transitional force that would destroy the old and harness the power of the country to the creation of the new. The Constructivists essentially viewed the Bolsheviks as a transitional force necessary to harness all the other forces needed for the avant-garde project. Increasingly, the Constructivists urged the suppression of those artistic movements that they viewed as being insufficiently radical, particularly mimetic art in general. In fact, they increasingly sought the assistance of the Bolsheviks in repressing those aesthetic movements, including the Revolutionary Association of Proletarian Writers (RAPP) and the Association of Artists for a Revolutionary Russia (AkhRR), which they judged to have grasped neither the true mission of art, nor the existing opportunity to recreate the world in its entirety.³³

The Bolsheviks, for their part, sought the broad support of the intelligentsia, as was evidenced by Lunacharsky’s policies that advocated pluralism among intellectuals and artists. They thereby accepted the support of the avant-garde, although they did not greatly care for their particular views and, more importantly, were suspicious of their dictatorial ambitions to lead a unified aesthetic and political movement.³⁴

It was during this period that the left wing of the avant-garde further radicalized their program, denouncing all autonomous art, not merely mimetic art, even moving beyond the “engineering” of the subconscious to which Malevich was dedicated. “Productionism” thus maintained that art should not only produce useful objects, but that its mission was to

³² Ibid., p. 22.

³³ Such leading radicals as Arvatov and Nikolai Chuzhak justified more traditional types of art only if they were useful at a given moment for the radical transformation of society. See, for example, the discussion in B. Arvatov, *Iskusstvo i proizvodstvo* (Moscow, 1926). This relative independence of the avant-garde’s radical project from particular art forms heralds in a sense the Party’s later decision that stipulated the use of more traditional narrative and visual forms in Socialist Realism on the basis of its accessibility to a broader public.

³⁴ Anatoly Lunacharsky was first head of the People’s Commissariat for Enlightenment and, as such, had broad responsibility at the highest levels for education and cultural affairs. For example, he directed such public arts experiments as the Agit-Trains and Agit-boats, which relied on art to spread revolution throughout the wide expanse of the Russian countryside. Lunacharsky also protected such avant-garde figures as Malevich, Tatlin, Meyerhold, and Mayakovsky. The first collegiums of the visual arts section at Lunacharsky’s Commissariat included Tatlin, Malevich, and Rodchenko, Rozanova, Kandinsky, and other well-known artists and aestheticians. His collected works and other writings address theater, cinema, aesthetics, sculpture, literature, painting, theory, criticism, government policy, as well as leading individuals of the revolutionary period and the 1920s. See, for example, A. V. Lunacharsky, *Sobranie sochinenii: Literaturovedenie, kririka, estetika* (Moscow: Akademiya nauk SSSR, 1963-1967).

organize everyday life and production. This group, most closely associated with figures such as Rodchenko and Arvatov, moved ever closer to the Party, coming to view it as the only force sufficiently powerful at the moment to realize the “new human being” and the “new world.” Nevertheless, their relations with the Bolsheviks were marked by a certain ambiguity insofar as they considered themselves to have the responsibility of not only carrying out the tasks of the Party, by virtue of their political commitment, but also of teaching the latter concerning the necessary scope of revolutionary activity, particularly in respect to the artistic and aesthetic reconstruction of reality that had been reduced to the zero point.³⁵

The Productionists: Political Power as Aesthetic

The Productionists viewed it as their particular obligation to make the Communists understand that political power is aesthetic in nature, and that politics and aesthetics are inseparably intertwined. Indeed, the development of the avant-garde project from Suprematism, through Constructivism, to Productionism during the immediate revolutionary period and the 1920s may be viewed as a growing recognition on the part of the aesthetic elite that instead of directly acquiring total political power for themselves in order to attain their goals, it would be more appropriate to teach the Bolsheviks, who in fact already controlled political power, that their project in its most radical formulation was in fact aesthetic in nature.

This recognition may also reflect a new view on the part of the avant-garde concerning the function of art in society – that art is limited by those forces in society that are in fact mobilized in the service of transformation, such as political and military power. In addition, art, as understood by the avant-garde, would lose its justification for existence when society had been transformed in accordance with the radical artistic project. That is to say, the fulfillment of the avant-garde project would culminate in the destruction of art as an independent institution in society. In Chuzhak’s well-known words,

We imagine the moment when real life saturated to overflowing with art will reject art as being unnecessary...The artist is until then a soldier guarding the social and socialist revolution as he awaits the arrival of the great “corporal of the guard” – Halt!³⁶

When these words are read alongside Arvatov’s statement that the artist must become the colleague of engineers and administrators, it becomes clear that the position represented views of art as being limited to the search for the most appropriate means to completely reorganize society. Stated otherwise, the goals of art come from outside art.³⁷

The radical theory of those around Chuzhak and Arvatov, who were closely associated with

³⁵ Groys, 1992, pp. 24-25.

³⁶ Chuzhak, 1923, p. 39.

³⁷ Groys, 1992, p. 25.

the journals *LEF* and *Novy LEF*, was reflected in the practice of concentrating on agitation and propaganda.³⁸ For example, the various works of Vladimir Mayakovsky and Rodchenko in this regard should not be taken merely as submission to Party directives since these artists themselves sought to incorporate art into Communism. They themselves consciously sought to deprive their work of its autonomy so that it would have a role in the task of making a new world that was by then clearly being led by the Bolsheviks.³⁹ Whether or not they were fully aware of the consequences of such activities, their practical work was nevertheless consistent with the theoretical position they had adopted.

In summary, the avant-garde competed with the Party for the leadership role in the revolution by projecting itself as a demiurge, not as an observer. It also sought to destroy its “realist” opponents, whom it judged to be not only without a true aesthetic vision of the future, but also thoroughly incapable and unequipped to seize the opportunity presented by history to undo the destruction that had been wrought by modern progress. It thus sowed the seeds of its own eventual repression by making enemies of both the Party and the broader masses of the more traditional intelligentsia. More importantly, however, the avant-garde thereby also made it possible for its own aesthetic program to be subsumed into the political and cultural programs of the Party.

The Unity of Politics and Avant-garde Aesthetics

The Communists responded to this situation by a radicalization of the avant-garde program within the framework of the central planning of society as a whole. The undertaking of five-year planning addressed not merely the economy, but involved the effort to create a new type of human being and a new type of world. The unity of aesthetics with politics had been the main issue for the avant-garde, whether it was aesthetics that was politicized, or politics that was aestheticized. However, it was the very politicization of aesthetics by the avant-garde that directly led to the Party’s taking full control of aesthetics and art with the understanding that they were to serve a role in the construction of a new way of life in the fullest sense of the term. Under Stalin’s domination, the central tenet of the Party program became no less than the creation of a new type of human being.

The Party had also been forced to take control of art because of the ongoing struggle between opposing aesthetic and artistic groups, not least of all under the instigation of the avant-gardes themselves, which had produced a considerable degree of chaos and strife among writers, artists, and critics. While this turn of events led to the disbanding of a number of leading groups (23 April 1932), including RAPP and AkhRR, it was not unwelcome.⁴⁰ More

³⁸ *LEF* (Lev front isskustva – Leftist Front for the Arts), later renamed *Novy LEF* (New Left Front), was also the name of this group of artists. Among the co-founders of the magazine was Osip Brik, the noted writer and critic, who was also Mayakovsky’s publisher and the husband of his mistress and muse, Lilia.

³⁹ Groys, 1992, pp. 28-29.

⁴⁰ It should be added that many of those prosecuted during the initial Party take-over of artistic production, both avant-garde and conservative, went on to successful careers under Stalin. See Groys, 1992, pp. 33-34.

importantly, however, this can be taken as an indication that the Communists had finally grasped what the avant-garde had been preaching for years, namely, that the political and economic transformation of society was impossible without the participation of aesthetics. This can certainly be interpreted as meaning, on the one hand, that the Party had committed itself to the control of society to such a degree that it would ruthlessly suppress all those who opposed it and its policies. Indeed, it is hard to argue against those who wish to emphasize the brutality of Party activities beginning at some point in the late 1920s, especially after the initiation of central planning. Observers find the first two five-year plans to be especially troubling in this regard, as was the entire period prior to the German invasion of the Soviet Union after Stalin's ascent to power.

But this view does not grasp the complexity of the situation, for although it is undoubtedly correct – and fear of the authorities was a real element of daily life throughout the Soviet period – it takes a consequence for the cause. One can gain much valuable knowledge and information through examining the results of a given process, but this does not necessarily guarantee a full grasp of what in fact were the aims and intentions underlying that process. It is not adequate to view the excesses of especially the Stalinist period as no more than the brutal exercise of power for the sake of power. Indeed, the period after the Revolution and before the creation of the Union of Soviet Writers, with the subsequent promulgation of Socialist Realism as the standard in art, has often been praised for its spirit of tolerance, and the very flourishing of the avant-garde, including Constructivism and Productionism, have been pointed to as evidence of this fact. Socialist Realism supposedly changed this situation, subjugating art to the demands of political doctrine and political programs, thereby reducing it to the glorification of communist ideals and Soviet leaders, especially Stalin.

But the fact is that the avant-garde was characterized precisely by a *lack* of tolerance, and it sought to assume precisely the position of absolute power for which the Communists have been soundly criticized. It also sought to use artistic creation as a tool in service of the transformation of society in accordance with principles that were external to art in the strict sense. The problem the avant-garde faced was that it did not succeed in garnering the means to do so, had to join forces with the Bolsheviks (whom it underestimated as an ally-adversary) in the effort to attain its goals, and eventually had to watch the Party take over the most radical aspects of its aesthetic and artistic project. Moreover, the Party did not use merely pen, ink, paint, and photographic paper as the material for artistic creation, but reality itself – and did so on the grandest possible scale.

Social Realism: The Tyrant as Artist

Instead of there being a break in artistic practice in the early 1930s along with the suppression of the spirit of the avant-garde, the Party took up the avant-garde project and carried it forward as it assumed total control over culture and intellectual life. There is in fact a substantial continuity of Socialist Realism with the project of the avant-garde that was realized in Stalin's fulfillment of the aesthetic demand that art abandon mimesis and instead undertake the transformation of life by means of a total aesthetic-political project. Further, it

was precisely Stalin's absolute political power that made him the heir of the avant-garde aesthetic project to reorganize the world in its totality through absolute control over society and culture.

Stalin thereby ushered in the age of the artist-tyrant, who succeeded the philosopher-king of the philosophers. He thus not only reversed the hierarchy between images and concepts – between perception and contemplative thought – that had been typical of European intellectual history and perhaps best represented by Hegel, but also took up the spirit of constructivist poetics in his political program.⁴¹ This reversal may in fact be considered as constituting a radicalization of the avant-garde project that was beyond the means of the avant-garde itself.

Perhaps the most obvious aspect of this radicalizing of avant-garde aesthetics that was carried out by Stalinism is the fact that it was both prepared to and capable of exploiting previous forms of life and culture. The avant-garde view of the past was in fact “metaphysical” or “non-dialectical” (to use Party terminology) insofar as it rejected the past without any consideration of what could be preserved in service of the revolution.⁴² The avant-garde was thus closed to the various possibilities presented by historical culture itself for overthrowing culture and creating it anew.⁴³ In contrast, the Stalinist approach to classical culture, embodied in the aesthetics of Socialist Realism, was capable of distinguishing between what were termed progressive and reactionary elements in classical culture in respect to the Communist conception of historical “truth.” This in fact is the basis of its “realism.”

A distinction, however, must be made between “realism” and “naturalism” that pertains to both Socialist Realism and the avant-garde. “Naturalism” here means the simple reflection of immediately perceived reality, which both of these movements denounced as a “bourgeois” ideology. “Realism,” in contrast, means the reflection of things that will *exist in the future*, which the Bolsheviks based upon their conception of reflection as both the development of material existence in history as well as the awareness of that development in consciousness.⁴⁴

From this perspective, “naturalism” is concerned with bare facts, while “realism” in the Bolshevik sense is concerned with historical truth as it points to the future. The eye reflects

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 36.

⁴² See Groys, 1992, p. 49, for a brief discussion of this point.

⁴³ Paradoxically, the very stress on style characteristic of the Suprematists and Constructivists presupposed that they knew their place in the history of art as professional artists, which they indeed were. It was almost as if they knew and respected the tradition to such an extent that they preferred to destroy it rather than profane it by putting it to use for something other than its original aims. Ibid., pp. 42, 49

⁴⁴ One of the most remarkable issues in the development of the Leninist theory of reflection is the notion of “anticipatory reflection,” whereby it is possible to speak even of the *perception* of that which does not yet exist. This theory thus broadens the concept of reality such that “realism” must reflect not merely that which exists or has existed in its proper historical context, but that which is to come. Two of the better examples of this notion in the specialized literature can be found in P. V. Kopnin, *Gnoeologicheskie i logicheskie osnovy nauki* (Moscow, 1974), and P. K. Anokhin, “Operezhaiushchee otrazhenie deistvit’nosti,” *Voprosy filosofii*, 1962/7.

facts, and naturalism makes absolute the isolated details thus seen and abstracts them from their temporal context. Human cognition, in contrast, combines knowledge of facts with abstract thought and thereby reflects the truth. It is the ability to employ cognition as related to history that makes Socialist Realism unique in respect to all other types of art.

It could also be said that Socialist Realism takes *objective facts* for its point of departure just as any objective cognition of reality does, but replaces a sense of fantasy that is opposed to existing reality with the need “to catch the signs of the new and better future” in the life around us.⁴⁵ The development of this artistic method gives rise to the possibility of seeing the future in the present and of determining in advance those tendencies that will come to define the future and those which will decline and pass away. This ability to “look at the present from the outside, from the point of view of the future, and in respect to the course of history in general,” relates this type of art to the art of prophets.⁴⁶

We could also say that the “realism” of Stalinist art does not “merely” reflect reality, but is rather intended to foster the creation of a new reality in accordance with the “truth.” The justification for this type of art is that it is an active participant in the production of a new reality in accordance with the Party’s vision of the future. Virtually all forms and techniques are permitted provided that they reflect the future and serve to stage reality in light of the “truth.”⁴⁷ And since this type of artistic production is the work of the Party, it is transferred into political and social reality, thereby constituting a further radicalization of avant-garde aesthetics that leaves behind any sense of the utopianism that was associated with

⁴⁵ Extended and representative discussions of such points from the last decade of the Soviet period can be found in A. A. Andreev, *Mesto iskusstva v poznaniu mira* (Moscow, 1980) as well as Andreev 1981. See Andreev 1980, pp. 244, 248-49, on this particular question.

There are in fact those who claim that the “specific” function and structure of art is “the cognition and evaluation of reality.” See L. I. Novikova, *Iskusstvo i trud* (Moscow, 1974), p. 14, for a typical example from the Brezhnev period that was unchallenged into the Gorbachev years. Andreev also emphasizes that Socialist Realism produces works of art not meant for exhibition in a gallery, but which are rather intended to be means of cognition. See Andreev 1980, pp. 238-39. He later explicitly reiterates that the social function of art involves the identification of cognition with what can be described as an “informed” aesthetic evaluation of reality. See Andreev 1981, p. 49.

⁴⁶ Andreev, 1980, pp. 250-51. The very conception of anticipatory reflection cannot help but invite the notion of “prophecy.”

⁴⁷ The ideological standard of “socialism in one country” that typified Soviet-style construction is not inherently at odds with the principles of the avant-garde aesthetic movement insofar as the basic issue remains the creation of a new reality, not the specific definition of the reality to be created. Nor can the particular forms of expression associated with Socialist Realism be reduced to merely the art forms favored by the specific regime, as could be said to have been the case with Germany in the 1930s and 1940s. It is well known that certain members of the Nazi leadership felt that they had an understanding of art, and that they were qualified to make decisions concerning which art forms were “good” and which were “bad” or “degenerate.” However, not only is this not true of the Soviet leadership – Stalin did not have pretensions to be a painter – but the use of specific art forms was not the central issue in Socialist Realism. It is clearly true that certain types of art were condemned as “elitist,” such as formalism, but this tended to turn upon their perceived concrete usefulness in furthering the construction of centrally planned society. As mentioned above (note 33), at least Arvatov and Chuzhak apparently acknowledged that the use of specific art forms was secondary to the aims that art was to serve, namely, the total remaking of social reality.

Suprematism as well as Constructivism insofar as they had visions of a totally new future but not the means to realize them.

The important point in this regard is not that avant-garde aesthetics shaped politics. It is rather that the artistic-aesthetic situation in Russia had developed in such a way that views concerning the nature and aims of art came to coalesce with those of Bolshevik politics. Prominent avant-garde artists were aware of this change, and they openly worked to unify the two such that politics and art together would marshal forces to re-create the world. Not only were these aims consistent in virtually all important respects with those that later typified Socialist Realism, their actions paved the way for art to be taken over by politics in the planned creation of a new society and a new human being under the leadership of the Party.

It is not that Stalin or Trotsky, for example, was a student of Arvatov or Chuzhak, but that all of them were working towards similar goals, and that the avant-gardes understood this. However, this also means that Stalin as Party leader was not merely a political actor, but rather the “demiurge” who created a new world from the human beings whom the revolution had inherited, so to speak, from pre-revolutionary reality. While even the most radical elements of the avant-garde, such as the *LEF* group, continued to work only on reflections of reality, Stalin through the Party had the means to rework reality itself, and he did so. That is to say that Stalinist aesthetics was the heir of the immediately preceding period in Russian art, and Stalin himself was the consummate Russian avant-garde artist, fulfilling the most radical dream of the avant-garde movement, namely, the creation, education, and manipulation of both the unconscious as well as consciousness in order to serve the creation of a new world.⁴⁸

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“Let Us Say *Yes* . . .”: Music, the Stranger and Hospitality

Helen Phelan

Editor’s note:

Defining what civic space is, and further defining how music might contribute to the creation of that space, would seem to suggest the need for understanding what it is we are looking for. Generally, as politicians and public administrators, we might look for outputs – more voters at the polls or more citizens joining activist groups – in order to define the health of civic society and our success in sustaining and improving it. However, these seemingly tangible outputs may not always express or address the quality of relationships among citizens, or the level of integration of difference, as much as they express the perceived conflict among individuals over narrow interests. Helen Phelan suggests that music provides a space for the intangible to occur, for people to adjust to each other according to their own time and according to complexity of human relationships. Her analysis of the nature of music and her findings among immigrant women and Travellers¹ in Ireland have significance for public policy that defines the manner and space in which citizens interact and long-term sustainable civic relationships are created.

Welcoming the Stranger

The stranger, or the foreigner, is a familiar figure in Western literature, philosophy, and theology. Plato’s interrogative *xenos*, Paul’s Hellenistic cosmopolitanism, medieval *peregrini* and *advenae*, Marco Polo’s accounts of the marvels of the East, and the good savage of

¹ Travellers refers to a nomadic, itinerate people of Irish origin living in Ireland, Great Britain and the United States. They speak, besides English, a distinct language of their own called Shelta. There is disagreement about their historical origins, but evidence suggests they have been in Ireland since at least the Dark Ages. Because of their nomadic lifestyle, Travellers are often the subject of discrimination and social exclusion.

Romanticism are all aspects of a complex, inherited projection of the Other (Kristeva, 1991). The turn of the millennium from the 20th to the 21st century has re-cast the concept of the stranger against a backdrop of global migration, unprecedented in its scope and character (Skeldon, 1997). Philosophy, psychoanalysis and literary criticism have all re-engaged in what is increasingly acknowledged as one of the seminal challenges to contemporary political, social and ethical human organization.

One of the concepts rehabilitated in this most recent engagement is the concept of hospitality. This has been most rigorously explored and deconstructed in a number of key lectures by Jacques Derrida in the late 1990s, including a series of lectures given in Paris in January 1996 and an address to the International Parliament of Writers in Strasbourg during the same year (Derrida & Dufourmantelle, 2000; Derrida, 2001). Circling around concepts of cosmopolitanism, forgiveness and the foreigner, is an illusive exploration of the double helix of hospitality. Two strands are explored: the strand of relative, political, law-based hospitality and that more aspirational “absolute” hospitality, on which he claims real hospitality must rest. The symbiotic relationship of both approaches is acknowledged, as is the lack of the latter, resulting in a restrictive approach to the former.

What is the medium of absolute hospitality? Questioning the claim of Levinas that language *is* hospitality, Derrida notes that “...we have come to wonder whether absolute, hyperbolical, unconditional hospitality doesn’t consist in suspending language” (135: SH). Could this suspension of language imply an alternative pursuit of sound? Anne Dufourmantelle describes a Derridean lecture: “[T]he first impression you draw from listening to the seminar is of hearing a musical score being played that makes the very movement of thinking audible” (22, FQ). Is music a kind of “audible” thinking, a way to suspend language and move from the law-based to the “lawless” liberation of absolute hospitality? Through an exploration of some key contemporary approaches to our understanding of the human phenomenon of music-making, as well as a case study of a particular musical happening in Limerick, Ireland, involving a group of women from the Travelling and asylum seeking communities, this paper attempts the postulation that music is a potential medium through which absolute hospitality can be glimpsed and, on occasion, realized.

Question d'étranger

Two aspects of the Derridean approach to hospitality require further exploration, in order to suggest its resonance with musical expression. The first of these involves the tradition of interrogation and the stranger. The lecture entitled “Foreigner Question” (Question d'étranger) admits that the “question” of the foreigner preoccupies contemporary Europe but equally reminds the listener / reader that the foreigner him/herself is a question posed at the host society:

... before being a question to be dealt with, before designating a concept, a theme, a problem, a programme, the question of the foreigner is a question of

the foreigner, addressed *to* the foreigner ...but also the one who, putting the first question, puts me in question (3: FQ)

Unlike the concept of community, with its emphasis on that which is held in common, the concept of hospitality is derived from the double meaning of *hostis*: both host and enemy (hostile / hostility). Hospitality in this sense implies both a patron, or patriarch, who welcomes and a stranger (enemy?), to whom the invitation is addressed. The invitation is issued in the language and the culture of the host, and it is this which first reveals the intrinsic inequality of the relationship. The foreigner must:

...ask for hospitality in a language which by definition is not his own, the one imposed on him by the master of the house, the host, the king, the lord, the authorities, the nation, the State, the father etc. This personage imposes on him translation into their own language and that's the first act of violence. (15, FQ)

The necessity of language is imposed by the conditional invitation, through which the terms and conditions of hospitality are extended. One must understand the question in order to provide an adequate answer, an answer which indicates one's status as a guest and not a parasite. The first aspect of this question is the ability to provide one's own *identity*: “to receive him, you begin by asking his name” (27: FQ). For, of course, the ability to identify the stranger is inextricably linked with the ability of the host society to define its own identity. Thus, asylum laws begin with documentation: accountability of the asylum seeker as both individual and type (name, label). Among the first questions asked of any asylum seeker is: What is your name? The most frequently asked question of all foreigners is: Where do you come from?

These are forms of hospitality. They reveal interest, curiosity, a desire to know. But do they also embed a desire to categorize and, perhaps, ghettoize? By forcing the other to define him/herself according to the questions of the host, does this ultimately reinforce the intrinsic power of the host, by allowing him/herself to be defined differently / better? “Does hospitality consist in interrogating the new arrival?” (27: FQ). Certainly, at one level, it does. Without the conditional laws of hospitality, upon which most nation-states rely, “[T]he unconditional Law of hospitality would be in danger of remaining a pious and irresponsible desire, without form and without potency” (23: OC).

The greater danger pointed up by Derrida’s work, however, is the tendency for the conditional to operate without regard for the unconditional. This is partially evidenced by the fact that “the right to political asylum is less and less respected ...in Europe” (9: OC). The *language* of conditional laws does not allow for that which resides beyond its power to interrogate. It must be searched for through a different medium, in another dimension: a placelessness or “utopia” resonant, ultimately, with the imagination: the place where music has its origin and being.

One other point needs to be made in this regard, relating to the emergence of silence. At the point at which language is suspended, silence may occur. Derrida notes, “[K]eeping silent is already a modality of possible speaking” (135: SH). Kristeva suggests that “...between two languages, your realm is silence” (15: Kristeva, 1991). But what emerges after silence? Kristeva relates the story of a famous Russian linguist who claimed to speak Russian in fifteen different languages: “As for me I had the feeling that he rejected speech and his slack silence led him, at times, to sing and give rhythm to chanted poems” (15-16: 1991). In a chapter significantly entitled *Toccata and Fugue for the Foreigner*, Kristeva makes claims for the emergence of music out of the suspension of language and the space of silence. Music is a *doing* and *expressing* beyond language: “Stuck with that polymorphic mutism, the foreigner can, instead of saying, attempt doing” (16: 1991).

Deconstructing Music

Musicologists and music-lovers alike have floundered at the task of articulating an understanding of what music is and what part it plays in the experience of being human. Nicholas Cook writes that:

...in the case of music the problem of experience and its representation is so pressing and so specific that some theorists, like ethnomusicologist Charles Seeger, have questioned the degree to which words can be regarded as capable of expressing musical experience at all. They have done so on the grounds that there is a basic incompatibility between words and rational reflection on the one hand, and the experiencing of music on the other – an incompatibility whose source lies in the quite distinct logical structures of verbal and musical consciousness (Cook, 1990, p. 1).

Nevertheless, the desire to understand and articulate is equally human, and a number of disciplines from cognitive psychology to ethnomusicology have attempted a full spectrum of quantitative and qualitative explorations in their attempts to understand this significant human phenomenon (though of course not limited to humans, our attempts to *understand* its significance often are). The *character* of music, which these studies attempt to articulate, allows us to consider its suitability as a potential medium of the unconditional.

Many studies indicate that the ability to hear is one of the first senses to develop in the unborn child. Prenatal auditory functioning continues to develop through to the eighth month, but studies indicate that the unborn child is able to hear at approximately eighteen weeks (Stoppard, 2000). A newly born child can only see about 15 inches away in monochrome, but its sense of hearing is fully developed. What it *understands* through this sonic ability is of course not primarily linguistic at this stage, but highly affective and emotional. Studies indicate that, not only do babies respond to music they have heard in the womb, but also they respond more emphatically to music which is favored by their mother. Babies have demonstrated the ability to change their sucking patterns to re-enforce the humming of a well

known lullaby, as opposed to a less familiar one (Deliège & Sloboda (eds.), 1996). These studies suggest that sonic / musical consciousness is *primal* in the sense that its development is primary (first) and closely linked to the ability of humans to respond emotionally and intuitively to the world around them. The *fundamental* and *foundational* nature of its development in the human may be seen to resonate with Derrida’s description of the unconditional. Whether writing of hospitality, forgiveness or cosmopolitanism, the absolute or the unconditional is always presented as primary or foundational to the conditional: “This is why the distinction Derrida sets out at the start between *The unconditional Law of hospitality* and (in the plural) laws of hospitality is primordial” (64: FQ).

It is also worth noting that the sense of touch develops equally early, if not earlier, in the unborn child. Smell, hearing, touch and taste are fully developed in the newly born baby (Masi & Leiderman, 2004). This leads to another characteristic of music, which Nicholas Cook describes as one of its most potent: its ability to imagine itself. Music imagines itself into being in a very distinctive way. Part of this imagining is scaffolded by conventions of structure, form, and other cultural frameworks, but the foundation of musical composition is musical imagination, and musical imagination is characterized as extremely multi-sensory. When describing their compositional processes, musicians often speak of not only “hearing” music in their minds, but also of “seeing” it and “feeling” it in their bodies. One well-known account quoted by Cook is Schlösser’s rendition of Beethoven’s description of his own compositional process:

I see and hear the picture in all its extent and dimensions stand before my mind like a cast and there remains for me nothing but the labor of writing it down which is quickly accomplished (Cook, 1990, p. 114).

Similarly, many musicians can “feel” new compositions emerging. Instrumentalists, for example, often feel them in their fingers or compose by playing with motifs on their fingers, out of which new musical ideas emerge. Most performers describe musical memory as a combination of mental and physical memory, with sound literally embedded in their fingers. The rhythmic aspect of music is also often imagined across the whole body and is most difficult to articulate in any way other than through physical demonstration.

With these examples, Cook is postulating a double characteristic for music. Not only is music primarily an “imagined” form of human expression (its genesis being primarily of the imaginative rather than the rational mode), but the *nature* of this imagining is intrinsically multi-sensory. Does this reach back to its primal / primary development in the “utopia” of the womb, the alien / other habitat of the “not-yet” realized? Has the nature of this imagining emerged from the necessary otherness of its original development, preceding linguistic and rational thought and articulation?

There are certainly aspects of musical expression, which are rational and open to analysis. Swanwick suggests that music resides in the space between analysis and intuition and that any attempt to understand it must move itself methodologically into this space: “[P]ut bluntly, it is

the dialectic of intuitive and analytical ways of making sense of the world” (4: Swanwick, 1994). This resonates with Derrida’s postulation of the Kantian “intermediate *schemas*” – a space “between an unconditional law or an absolute desire for hospitality on the one hand and, on the other, a law, a politics, a conditional ethics” (147: SH). As a music educationalist, Swanwick cautions against approaches to music which attempt to explain its existence exclusively through analysis: “[T]here are layers of musical meaning, some beyond the reach of other forms of discourse (Swanwick, 1994, p. 1).”

A final comment on these brief deconstructions of music concerns its role in the impulse towards communication. The nature of what is actually communicated by music is highly debated: “The fact that a generative grammar for music seems to be a less realizable goal than for language forces us to consider the fundamental differences in aim of linguistic and musical communication” (Sloboda, 1985, p. 65). Music is clearly not propositional or interrogative in the linguistic sense, but it is equally clear that it communicates something of value to human beings. Sloboda relates the common experience of going to a concert and, even if the music performed cannot be recalled (or paraphrased as a play or poetry reading might be), the *emotion* which was communicated is remembered and valued by the listener: “[F]or a great number of us, then, music has extra-musical meaning, however intangible” (Sloboda, 1985, p. 59). What is being communicated may not be semantically clear or logical – indeed, it may differ quite significantly for different people experiencing the performance. But the depth and significance of the communication would seem to be evidenced in the metaphorical attempts most musical communities make to express their sense of music: an experience which can conjure up feelings of euphoria, catharsis, humor, or an existential, omnipotent sense of the world’s suffering or mystery (Maconie, 1990).

The Derridean thrust towards a deeper kind of hospitality would seem to propose a diving down, back and beyond: back into some primordial way of being human, one which is more essential than our increasingly rational and political mode. One which goes beyond language and which recognizes that our ability to experience this way of being depends on our ability to access the imagination, intuition and the communication of emotion and feeling. Above all, Derrida describes this as an essentially *ethical* experience: “... in as much as it is a manner of being there, the manner in which we relate to ourselves and to others, to others as our own or as foreigners, *ethics* is *hospitality*” (17: OC). In his visionary essay on forgiveness, he cites Jankélévitch’s call for the “imperative of love and a ‘hyperbolic ethics’: an ethics, therefore, that carries itself beyond laws, norms, or any obligation. Ethics beyond ethics, there perhaps is the undiscoverable place of forgiveness” (35-36: OF).

Migration and the Stranger in Ireland

Uniquely positioned as a colonized “third world” country, in the heart of “first world” colonizing Europe, Ireland’s migration pattern has, in recent history, been one of almost exclusive emigration (O’Sullivan, 1997). This pattern reached an apex with the Potato Famine of 1845-49 and, from the mid-19th century until the end of the 20th century, Ireland had the

highest rate of consistent emigration of any Western European country. This trend halted slightly with Ireland’s entry into the European Economic Community (EEC) in 1973 but returned with the economic depression of the 1980s (Farrell & Watts, 2001).

The prosperity of the 1990s, popularly known as the “Celtic Tiger,” resulted in unprecedented social and economic change. For the first time in Irish history, the pattern of migration shifted towards Ireland, with significant waves of immigration from beyond the Irish Diaspora and the European Union. Drawn by the promise of employment, these new immigrants came primarily from Eastern Europe and Asia. A smaller but significant number came seeking not employment, but asylum. While the numbers of asylum seekers in Ireland are still quite small in comparison to other European countries, they rose very quickly from virtually none in 1992 to over 10,000 by 2000, with the majority coming from Africa and Eastern Europe (Fanning, 2002; Farrell & Watts, 2001).

Until 2000, the majority of asylum seekers in the Republic of Ireland were housed in Dublin (the Republic’s capital city) while their claims were being processed. As the numbers continued to grow, the Government of Ireland introduced a policy of dispersal, allocating asylum seekers to towns and cities around the island.

With a population of over 170,000 in the greater Limerick area, Limerick is the third largest city in the Republic. Situated at the mouth of the Shannon estuary (the longest river in Ireland), Limerick has a strong association with Shannon airport (the first international airport in the country) and a growing informatics industry, attributed with much of the credit for the economic boom of the 1990s (McCafferty, 2005). The first asylum seekers arrived in Limerick in June 2000. Since then, approximately 260 people have received refugee status in Limerick and about 120 have received leave to remain on humanitarian grounds. There have been about 40 family reunifications, and additional 546 persons are still in the asylum process (Phelan & Kuol, 2005).

Comhcheol: Harmony

In 2000, the HEA (Higher Education Authority) introduced “targeted initiative schemes” (later re-named “strategic initiative schemes”) with a goal of promoting greater equity of access to higher education in Ireland (HEA, April, 2005). The refugee and asylum seeking community was identified as a targeted group by the HEA, and the Irish World Music Centre at the University of Limerick developed *Sanctuary* as a HEA-funded initiative to promote greater access to education through the pursuit of cultural activities. *Sanctuary* acts in partnership with the Limerick support group, Doras Luimní (Development Organization for Refugees and Asylum Seekers in Limerick). The Irish World Music Centre also operates a second HEA-initiative called *Nomad*, which fosters educational and cultural activities with the Travelling community.

Comhcheol (the Irish language word for “harmony”) emerged out of recognition of the particular obstacles which faced women in both the asylum seeking and Travelling communities in accessing higher education. Childcare was one of the most significant. Few women were able to access *Sanctuary* projects, for example, which took place in the evening, as it was not possible for them to source adequate childcare. The Travelling community already operated a women’s group with connections in the university, and it was decided to combine this group of women, who were coming to the campus a number of days each week, with a group of women from the asylum seeking community and to form a community-based women’s choir. The goals of the choir, from the perspective of the coordinators, included exposure to university life, through participation in a cultural activity; cultural exchange of repertoire from the Travelling community and the cultures represented within the asylum seeking community; and the provision of a creative space for women to explore music-making.

It is necessary to precede my observations on this experience with a few words on methodology. Like all musicians trained in the tools and methods of ethnomusicology, I approached the group armed with the presumption of conducting several interviews, formulating case studies on individual participants and “representing” their voices in their own words. I immediately met with a number of obstacles. None of the women within the asylum seeking community would agree to be interviewed or recorded. Once they saw my minidisk, they presumed that I was doing an interview for a newspaper. Their experience of the Irish press had been overwhelmingly negative, and there was great fear of their names being exposed in a way which might jeopardize their asylum case. I considered the use of anonymous questionnaires, but literacy was an obstacle for many women in both communities. In fact, language itself was a basic problem. I eventually managed to communicate that I was not a journalist, but rather a musician and teacher who wished to write about the “story” of our choir. This was immediately acceptable, but it was suggested to me that surely what I needed to record for such a story was the singing of the choir?

This is what I eventually did. In fact, a video documentary on the choir was produced with the assistance of the women in the ensemble. The suggestions of the choir, which directed my fieldwork, were in many ways resonant with the questions ethnomusicology is asking about its own discipline. Is talking to people the best way to understand a musical event? *Shadows in the Field* (Barz & Cooley, 1997) is a collection of essays exploring the question of fieldwork and the documentation of musical experience:

As we approach the twenty-first century, ethnomusicology is in a unique position to reflect on our rich heritage as a field ...[T]he fieldwork methodology of collecting data to support goals external to the field experience is no longer considered adequate. This model has not been replaced by a single new model or single methodology, but we have entered an experimental moment when new perspectives are needed (11).

One approach increasingly employed by ethnomusicologists involves viewing the performance itself as a “commentary” on itself. In other words, performance is understood as fieldwork: “The young and diverse field of performance studies providing new perspectives towards performance-approach ethnographic methods ...[O]thers have called for the inclusion of our entire sensory experience in ethnographic representation” (14). It is from this perspective that I offer the following observations on *Comhcheol*: as a performing member of the musical ensemble and a scholar and musician wondering about what the musical meaning of the experience might be?

Overtly, the choir might be viewed as a failed experiment in hospitality. The two groups of women never really mixed socially. At tea break, they sat at two different tables. They often spoke different languages (mostly English and Yoruba, but also Romanian, Igbo, French and Cant). There was tremendous shyness between the groups. Although we began each session with an introductory song, including the names of all the participants, I know that very few of the women actually knew the names of women from the other community by the end of the year. Finally, one of the coordinators from the Travelling community informed us that the women from that community wished to continue with their own choir in the following year. The high level of illiteracy, particularly with the older women in the group, made them feel very intimidated when women from the asylum seeking community brought in written lyrics to sing.

On the level of cultural exchange, the choir also failed to reach the initial goals of the coordinators. Part of our remit as educators and musicians involves the support and celebration of unique cultural traditions. We were anxious to facilitate the transmission of traditional Yoruba, Igbo and Traveller musical repertoires and were aware that there were important tradition bearers within the choir. We also viewed this learning process as a way of “opening-up” each community to the music of the other, promoting respect and integration. This did not happen. Instead, the choir elected to sing well-known Irish, Country & Western-style songs, as well as some American style Gospel music.

On the conditional level of hospitality, then, this musical event might be seen to have failed to reach even the most basic levels of welcome. After all, no one seemed to even remember each other’s name when the event was over. But I have come to wonder whether a deeper kind of hospitality did in fact occur: one which had nothing to do with our overt, political goals of integration or cultural respect, but one which resided in the musical experience itself. Even if the tea breaks happened separately, the music making did not. The group itself divided into high voices and low voices, which did not correspond with ethnic or community difference. While we encouraged the communities to represent their own identity (as we had ordained it: Traveller, Nigerian etc.), they chose instead repertoire, which reflected their sense of the other. After one of the rehearsals, the Traveller women started singing “Limerick You’re a Lady.” The women from the asylum seeking community immediately suggested that this would be the song they would “learn” from the others. Did this speak to their desire to be of Limerick or their sense that the other women were from Limerick? Likewise, the Travelling community kept asking the African women to sing “Sister Act” songs. This was what they

viewed as “black” music, while the Africans viewed it as American. But as all things American seemed to be popular in Ireland, they agreed to “teach” these songs, not because they felt them as their own, but because they sensed that other women would like them. This crisscross of communication did not seem to affect the performance of the songs. In fact, at the end, it was not easy to decipher which songs “came from” which community, and both sang them with equal ownership.

One of the reasons that “conditional” hospitality was not possible is that neither group could call themselves the “host” group. In many ways, both were outsiders. It was unclear who was to welcome whom. The traditional dynamic of host and guest did not exist between them. If it existed anywhere, it was between both communities and the “host” university programs which issued the invitation to them as Travellers and asylum seekers (label), asked them their names at every session, and issued the invitation to their home (university) on the *condition* that they participate in this choral program. Under these conditions, they were welcome.

But what happened *between* the two communities, really happened at the musical level. In the environment of socializing (tea breaks) and learning (new songs with lyrics), very little hospitality was extended on any side. But on numerous occasions, one or other of the women, often after being frustrated by a lack of linguistic communication, would simply break into one of the songs. All the others would join in and, on several occasions, the “structure” of the sessions was subverted and the women would simply sing song after song. In this improvised, imagined space, a whole spectrum of repertoire emerged: songs we were teaching each other, tribal songs which perhaps only one or two women could sing, Irish language songs sung only by the older members of the Travelling community. Once, a woman from the Travelling community sang a song in memory of a child of hers who had died. I am sure that many of the African mothers did not understand all the words, but afterwards, at least two of them found a way to get her to interact with their babies. What was communicated? How was it intuited? I don’t know, but I wrote that day that something came right out of the womb in the singing between the women at that session.

Performance often brings its own kind of euphoria. In the video documentary, we see the women getting ready for the stage. We had shopped for a wide-sweeping, floral neck-scarf for everyone in the group, and there are shots of women doing their hair, putting on make-up and helping each other to pin on their scarves. There are shots of the performance, with heads tossed back, eyes closed, hands beating rhythms on hips, holding hands, mothers holding babies, singing. Afterwards, much hugging and jubilation between women who hardly knew each other and would not necessarily ever meet again.

Was this hospitality? Can the question be answered outside of the experience? Does the question need to be articulated, or does the experience need to be simply accepted, in faith? I am not sure myself, though I know that what it *felt* like to me was a great “saying yes.” I have been involved with support groups for new cultural communities in Ireland since 2000. I have been part of many local political meetings, community-based support groups, legal strategy sessions and media profiles, and they rarely feel like a *yes*. The language of politics,

legality, asylum law, community fund-raising and academic research often sounds like a tentative “we hope so,” “perhaps,” a pragmatic “we’ll try,” or a down right “no.” An unconditional “yes” needs a different language, a different space, a different medium, and an almost religious reaching beyond what we think we can do:

Let us say yes to who or what turns up, before any determination, before any anticipation, before any identification, whether or not it has to do with a foreigner, an immigrant, an invited guest or an unexpected visitor, whether or not the new arrival is a citizen of another country, a human, animal or divine creature, a living or dead thing, male or female (77: SH).

This is, perhaps, why we sing.

Notes on the Use of Derridean Texts

Foreigner Question (FQ) and *Step of Hospitality / No Hospitality* (SH) were published as *Of Hospitality* in an English language translation for the Cultural Memory in the Present series (2000). This publication also includes a response by Anne Dufourmantelle, in an effort to represent the dialogical approach to discourse presented in these lectures. Translations of *On Cosmopolitanism* (OC) and *On Forgiveness* (OF) were published as part of the Thinking in Action Series (2001).

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The Suppression of the Music of Ionian Islands by the Modern Greek State: Culture that did not Fit the Political Agenda

Adamantios Dionysios Minas

Music plays an important role in social integration, often providing the vehicle for how one culture reinterprets itself in another. However, as in the case of the Ionian Islands, a peoples' ability to incorporate outside influences and produce local culture may find itself at odds with the more nationalistic purposes of the state. The Ionian Islands came to be part of the Greek state without enduring the yoke of occupation by the Ottoman Empire or suffering in the wars that preceded the Greek free state. Therefore, the Ionian culture, in particular its popular music, has been made obscure by political elites who defined Greece as the benevolent opposite of its enemies, as the center of civilization and therefore without cultural influences – a definition that Ionian music, influenced by Italian settlers, did not meet.

The Territorial Integration of Greece

From the subjugation by the Romans and until the early 19th century, Greeks did not have an independent State of their own. In the Greek collective consciousness, the Byzantine Empire is portrayed as a Greek Empire, partly because since the 6th century AD its administration was highly Hellenized, gradually shrinking in the areas where more Greek than Latin speaking populations dwelled (Davies, 1997, p. 238-51). However, technically speaking, the Byzantine Empire was the Eastern Roman Empire. The latter entered a period of crises after the loss of the battle of Mancikert in 1071, when the Seljuk Turks had established a foothold in Asia Minor. The Empire collapsed entirely on May 29th, 1453, when the Ottoman Turks besieged and occupied Constantinople. Various failed revolts followed throughout the following centuries.

In conventional thought, the Greek War of Independence broke out on March 25th, 1821. It is interesting to note that there was an earlier attempt in February 1821, not in predominantly Greek areas, such as the Peloponnesus, but in modern day Romania. This may seem absurd today, but it had a rationale of its own. The Greek War of Independence was not only considered the means to establishing an independent Greek State, but also the means of

ousting the Ottomans and re-establishing the Byzantine Empire. Furthermore, commencing the War of Independence in areas neighboring Russia would presumably encourage the latter to intervene and help its fellow Orthodox brethren (Clogg, 1996, p. 80-84).

Greek freedom fighters had notable success, and they took advantage of Ali Pasha's attempts to establish a principality of his own, as it distracted the Ottoman forces. However, the Ottoman Turks managed to strike back. Apart from having technical superiority, they took advantage of a Civil War that had fallen upon the Greek side (Clogg, 1996, p. 96-98). The Ottomans, by taking advantage of the Civil War among the Greeks, almost managed to regain control and subdue the War of Independence. The independent Greek State owes a lot to the naval battle of Navarino, when the combined British, French and Russian fleets destroyed the Turkish fleet (Clogg, 1996, p. 101; *Iστορία Του Ελληνικού Εθνους*, 1975, p. 466-67).

The Megali Idea

The independent Greek State was established in 1830. It included the Peloponnese, Central Greece, the Cycladic islands, Euboea, the islands in the Saronic Gulf, as well as Skiathos, Skopelos and Allonesos. Within its borders, the new state contained only a tiny proportion of the Greek-speaking Christian Orthodox population. The new State's declared and most exalted policy was the one of national integration, known as the *Megali Idea*. The objective of this policy was to bring all Greeks of the Ottoman Empire into the Greek State by expanding its borders. The crowning achievement would have been the liberation of Constantinople. The Megali Idea was actually the code name of resurrecting the Byzantine Empire. Otherwise, the Megali Idea was irredentism, Greek style.

The first King of Greeks, King Otto of the House of Wittelsbach, championed Greek irredentism. However, during his reign there was no success in expanding the Greek borders. On the contrary, whenever Greece attempted to provoke the Ottoman Empire or take advantage of international pressures on the latter, there was no help or support. Rather, there would be counter-actions by the Great Powers, such as naval blockades.

Ironically enough for King Otto, the first successful expansion of the Greek State was realized after he was deposed from the throne. The Great Powers chose as the new King Prince Christian-William-Ferdinand-Adolph-George of Denmark, who ascended to the Greek Throne under the name of George the First. Great Britain, in order to enhance its influence in Greece and to get rid of a nuisance, decided to make a goodwill gesture to the new regime and offer its protectorate of the Ionian Islands to Greece. The Islands were officially handed over to Greeks on May 21st, 1864.

Redrawing its borders after the Congress of Berlin, Greece extended its holdings to include Thessaly as well as the area of Arta. Like the Ionian Islands, these areas were not acquired by war, but by means of negotiation and by taking advantage of the international political environment. However, in 1897, Greece tried to further expand its borders through war. Being poorly prepared, however, the Greek Army was severely defeated by the Ottoman Army. The

latter advanced nearly to the outskirts of Athens. The international community intervened, requiring the retreat of the Ottoman Army. The subsequent peace treaty had minor territorial adjustments between the two states in favor of the Ottoman Empire. This defeat had major ramifications in Greece, the most important of them being the de-legitimizing of the existing political system.

Therefore, Greek territorial integration was achieved at a high price. The highest price to be paid came, however, during the period of the Balkan Wars, the First World War, and the expedition in Asia Minor and the subsequent defeat by the Turks, which led to a mass influx of refugees, subsequently legitimized and ratified by the Treaty of Lausanne. One could allege that Thessaly, as well as the Dodecanese, were peacefully integrated within the Greek realm. However, it is more likely that Thessaly witnessed the consequences of the advancing Ottomans during 1897. Further, Dodecanese was granted to Greece as reparation to the Second World War and the subsequent occupation. Therefore, one can say that it was only the Ionian Islands that were genuinely peacefully integrated. This fact would set the islands apart when the Greek state established its loyalties among those who suffered losses in the wars. In particular the Greek state was sensitive to the issue of cultural influences from the outside.

Due to the Turkish occupation, Greece mostly missed the intellectual endeavors associated with the Renaissance, the Reformation, and the Counter-reformation. Indeed, once Greece gained its independence, it was too difficult to catch up, not only with the Industrial Revolution, but also with the modernization project. However, it would be too bold to allege that there was no cultural production in Greece, even though this absolutist thesis supports the common belief that makes the Ottoman occupation the scapegoat for any cultural, social, and political underdevelopments in modern-day Greek society.

The Ionian Islands

The Ionian Islands today constitute the western limits of the Greek State. These Islands are connected and related to mainland Greece not only in mythology but in history as well. Ulysses, King of Ithaca, is probably the most famous mythological person coming from the Ionian Islands. Furthermore, the realm of the Phaeaceans was traditionally identified with Corfu. In history, the expedition against Corfu was one of the major, if not *the* major, events leading to the outbreak of the Peloponnesian War. Like the rest of Greece, the Ionian Islands were subjugated to the Romans, and when Emperor Theodosius divided the Empire into Eastern and Western parts, they became part of the Eastern Empire – the westernmost part of it. However, contrary to the other Greek speaking areas, the Ionian Islands had an earlier and more stable association with the West. Further, in contrast to the rest of Greece, they did not fall under the Ottoman occupation. Actually, the Turks occupied the islands of Cephalonia, Ithaca, and Zante for a short period of time, about 15 years, while Santa Maura suffered a longer Turkish occupation until the mid 1660s. The Ottomans, however, did not manage to establish even the shortest-lived toehold in Corfu.

It was mainly the occupation by the Most Serene Republic of Venice that linked these islands, forming the coherent political, geographical, and socioeconomic unit called in Greek the “*Heptanesos*” (The Seven Islands). The Venetian occupation lasted until 1797, when Napoleon Bonaparte abolished the Venetian State. The French were welcomed as liberators, the *Libro d' Oro* (the nobility registry) was scrapped, and symbolic trees of liberty were planted on the islands. From then on, the Ionians were entangled in the Napoleonic wars. In 1799, the islands were captured by the Russians. In 1807, they were given back to France, but the British showed interest in them as well. From October 1809, they managed to conquer them all again, except for Corfu, whose garrison resisted until the abdication of Napoleon in 1814 (Clogg, 1996, p. 75-76; *Iστορία Του Ελληνικού Έθνους*, 1975, p. 401).

The fate of the Ionian Islands was decided during the Paris Peace Congress in 1815. Therefore, the Ionian Islands followed a different trajectory in history than the rest of Greece, which remained under the Ottoman occupation.

Music in the Ionian Islands and Its Neglect

Having strong political ties with the Italian peninsula, the Ionian Islands have developed a rich musical culture – not only popular songs, but also works by classical composers with international reputations in their time. Yet, apart from the political connections, geographical proximity also played its role. Therefore, cultural development and influences in the Ionian Islands followed a different trajectory from Crete, also a Venetian possession until 1669. Crete provided an early example of Greek Renaissance during the Venetian Occupation, of which Domenikos Theotokopoulos and Frangiskos Leondaritis are its *enfants célèbres* of Pan-European fame. Both were dubbed as “El Greco” (the Greek) (Davies, 1997, p. 562-63). It has also to be noted that after the fall of Crete to the Ottomans many Cretans found refuge in the Ionian Islands, thinking it was better to be under the “schismatic’s yoke” rather than that of the “infidel.”

The Ionians and Italy: The Western Leanings of Western Islands

On the other hand, the Ionian Islands were closer to Venice, the Italian Peninsula, and its influences. The local nobility followed Italian customs. Among these was the opera. The Opera was housed mainly in San Giacomo’s Theatre in Corfu, where opera-companies coming from Italy performed. Stefanos Poyagos was the first local – non-Italian – to compose an opera, just a decade before the Collapse of the Most Serene Republic (Leotsakos, 2005; Χάρης Ξανθουδάκης, 2005, p. 6).

Swept by the romantic nationalism of the 19th century, the Ionian composers were the forerunners of the Greek National School of Music. Their endeavors were neither unprecedented nor unparalleled. One can think of the composers coming from the territories belonging to the Habsburg monarchy, such as Bartók, Dvořák, Smetana, from Russia, such as Mussorgsky, Balakirev, and from Latin America, such as Villa Lobos. These composers

combined musical techniques studied in Western Conservatories with traditional Greek elements. The major Ionian composers appeared during the 19th century, when the local nobility collapsed because of the demise of Venice, and the bourgeois class became stronger. Likewise, nationalism, the desire for self-determination, and the desire for the identity provided by local culture were formulated during the first 15 years of the 19th century, when the political status of the Ionian Islands was rather unstable (Ξανθούδακης, 2005, p. 6).

The Neglect of the Ionian Music

Nowadays it seems that almost no one is familiar with the music of the Ionian Islands, except for specialized musicologists, who seem to have committed themselves to a futile crusade to save it. Further, lay people may have heard that the retro-style *kantathes* songs came from the Ionian Islands and that this style influenced a homologous one in Athens during the early decades of the 20th century, but little else. One has to wonder why the music of the islands has been so severely neglected by the Greek State and subsequently by the Greek people.

There are possibly three main reasons for this that are interwoven with each other and with historical events: (1) Manuscripts from Ionian composers were generally lost and not preserved, (2) Ionian music was neglected by the Orthodox Church, and (3) Ionian music was neglected by the Greek State because it did not fit within the nationalistic concept of cultural superiority.

The Ill-Fated Manuscripts

Unfortunately, a great many of the manuscripts by Ionian composers have been lost or at best dispersed to various locations. Some of them were particularly ill fated. For example, in the release notes by Byron Fidetzis for the CD containing the Opera *Rhea* by the Ionian composer Spiro Samara, he says:

Naturally, the entirety of Samara's printed copies of his works along with the original hand-written drafts were kept in the Archives of Sonzogno Publishing House in Milan... However in 1943, the premises of Sonzogno were merely reduced to ashes following a bombing attack by the Allied Forces... It should also be stated that the Publishing House of Christian Friedrich Kahnt Verlag in Leipzig, which had published the orchestral score of Samara's opera *La Biondinetta* as well, was completely destroyed during World War II; as a result, today's successors to Kahnt (Drei Masken Verlag) are totally unaware of Spiro Samara, even as a mere entry (Fidetzis, 2004, p. 40).

These conditions make efforts to collect and compile the manuscripts difficult even for the most expert musicologists. George Leotsakos (2005), for example, writes about the responsibility of the composers' heirs.

...the works of the Ionian composers, even those in print, were posthumously mislaid, through the unpardonable “negligence” of heirs and trustees, the loss often amounting to ninety or even a hundred per cent of their production. (2005).

Attitudes of the Church

The population of Greece is predominantly Greek Orthodox. However, not all members of the congregation are active churchgoers. For most of them, the Church is associated with rites of passage, such as weddings, or they may attend occasionally at Christmas or the Easter Mass. During the Turkish Occupation, the Patriarchate was integrated into the Ottoman administrative system and the Patriarch was the supreme leader of the Sultan’s Orthodox subjects. However, since the tensions in Ottoman society were along religious rather than national lines, Orthodoxy offered a clear line of demarcation (Clogg, 1996, p. 36-38; Θάνος Βερέμης, 1998, p. 29-31). Moreover, Orthodoxy offered a further line of demarcation: that regarding the Catholic and Protestant West. Even today, the Orthodox Church is suspicious of the West and its culture, including its music. According to Leotsakos, “the tradition of art music in Greece was long inhibited by the opposition of the Orthodox Church to polyphonic secular and instrumental music” (2005). It is interesting to browse web pages of Greek Orthodox sites. The official website of the Church of Greece, <http://www.ecclesia.gr/English/EnIndex.html>, does not make any commentary on music. It has only an internal link devoted to chanting http://www.ecclesia.gr/Multimedia/Audio_Index/audioindex_en.html. However, the Bishopric of Attica <http://www.i-m-attikis.gr/html/gr/mainpage/maingr.html> has a site devoted to Greek music. There one reads (my translation from Greek) that Greek’s national music consists of “Byzantine church music and folk music.” For the Attica bishopric, there is no room for individual artistic creation. Needless to say, nothing is mentioned about music from the Ionian Islands, even about Mantzaros, who composed the music of the Greek National Anthem.

There is also a hostile perception of Ionian Church music by choirs associated with the Patriarchate of Constantinople and with the bishoprics of Continental Greece. According to these, Italian influences can be traced in Ionian Church chanting, influences that have fatally contaminated “Our Byzantine” tradition. Circles associated with the Ionian Islands retort, however, that it is the Ionian chanting that has saved the genuine Byzantine tradition, while the “mainstream” Byzantine chanting has been fatally contaminated by music influences and styles coming from the Ottoman cultural tradition (Ξανθουδάκης, 2005, p 8-9).

The Historical Coincidence: Greek Refugees with Unhappy Songs

As mentioned above, the most critical period of Greek national integration and of Greek nation shaping has been the decade of 1912-1922. Ever since the nationalistic revolution of the “New Turks,” Greeks dwelling in the Ottoman Empire found themselves in a difficult position. Things got worse as the Ottoman Empire entered the Great War. Being trapped in the new situation that the war brought, Greeks from the Ottoman Empire started to emigrate

to Greece as refugees. The Treaty of Lausanne in 1923 forced Orthodox populations to leave Turkey for Greece, while Muslim populations followed the opposite route. Assimilation and integration was anything but easy and harmonious. Locals had to share their plots of land and their output with the refugees. This unavoidably led to tensions. The ratio of refugee influx to Muslim deportation was not favorable. Further, refugees came to constitute a significant percentage of the Greek population. Moreover, a significant amount of the refugee population could not speak Greek as Christian Orthodox. This led to further tensions.

Among other things, the refugees brought their culture including the *Rebetiko* music. According to the 1928 census, refugee population was 20 per cent of the total population (Μαυρογορδάτος, n.d., p.19). Refugees therefore have had considerable influence on the development of cultural artifacts such as music since that time. On the other hand, numbers were not favorable for the Ionians.

Moreover, it is asserted here that the following also played a role in the demise of Ionian music. The popular urban music of the Ionian Islands exhibited a *joie de vivre* with the most profound lament usually being an unconsummated love. These troubles were of minor importance compared to the lament associated with the status of being a refugee and with the nostalgia towards the “Lost Fatherlands” that the *Rebetiko* songs expressed. Moreover, music from the Ionian Islands had Western influences and therefore had to face the general resentment towards the West caused by its seeming indifference to the Massacres in Asia Minor and as the place of origin of the Greek Royals, those responsible for the disaster.

Kalomiris' Role: State Building through Music

Added to these conditions limiting the spread and survival of Ionian music is Kalomiris, considered to be the founder of a Greek National School of Music. Though tactful, Kalomiris resented music from the Ionian Islands for various reasons. According to his *credo*, a genuine national school of music could only be based on folk songs, their scales, and their rhythmic patterns (Μυρτώ Οικονομίδου, 2005).¹ His rejection of the music from the Ionian Islands is indirectly evident in the very first program notes, which he released on his first concert in Athens in 1908. He writes about his vision to create a “real” National music, based on folk songs but using all the technical means that progressive music nations such as German, French, Russian and Norwegians have offered (Μανόλης Καλομοίρης, 1908). Probably it was not a matter of coincidence that, while he referred to Germany (Πολ Γκρίφιθς, 1993, p. 159-60),² he did not mention Italy as a developed music nation. Having done this, he would have to recognize the music from the Ionian Islands, which, although being Greek, was influenced by the Italian style.

¹ It is interesting to note that even composers from the Ionian Islands, such as Labelet and Lavrangas, have proposed a "national school of music". Furthermore, they have tried to disassociate themselves from any Italian influences.

² German music, or even better music from the German-speaking or German cultural cycle world, has a pivotal role in music. We have to take into consideration that even Schoenberg, the composer who was going to flee Germany after the rise of Hitler because of his Jewish origins, invented serialism so as to reassure German pre-eminence in music.

Kalomiris was undoubtedly an ambitious man who believed that he had a mission. Not only his activism, but also his political chameleon-behavior helped him to champion his cause. He was on good terms with the Government Party, but he also had contacts with the opposition – just in case the political situation was overturned (Γιάννης Μπελώνης, *Μανώλης Καλομοίρης*, 2002). He wanted to be the epicenter of musical life and therefore clashed with the composer Samaras for who would be the champion of Greek music (Γιάννης Μπελώνης, *Μανώλης Καλομοίρης*, 2002) To be fair, however, his ambition was not to establish a Kalomirian School of Music, but rather a national one. Furthermore, he urged his students to study all the musical trends and to write according to their feelings. When performing abroad, apart from his compositions he also promoted compositions from other composers (Popper, 1966, p.157-68). The National School of Music was probably his utopia, and as a utopian engineer he had to wipe the canvas clean (Popper, 1996, p. 157-68).

Kalomiris was born in Samos, but he came from Smyrna, and his attachment to the Venizelist camp during the crucial decades of 1912-1922 probably played a role in the development of his worldview (Leotsakos).³ Therefore, he would have lamented the lack of eponymous art because of the Ottoman occupation, seeing himself as the apostle of an eponymous musical creation that would synchronize Greece with the developed music world. He would not have considered Ionian music to even be Greek music due to its Italian influences. Greek culture was the “matrix of civilization” and therefore had no influences. Nor would Kalomiris have recognized influences from the Ottoman Empire, as the Ottomans were the Barbarians. Leotsakos writes that “until recently texts on the history of Greek art music, reproducing the views of Manolis Kalomiris, invariably started from 1830 (the year of Greek independence) thus marginalizing the contribution of the Ionian Islands (2005).” Ironically, it was an attack by an Ionic against the Ionians.

Other Composers and Institutional Figures

Kalomiris’ role in undermining the musical repertoire from the Ionian Islands was pivotal. However, he was not the only one. The infamous director of the Athens Conservatory, George Nazos, who trained in Munich, gave the curriculum a German orientation. He opposed the Italian-trained composers, of which the Ionians were the majority (Γιάννης Μπελώνης, 2002, p. 16). Kalomiris sided with Nazos against the Ionian composers, targeting primarily Samaras (Leotsakos).⁴

³ Kalomiris’ Symphony n. 1, “tis levendias” (loosely “valiant virtues”) was performed at the Treaty of Sevres festivities. Its fourth part makes extensive use of a Byzantine hymn. This hymn praising Virgin Mary as a supreme commander and Saviour of Constantinople was not used by chance by the composer. It expressed the crowning achievement of the Megali Idea – the liberation of Constantinople. (Krones, 1981).

⁴ Spyridon-Filiskos Samaras (1861-1917) is considered an equivalent of Domenikos Thetokopoulos and Frangkiskos Leontaritis as a Greek artist of European reputation. He studied in Corfu, Athens and at the Paris Conservatory. He was praised by Massenet and his teachers (among others Delibes and allegedly Gounod). He had an international career. Not only did he know Puccini, with whom he shared librettists, but he heralded the style that Puccini would develop. He is known best perhaps as the composer of the Olympic Anthem. There is a legend that he is the original composer of the aria “Vesti la guibba,” but that he waived any rights to Leoncavallo after losing at a game of cards.

We have already mentioned the rebetiko music, which came with the refugees from Asia Minor and the Black Sea. Initially, *rebetiko* was considered to be music of the lower class or “outlaw” music. After World War II, however, it assumed a different role. According to Leotsakos, “During the Civil War of 1946-1949 the nationalist radio propagated *rebetiko*”.⁵ Furthermore, he says that in 1948 the young composers Hadidakis, Kounadis and Theodorakis discovered in *rebetiko* a counterweight to Kalomiris’ nationalism. Later, however, the songs of Hadjidakis, Theodorakis and their followers, based on *rebetiko*, came to eclipse Greek art music and, partly through the well-known film *Never on Sunday*, shaped Greece’s musical image abroad (Fiske, 2000, p. 116-17).

Music from the Ionian Islands: Unfit for Propaganda

According to Lévi-Strauss, our perception of reality is socially constructed through a process imbedded in human physiology of mind. Through comparisons and posing oppositions and antithetical positions, perceptions and the structures to support them evolve (Fiske, 2000, p. 116-117). Applying this to a hypothetical Greek subconscious, Greece opposes herself to Turkey. In her mind, Greece epitomizes peace, the rule of law, and the love of life – the positive values. On the other hand, in this view, Turkey epitomizes war mongering, lawlessness and, generally speaking, everything sinister. Greece connotes culture and civilization, while Turkey exhibits barbarity. Turkish occupation, therefore, was the era when the darkness of barbarity fell upon culture and light. Greece was, therefore, cut off from the developments that marked the rest of Europe, such as the Renaissance. There was no cultural output, in this view. There were no educational institutions as well. Greeks learned their language in the so-called “hidden schools” because the Ottomans barred education. Greece did indeed miss the Renaissance, but there were cultural products nonetheless.

However, Greece is structurally related to the West as well. Things here seem to be more complex. On the one hand, there is the antithesis expressed through the dogmatic differences between Eastern Orthodoxy and Catholicism and, to a lesser degree, with Protestantism. Nevertheless, one can see another pattern of relationship. Greece sees itself as the originator of Western Civilization. It considers that it therefore influences, but can never be influenced. Due to these conceits, it considers that the West should respect it and not criticize – although it admires the contemporary West. The association resembles a mother to daughter relationship, where the mother admires and envies her daughter simultaneously.

The recognition and acceptance of music from the Ionian Islands would shake these structurally founded myths. For one, it would mean the acceptance of the fact that there was cultural production in Greece during the Ottoman occupation, even though it did not come from Ottoman occupied areas. Further, the music from the Ionian Islands denies the belief that

⁵ Leotsakos does not speculate about the reasons government forces used rebetiko as a tool of propaganda. We assert the following reason: The refugees, who brought rebetiko, settled mainly in Macedonia and Thrace. A part of the indigenous population was Greek who spoke Slavic. During the Civil War, a large part of the population sided with the Communists in order to form the “Great Macedonia.” Rebetiko music could be used to rally the refugee Greeks against the traitors.

Greek culture only influences rather than is being influenced – since Ionian music is influenced by the West. Therefore, being comparable to Western music, it can be valued and judged, and this destroys the myth of infallibility and incomparability of Greek state culture.

Papadopoulou and Veneti say that a relationship exists between art and politics in that a work of art, for various reasons, can become a work of committed art (thus conveying a political message) by mistake (Papadopoulou & Veneti, 2005, p. 10-11). Needless to say, the boundaries between “conveying a political message” and propaganda are sometimes opaque. Because it denied the image the Modern Greek state had of itself, music from the Ionians could not be used as a committed vehicle for conveying political messages. To paraphrase Papadopoulou and Veneti, we can speak about *uncommitted* art by mistake as well. However, we think that the persona that the Greek state adopted was a conscious choice by the political elite and as being apolitical is a political thesis, so is the negligence of the music from the Ionian Islands. Therefore, contrary to the *rebetiko* that served as a propaganda tool, music from the Ionian Islands was unfit for this role.

Conclusion: The Consequences

In the previous paragraphs, it has been argued that there has been a (mis)-perception about the lack of musical output from the Ionian Islands by the Greek State and the Greek society. This misperception has the following ramifications: (1) an important aspect of Greek cultural inheritance is ignored, (2) a point of contact between Greece and Western Europe is disregarded, and (3) this misperception has led to a superficial approach to music by the Greek public in general.

Perhaps the first and second points need no further comment. The third point is the author’s conjecture. Being ignorant that there is also a serious or classical music tradition from the Ionian Islands, the Greek people have, at best, indifferent attitudes towards serious music irrelevant of its place of origin and its style. Undoubtedly, Ionian music is different from modern serious musical output associated with atonality, modality, and polytonality, for example. However, if the Greek people knew that they also had their own serious musical tradition, that the music from the Ionian Islands can be considered its oldest form, they would perhaps have a different attitude.

For the majority of Greeks, “serious” (qualitative) music means predominantly songs not associated with the bouzouki nightclubs but with cozier music scenes and clubs. In many instances, interpreters of an older generation that used to sing in bouzouki nightclubs have forsaken these clubs for the cozier ones, where they continue to sing the very same old songs. Undoubtedly, many of these songs, while belonging to the Greek popular music genre, have their own merits and have been justly confirmed by the passing of time. However, we think that music labeled as “quality” music is more or less a marketing technique – a technique resembling the one used by television and cinema, where older popular genre productions are elevated to “quality” status by being labeled as “cult.”

It is asserted here that the attack of Kalomiris and others against music from the Ionian Islands displayed the traits of a culture of “destructive radicalism.” Later, Kalomiris was considered to be out of fashion by Theodorakis and Hadjidakis. The last two are still in “fashion.” However, it seems that no Greek knows the symphonic or operatic work of Theodorakis, who studied with Messiaen. The same seems to happen with the symphonic works or the *Lieder* of self-taught Hadjidakis. Both composers are predominantly known for their popular songs.

So, is not music from the Ionian Islands influenced mainly by Italian music? The answer will definitely be “yes.” However, this does not mean that it is Italian music per se. It is perhaps as absurd as labeling Bach’s lute suites as Arabic due to the origin of the instrument. Cultures influence and are influenced by other cultures, and this process leads to cultural rejuvenation. Cultural isolation is rather impossible and, if ever possible, it would lead to cultural collapse, due to immobility.

Music from the Ionian Islands could serve as a point of further cultural contact between Greece and the rest of Europe. Contrary to the perception of cultures being in constant conflict, as Huntington and others have proposed (Σάμιονελ. Π Χάντινγκτον et al, 1998), the author prefers to see cultures in a continuum or in an intersecting manner, where the one influences the other (Davies, 1997, p. 1238).

A Greek saying states that the city of Ioannina is a champion in knowledge, commerce, *and* warfare. On the other hand, the Ionian Islands, being relatively peacefully handed over and unaware of the Ottoman Occupation, could be listed as champions in commerce and knowledge, but not in warfare. Therefore, they had to pay the price of negligence in the eyes of the Greek State, for they did not suffer the Ottoman yoke, like the rest of Greece. We think that these attitudes are evident in the perception of music from the Ionian Islands in Greece.

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A Story of Saxophone Craftsmanship: Implications for Public Administration Theory

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Author's note:

While having breakfast and visiting with my friends, Ralph Hummel and Camilla Stivers, last week at the 2005 American Political Science Association annual meeting in Washington, D.C., we were sharing stories about the loss of American (and, indeed, outside of the U.S.) craftsmanship and the propensity for manufacturers and service providers to obey the laws of mass production. When it was my turn, I recounted the story of my own experience when it came time for me to buy a "new" baritone saxophone. After having talked about the story, my friends told me that the story had important aspects pertinent to public administration.

Background

I have played the saxophone, clarinet and flute now for about thirty-seven years. I consider playing professionally (or semi-professionally) to be my avocation. Currently I play in a jazz ensemble in South Texas, where we play for the public in the Rio Grande Valley and in Corpus Christi. I collect and have several musical instruments. Before moving to the Valley and working at the University of Texas-Pan American (my current full-time "gig") as an assistant professor of public administration, I performed with big bands in the Oklahoma City metropolitan area and played weekly at retirement centers and rest homes for a number of years with the "Talk of the Town" – big band from Norman, Oklahoma, as a community service. My primary "ax"ⁱ is the tenor sax, but occasionally the bands needed me to play the baritone sax, which is the bottom voicing in the five-piece saxophone section that also includes two alto and two tenors. The first baritone I had was a 1970 Selmer Mark VIⁱⁱ that had at one time been a high school band instrument and was pretty much a "beater."ⁱⁱⁱ The bari did not have a low "A," or concert "C," that I needed to do some of the work in the

saxophone section. So, I decided to see about trading it for another baritone saxophone. This is the story about the search.

Searching for the “Best” Horn

eBay seemed to be a good place to start looking at what was available, not to buy from, but to get an idea of the price. Baris are expensive, and it is rather unusual for an individual to own one, as institutions (high schools and colleges, for example) usually provide them to their students to play in ensembles. I wound up going to several musical instrument shops in Oklahoma City and Wichita, Kansas, and trying the newer horns that they had on hand. My friend and high school band director told me long ago not to be too obsessed with the brand and to find what worked best for me. His advice was this: “If it is frozen spit and plays well for you, then that is all that matters. Who cares what it looks like or what it says on the horn?”¹ I found the adage to be true. One of the musical instrument shops in Wichita (one of the biggest in the Midwest) had a rather large selection of new and used instruments, so I decided to make the trip there. I called the shop and set up an appointment to give their stock a test run.

The day finally came in the fall of 1998, and, when I arrived at the store, the salesman had twelve baritone saxophones, old and new, laid out on tables for me to try. He pointed me to the new Yanagisawa first. It was visually beautiful! The brass lacquer and engraving on the bell were perfect (a bit too perfect, though). I picked up the horn, put my own mouthpiece on it and went into the practice room to try it out. The key work was very comfortable as my hands and fingers gripped the instrument. As I blew into the horn, the sound emanating from it was pleasant enough, but I noticed that it made me sound like every other baritone saxophone player on the planet. This is not good. I wanted a distinctive sound. So, while the “mechanics” of the horn were okay, I was bothered by the “character” of the instrument (at that particular moment, I could not quite put my finger on what was wrong, but my gut was telling me something). I took it back to the salesman who informed that he had another horn made by “Vito,”^{iv} which happens to be made by Yanagisawa, too, though with less engraving on the bell, and it was less expensive. I tried it and found it to play *exactly* like the other Yanagisawa! Ugh! Okay, now I was really bothered and wanted to know why the two were so much alike. So, I went to the salesman and he told me that both horns were mass-produced in a Japanese or Asian factory using computers and lasers to make the instruments *exactly* alike. He further went on to add that this was a “virtue” and a breakthrough in the modern manufacturing process that allowed for “precision” and reductions in “human interaction” which would add to manufacturing costs and “flawed” instruments. Basically, the laws of production and profit making were the dominant core values now in the musical instrument business. I was stunned. Yanagisawa (unlike Yamaha) had been well-known previously for their great hand-craftsmanship since the late 1800s. At this point in my journey to find a bari, there was no way I was going to go with either of these two horns.

¹ This Oklahoma colloquialism is roughly the equivalent of the old adage “don’t judge a book by its cover.”

There were other new horns I tried there, including the top-of-the-line Selmer, Cannonball, Jupiter and Keilwerth brands.^v The Keilwerth bari was the best of that lot, but the price was too exorbitant for the “sound” that came from the instrument. Finally, there were two “old” baris left to try out. One was an old Conn “12M” made in the 1960s, but the “neck”^{vi} was not the original and did not fit properly, so the air leaked out before it made it into the horn. The other bari, however, was a real eye-opener: a 1967 King “Super 20.”^{vii} The Super 20 is my favorite^{viii} tenor saxophone, and this bari version was far and away the most superior of all the baritones I tried in Wichita.

After finishing the last of the baris, the salesman wanted to know which of the instruments I thought was the best. I told him hands down it was the Super 20. Disappointment and shock seemed to spread over his face. “But, but, how can that be?” he sputtered. Basically, I gave him my perspective as to the virtues and failings of each of the instruments. The King had a “sound” and “feel” unmatched by the mass-produced newer instruments laid out on the table, and I was strongly tempted to buy it. It was unique and had a sound that I wanted, though I would not buy it because it did not have the low “A” key that I needed for the ensemble work I was doing. I left the shop disappointed that all the new manufacturers were seemingly obsessed with mass-producing cookie-cutter horns that have lost their distinctive style. The values of economy and efficiency were stressed over the values of character and artistry. Large numbers of cheaply made, non-distinctive instruments are hurriedly pushed onto the “market” in order to turn quick profits. While this may be somewhat understandable, given the propensity of business towards the “bottom line,” the problem was that they were trying to live on their past reputations while skimping on the metal work and craftsmanship of their current production. I went back to Oklahoma City without a “new” instrument and distressed over the present state of instrument manufacturing.

A few weeks after the bari trials in Wichita, I talked to my favorite instrument repairman, Weldon Collier, about what happened. He told me he was not surprised given the fact that a lot of the mass-produced “junk” found its way into his repair shop. Weldon let me know about one of his former shop apprentices, Bobby Black, who was now the owner of “The Saxophone Shop” in Evanston, Illinois, and “Chicago Band Instruments.” Weldon knew Bobby carried a wide array of new and used instruments and suggested that I make a trip to see what he had in stock. Keeping what Weldon told me in mind, the next chance I had to go to Chi-town meant that I would go to The Saxophone Shop.

In the summer of 1999, my opportunity to go to Chicago came as my family and I went to visit my sister and her family. After a few days, I drove to Evanston and found the Saxophone Shop. I had called Bobby Black in advance and made arrangements. When I arrived, Bobby placed me in a room with a dozen or so baritones. As I glanced at the instrument cases, I eliminated most of the instruments (at least initially) and explained to Bobby the problems I had with each. He then brought into the room a bari and opened it to show me a stunning, black nickel-lacquered, gold-plated keys “B & S” brand^{ix} baritone sax made in the former “East” Germany. I immediately proceeded to try the horn and loved the

response of the key action, but most importantly, I loved the “sound.” It was far and away the best baritone sax I had ever played!^x Bobby brought in another and let me try it. It was nice, too, but didn’t quite get the response as the first horn. The “feel” of the keys was pretty much the same, but the sound did not quite resonate well with my ear and interpretation of what I wanted to project. I asked Bobby Black why there was a difference and he pointed out to me that each instrument was handcrafted. He said the B & S instrument line under the GDR and before 1999 had never modernized for mass production. Each instrument had personal care and attention, all the way down to the engraving and finishing touches. Needless-to-say, I wound up buying the first B & S baritone sax, taking it back to Oklahoma, and have been playing it ever since. This baritone saxophone is unique and contributes mightily to my own personal sound.

Implications for Public Administration and Public Administration Theory

You may be wondering at this point what the hell the story above has to do with public administration. Well, it is like this: managing well in the public sector is an art. Like selecting the “right” ax to perform at our best, we (those who serve the public) need to know what works best in order to perform. We know what is best as we use our judgment (Vickers 1995). Each of us has her own idiosyncrasies that have to be developed in order to realize one’s full potential in the art of public administration. Much of the practice of public administration today reflects the modern musical instrument industry values, namely “cost-effectiveness,” the “laws of production,” “cost-benefit analysis,” and “profit-making.” These principles take precedence in the discourse of public administration over the values of “responsiveness,” “artistry,” and personal “craftsmanship.” The fixation of many academics with science and the “big questions” of public administration (see Lynn, 1998, for example, on the science of economics and public administration) pertaining to “science” dominate the discourse. On the other hand, the stories that managers (and others) tell are as valid as science (Hummel, 1991) and help us to know our shared art. Like the language of music and the importance of instruments and voices being used to convey the aesthetic sounds of the art, in public administration the language we use affects how we view our craft, and the primary object of our craft is public service.

As in the musical instrument industry today, the rush in the public sector to replace public service and personal care with market-based values is, and has been, well underway. Executive-centered abstractions based on arithmetical knowledge undermine and overwhelm everyday experiential knowledge and craftsmanship. The dominant executive values based on an emphasis of economic production drive today’s public sector to the point where personal care is hardly a thought in terms of service delivery or work-related issues like safety, which can suffer as a consequence (Garrett, 2004). One only has to look at the Hurricane Katrina disaster and the war in Iraq to see the manifestation of the effects in the mind-numbing body counts and finger-pointing by today’s executives in pursuit of their public, ill-defined personal agendas. The lack of response and personal care for those lost

souls with all their dramatic stories of survival, while compelling, is lost in the sheer magnitude of the numbers. We (scholars, executives, managers, and workers serving the public) need to recover our public sector identity. And a good place to start is through stories.

The Moral of the Story

The uniqueness of craftsmanship for the building of great saxophones (as opposed to mediocre, mass-produced cheap ones) represents a metaphor useful for the delivery of public services today. Obsessions with executive-centered numbers and abstractions distract from service delivery which would otherwise be based more on personal everyday experience and artistry. The “craft” of public service is overwhelmed by the dominant management ideology based on science to the point where the nurturing effects and needed patience of good public administration are lost.

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Endnotes

ⁱ The word “ax” is musician lingo for one’s musical instrument.

ⁱⁱ The French “Selmer” brand is one of the most famous saxophones made. The best ones, and most sought after by saxophone players, are the old hand-crafted instruments made from the late 1930s up until 1972 and carry the motif “Balanced Action,” and “Mark VI.” Personally, I generally do not like them because they are too “stuffy” in the low registers, whether you have an alto, tenor, or baritone.

ⁱⁱⁱ “Beater” in this case means a mistreated horn by uncaring (or care-less) high school students who did not appreciate the value of the instrument. The horn had suffered through three “re-lacquering” jobs that resulted in a loss of the original metal on the horn after each removal of the old lacquer process. The original engraving, while exquisite at one time, was now almost completely gone.

^{iv} The “Vito” name has long been owned by the LeBlanc Corporation. Apparently, they have also bought out Yanagisawa.

^v Keilwerth saxophones are made in western Germany. Cannonballs and Jupiters are made somewhere in Asia.

^{vi} The neck is the tube that connects the mouthpiece to the instrument.

^{vii} King and Conn instruments are American made. A semblance of them exists today under the overarching music corporation titled “United Musical Instruments.” The new horns produced by UMI are in no way, shape or form as good as the originals. Conns effectively “died” after the 1960s while the King “Super 20s” made it all the way to 1981 before the brand failed as a “professional” model. Kings are the last of the great American saxophones (Grief and sigh here).

^{viii} I own a 1964 King Super 20 tenor and believe it to be the best horn ever made for me. Believe me, there is such a thing as love for such a fine object!

^{ix} B & S are the initials for *Blaserinstrumenten und Signal* (translation – Wind instrument and sound).

^x The next best baritone sax I ever played was one I had in high school – a Conn 11M.

In addition to being a gifted and passionate jazz musician, **Dr. Garrett** works as an associate professor at the Master of Public Policy and Management Program of the University of Texas at Brownsville. At the time of writing this article, he was teaching public administration at the University of Texas-Pan American.

Letter to the Editors on the Fun of Counterfactual History

(The symposium “Rewriting the History of Public Administration: What if...” was published in Volume VIII, Number 1 of *Public Voices*)

Dear Editors,

It is a pleasurable labor to engage in writing counterfactual history, especially if you enjoy reading about events of the past and think how those events may have contributed to shaping our present. At least to some extent, who we are now is a product of who we were then. Hopefully, we learn from our mistakes as individuals, as a society, and as a civilization, and even if we are occasionally doomed to repeat them sometimes, we can still document them just in case we can find these missteps avoidable in the future.

A more frustrating extension is to take key historical events and attempt to write what would have happened or what could have happened or how things would be different in the present if events of the past were somehow different. This is the slippery slope upon which the work perches if the writer pretends at scholarship, particularly, for publication in a peer reviewed journal. The problem is that any point asserted in the counterfactual story can be just as easily refuted by the reader by simply asserting another point, that is no more or less plausible, based on the same assumed facts which are in evidence; indeed, the facts may not be facts at all in the creative nonfiction work where a lot of creativity has been applied.

For instance, in my article “Alexander Hamilton: What if Aaron Burr Missed” (*Public Voices*, Volume VIII, Number 1, p. 8-21), I was able to extrapolate from Hamilton’s past actions, which are part of the historical record, and his beliefs, fears, and concerns as gleaned from his written record, what he might have accomplished had he lived the fullest extent of his life. I was also fearless in implicating Jefferson as a co-conspirator since he had so much to gain if both Hamilton and Burr were removed from public life. Jefferson’s involvement is plausible since many Jeffersonian scholars would agree that this type of action would not be beneath him – especially if he could avoid any public knowledge of his involvement. Jefferson had a thinly disguised ruthlessness in him that can be found if you search carefully. However, historians would never venture out on that limb to make the implication that he encouraged Burr to kill Hamilton, but we can – even if it is unpopular to do so, given Jefferson’s status in our history and our ideology.

Under the guise of creative nonfiction or counterfactual history, we can explore an infinite number of implications because we do not have to prove our allegations beyond their limited use as food for thought or a potential direction toward a more thorough historical investigation. He had the motive and he had the means and the smoking gun was in Burr’s hands, thus, circumstantially, Jefferson could have been involved from the sidelines – far enough as always never to get his hands bloody.

My definition of creative nonfiction is appropriate here. I see this genre as defining a carefully crafted story that contains a large percentage of fact ripped from the historical record as accurately researched by the writer as possible, and the remainder of the story is fiction, which would include creating conversations not quoted directly into the historical record, narrating actual events as though the writer was an eyewitness, ascribing motives to the characters not yet in evidence (or never to be in evidence), and, of course, in some instances, changing the names of the characters in the story to protect the identities of the unindicted co-conspirators, which I often have to do in my contemporary short stories because they are really so closely based on real events and real people I’d find myself spending a lot of time in court (or the alternative is to not write the creative nonfictional account of an event at all, which would rob us of the splendid opportunity of watching stupid people commit stupid acts as they are hoisted upon their collective petards. It’s like Will Rogers once said, “I don’t write humor; I just observe Congress and report the facts.”).

The more facts a story contains, the more believable it becomes, but also the story can shine a light too brightly on something true, and if it is a true story, then the details must be cited appropriately as either news or history, as the serious scholars have always been commanded to do. Certainly, the writer anticipates that the well informed reader will recognize who these masked men (and women) in the fictional account really are, but the writer can also avoid libel by discrete name changes. And, if the reader is not sure who they are, it’s nevertheless quite fun to guess. And, it may not be all that important to know who the characters really are, or were, if the circumstances of the story itself educate and enlighten the reader with its message. So, the story is fiction, and it retains its value as entertainment, and just possibly it is educational as well, but its degree of relevance is firmly lodged in its use of a great deal of factual detail, and the fictional extension is evident if a little literary license is applied to keep it moving smartly, so what; no harm is done.

Professional historians are loath to think this way; at least until after they get tenure. They are disciplined by their peers and the journals that they peer review in to withhold judgment and not speculate too much or stray too far from the known into the shadow world of what could have been. But, what’s the fun in that?

Sincerely,

*Michael W. Popejoy
Pfeiffer University*

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