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# Musicology and Mediation: an examination of the cultural materialisms of Raymond Williams and Pierre Bourdieu in relation to the fields of contemporary music and musicology, with a case study of Arvo Part and ECM

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**Musicology and Mediation: an examination of the cultural materialisms of Raymond Williams and Pierre Bourdieu in relation to the fields of contemporary music and musicology, with a case study of Arvo Pärt and ECM.**



*In memory of Dee Begbie*





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Tom Begbie

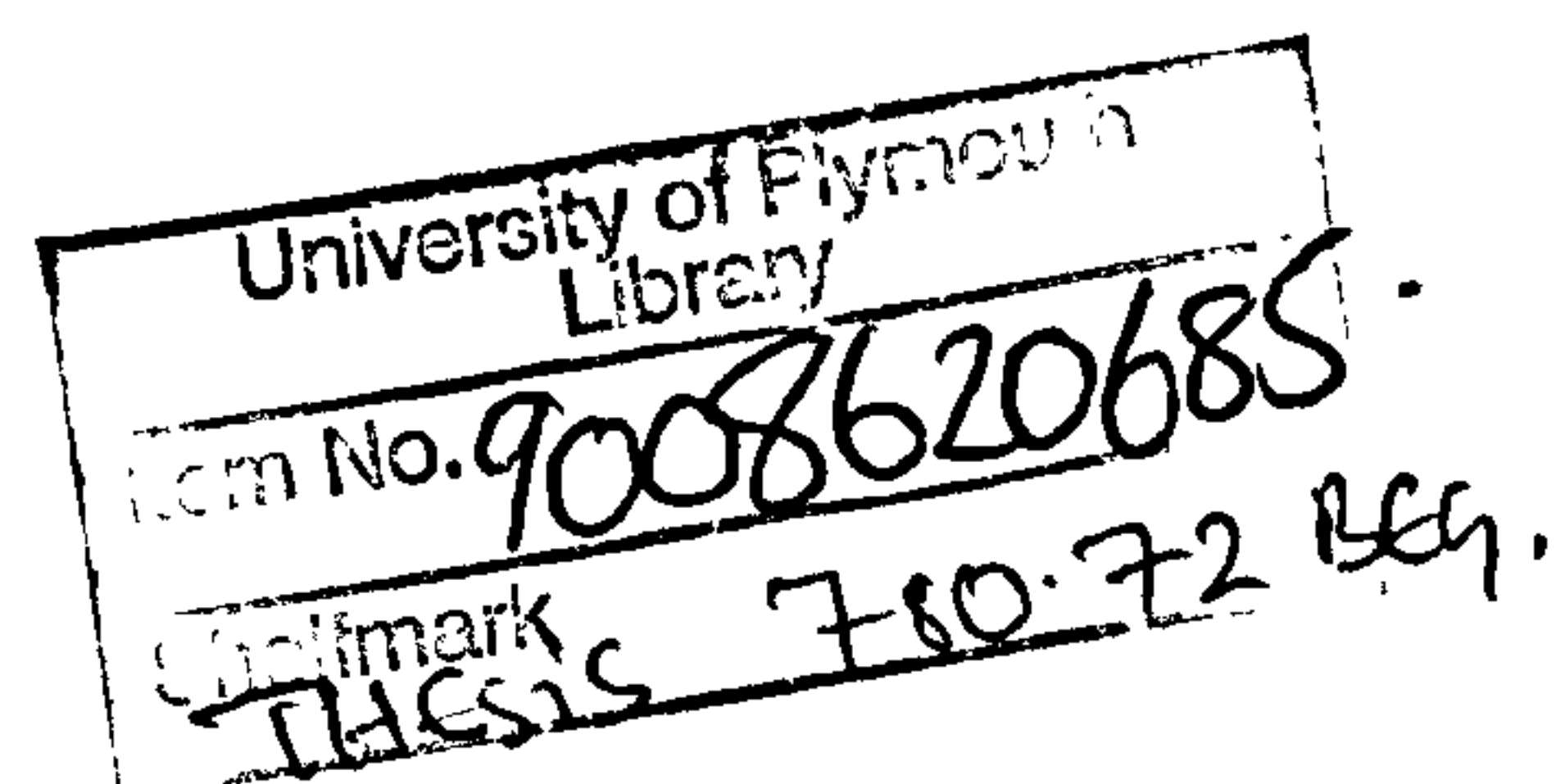
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## Abstract

This thesis examines the usefulness of the work of Pierre Bourdieu and Raymond Williams for discussions of material mediation in musicology. In part 1, I focus on Bourdieu's discussions of cultural production as set out in *The Rules of Art* and "The Field of Cultural Production", and reconstruct the terms of Williams's late theoretical project. In establishing the terms of these projects, I draw a parallel between their attempts to materialize the categories of Marx's superstructure – noting in Williams's subsequent use of a revised Marxist production paradigm a proximity to the work of Adorno – before noting the differences imposed by the pressures and limits of their respective intellectual cultures. The tensions between these two models are therefore identified as the opportunity for dialogue between theoretical traditions.

In part 2, these reflections are tested through a discussion of Arvo Pärt's music and the record label Edition of Contemporary Music (ECM). Using data from musical scores, CDs, reviews, critical essays, magazine articles, interviews, and so on, Pärt's emergent field position in the late 1970s and early 1980s is reconstructed and ECM's function as both institution and artistic formation is argued. These instances of musical practice remain rhetorically committed to the ideals of autonomy while spanning the opposition of autonomy and heteronomy. This ambiguity puts strain on Williams's and Bourdieu's readings of cultural production, allowing for a critical approach to this range of debate. In this sense, the method becomes part of the subject matter, and the discussions combine both theoretical and musical reflection.



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## Declaration

At no time during the registration for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy has the author been registered for any other University award.

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Signed..........



# I      **PART I: Raymond Williams, Pierre Bourdieu, and**

## **Questions of Material Mediation**

### **Introduction – The Place of Theory**

#### **Overview and Research History**

This thesis is divided into two parts. The first offers a discussion of the theoretical interests of the research and the second a case study of Arvo Pärt and ECM designed to interrogate aspects of these earlier arguments. Chapter 1 establishes the key contentions of the thesis: first, that notions of mediation in musicology deserve some investigation; second, that reconsidering aspects of Marxist materialism is particularly useful for interrogating this theme; and third, that treatments of this materialism are discoverable in different intellectual cultures. The legacy of an Adornian musicological model is discussed in this context. Chapter 2 considers the material approaches to culture of Pierre Bourdieu and Raymond Williams and chapter 3 discusses how the two projects can be drawn together. The section concludes with a discussion of the general implications of these reflections for musicology. I would like to be clear from the outset that this theoretical work is intended to be useful to various domains of musicological work, rather than being the development of a body of theory to interrogate one specific artist. Part 1 is general in its tone, as it seeks to communicate the reach of the theoretical understandings of the research. Part 2 draws out some of the detail in a discussion of Arvo Pärt and the record label ECM. This case study is intended to be critical over the range of debate; the choice of subjects is designed to interrogate the theoretical understandings rather than exemplify them.

This thesis can be introduced as the furthering of my interest in the nature of the relationships between music and the society within which it functions. My previous research was influenced by a reading of Adorno, and attempted to focus on the shift from modernism to post-modernism. At times I took an historical approach, whereby developments in musical language could be understood to correspond to various developments in society. Subsequently



a basic homologous understanding of the relationship between a cultural sphere and society was adopted; between modernism and modernity, post-modernism and post-modernity. The most obvious problems with this approach were the uncritical constituting of musical language and form as the ultimate basis for musical meaning, and a superficial theorizing of homologous relationships. The decision to undertake the research for a PhD was initially taken so as to address these problems and explore ways of approaching a reflexive materialist interrogation of the social contingency of artistic forms and processes. This research is designed to address a current situation in contemporary musicology. I will argue below that in recent decades the attempt to demonstrate that autonomous music is socially contingent has become a well-trodden area of musicology, producing a proliferation of creative approaches to the discipline.<sup>1</sup> While the contingency of autonomous music is no longer a contentious subject, the debate is still open as to *how* this relationship can be satisfactorily examined. I found in Williams and Bourdieu bodies of work which addressed these concerns.

The musicology of Rose Rosengard Subotnik, which tackles the above problems in depth and in explicit relation to Adorno, was particularly useful for initially clarifying these research interests. Subotnik explores the epistemological nature of the relationship between music and society, examining problems of musical meaning in this context. Also of importance was the clarity with which Subotnik moves between the critical theory of Adorno and ideas of French structuralism and post-structuralism. This pointed the way to one of the subsidiary themes of this thesis: that the renunciation of mastery in reading allows for consideration of how different intellectual cultures approach similar themes and problems. Subotnik's early work aims to introduce Adorno's musical ideas to American musicology.<sup>2</sup> Her later theoretical focus deploys poststructuralist considerations to critique Adorno's epistemological methods of cutting through the barriers between music and life.<sup>3</sup> Despite the brilliance of this work, I felt

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<sup>1</sup> The definitions of autonomy will be more fully elaborated below.

<sup>2</sup> Particularly the following essays: "Adorno's Diagnosis of Beethoven's Late Style: Early Symptom of a Fatal Condition"; "What is Adorno's Music Criticism the Way It Is? Some Reflections on Twentieth-Century Criticism of Nineteenth-Century Music"; "Kant, Adorno, and the Self-Critique of Reason: Toward a Model for Music Criticism" (1991, 15-41; 42-56; 57-83).

<sup>3</sup> Perhaps the key essay here is "Towards a Deconstruction of Structural Listening: A Critique of Schoenberg, Adorno, and Stravinsky" (1996, 148-176).

that the problem of Adorno's culture industry thesis remained inadequately addressed – that this formulation constituted a block for the theorizing of contemporary culture or society in Adorno's work. To my mind, this aspect of Adorno's work combines an inability to develop a positive notion of culture, beyond the category of autonomy, with a suspicion that the rapidly developing communications technologies and the social structures which deploy them constitute social manipulation. I was interested to see if it was possible to extend a model from within this critical tradition so as to resolve some of these problems, and the relationship such a model may have to the more dominant current intellectual preoccupation with post-structuralism.

This led to my reading of Raymond Williams and Pierre Bourdieu. Both of these theorists develop models designed to interrogate the material mediation of cultural production. Williams's work has the goal of analysing the relationships between cultural and general production, insisting on their historicism and retaining a space for the agency of the individual. The core of these reflections lies in his deployment of a re-worked Marxist model of production. The theoretical point to be highlighted is that Williams's deployment of a production paradigm, as an alternative to the reductionism of a base and superstructure model, is very close to Adorno's use of a model of production in his critical musicology and the formulation of his culture industry thesis. The extent of this proximity has not been acknowledged in musicological sources, and very rarely in broader intellectual circles. Williams's attempts to integrate a production paradigm with the economic, political and technological situations of late capitalism opens up a useful theoretical debate with the potential to move beyond some of the limitations of Adorno's work.

Bourdieu's deployment of his theoretical model to examine cultural production (especially in *The Rules of Art*), rather than cultural consumption (as in *Distinction*), is central to this thesis: this body of work has not been extensively discussed in musicology. While Bourdieu does not develop a Marxist model of production in the same way as Williams, there are some remarkable commonalities. Like Williams, Bourdieu was dissatisfied with the base and

superstructure's dematerializing of the superstructural categories and worked through Marx's conception of labour to insist that the basis for *all* practices is material. This position (discussed more fully below) closely mirrors the intention behind Williams's attempts to materialize cultural labour through his cultural duplication of the production paradigm. The theoretical models that each subsequently develops are determined by the pressures of their respective intellectual cultures and appear, at least on the surface, to be radically different. However, it is my contention that the legacies of Marxist materialism are evident in the dominant Western intellectual cultures of Western Marxism, British culturalism and cultural studies, and even contemporary French philosophy. If it is possible to identify moments when post-structuralisms have attempted to rework a Marxist heritage, then it is possible to establish the grounds for comparing these moves to analogous developments in other Western intellectual cultures. This simultaneous proximity and difference between Bourdieu and Williams is one of the dynamic aspects of this research. In retrospect I can see that my reading of Bourdieu followed a similar route to Subotnik's exploring of Adorno through her reading of structuralist and post-structuralist texts: my own processes exhibited the desire to find related but alternative positions to Williams's cultural production. Recognizing that mastery in any reading is an impossibility, I hoped to develop a practice that would involve the critical reading back and forth between two alternative views, possibly inviting multiple readings.

### **The Emphasis on Theory**

"Theory" has come to occupy an important place in this thesis. Because of the vexed status of the deployment of trans-disciplinary theory in musicology, with its camps and factions, I want to be very careful to delineate the position and nature of such theory in this thesis, and will offer some broad definitions and contextualisations from which more detailed arguments can build. As should be clear from the above discussion, the character of relatively recent theory and various deployments must be distinguished from the received practices, themes, and interests of the various disciplines of the social sciences (in which I include "traditional"



musicology). Instead, I have found Andrew Milner's description of theory as a "transdisciplinary" way of thinking to be particularly useful (7). This general characterization of theory is often directly equated to a post-modern or post-structuralist intellectual position.<sup>4</sup>

For example, Jameson argues that

[...] what is today called contemporary theory [...] is [...] itself a very postmodernist phenomenon [...] we can say that besides the hermeneutic model of inside and outside [...] at least four other fundamental depth models have come to be repudiated in contemporary theory: (1) the dialectical one of essence and appearance [...]; (2) the Freudian model of latent and manifest, or of repression [...]; (3) the existential model of authenticity and inauthenticity [...]; (4) [...]the great semiotic opposition between signifier and signified [...]. What replaces these various depth models is for the most part a conception of practices, discourses, and textual play [...] let it suffice now to observe that here too depth is replaced by surface, or by multiple surfaces (what is often called intertextuality is in that sense no longer a matter of depth). (2005, 12)

In general terms, the dominant notion, or practise, of theory is exemplified by the various challenges made to received disciplinary assumptions and doctrines in the field of French philosophy. This is evident, for example, in Derrida's challenge to the notion of signification, or Foucault's emphasis on the importance of genealogical relations of power rather than relations of meaning, and their respective attempts to relativize discourse. Lyotard's often quoted "incredulity towards metanarratives" is perhaps the soundbite of this tendency (Lyotard, 1986). Following these initial challenges, Jameson's "depth models" (hermeneutics, Marxism, semiotics, psychoanalysis) became incorporated into this interrogation of received disciplinary assumptions: reformed and reconstituted many times and in various forms as various "trans-disciplinary" approaches to analysis. It seems that the encompassing intellectual fascination with certain forms of post-structuralism has slowly weakened in recent times, allowing for some energetic discussions of materialism to resurface. A musicological example of such an instance can be found in Klumpenhouwer's commentary to *Music/Ideology: Resisting the Aesthetic*, a

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<sup>4</sup> Williams would have understood this characteristic to be one of the positive characteristics of a "post-modern" intellectualism (although he very rarely uses the term). Indeed one of the reasons he welcomed "radical semiotics" (by which he meant Barthesian and Derridean deconstruction) was because of its expansion of received disciplinary categories. However, he also saw one of the defining characteristics of the post-modern intellectual to be a conformism to the dictates of a globalized market economy and its concomitant political order (consider the subtitle of the posthumous *The Politics of Modernism: Against the New Conformists*): Williams was vehemently opposed to this tendency.

collection of essays predominantly influenced by aspects of poststructuralist theory. Here

Klumpehouwer argues provocatively for a “Marxist poetics of music”:

[I]t is my view that Marxist criticism offers the only possibility for sustained and successful critique of our current mode of production (described variously as “late,” “postindustrial,” or “postconsensual” capitalism) and all of its ideological forms and superstructural institutions, including contemporary music theory and analysis [...] only by way of dialectical-style, historically materialist writing can an adequate analysis and critique of theoretical and musicological practices come about [...]. (Krimm, 1998, 290-291)

The complexities of the play between different theoretical systems, with all of their respective and sometimes contradictory baggage, perhaps accounts for the bitterness with which theoretical arguments with no possible court of final appeal played out against each other in the 1980s and 1990s. One of the chief tensions in this “post-modern” intellectual situation is the deployment of theoretical systems whose generative principles were inspired by a radical political commitment no longer to be found in reality. As Eagleton puts it:

The early 1970s – the very highpoint of radical dissent – also saw the first glimmerings of the postmodern culture which was eventually to take over from it. The halcyon days of theory lasted until about 1980 [...] Theory overshot reality, in a kind of intellectual backwash to a tumultuous political era. As often happens, ideas had a last, brilliant efflorescence when the conditions which produced them were already disappearing. (2003, 29)

This moment in the late 1970s and early 1980s has come to occupy an important place in this research: the cusp of utopian prospect and tragic conformism to the pressures of increasingly dominant market forces plays out an important role in the formulation of the ideas of both Williams and Bourdieu. It is also my contention that similar pressures and limits are felt in other fields of activity in this period: this understanding was central to my choice of Arvo Pärt and ECM as the case study for this thesis in part 2. The contemporary fascination with theory, its predominance in contemporary debate, and its aptness for the study of current cultural forms must be acknowledged.

## I.1 CHAPTER I – Contexts

### Introduction

This chapter aims to establish the thesis's theoretical research questions in general terms. Section 1 extends the above discussion of theory, using Williams to identify idealist and materialist paradigms in the study of culture and placing “alternative musicologies” within a more general interrogation of these received models. Section 2 identifies issues of mediation as a central problematic in these alternative musicologies, arguing that such questions can usefully be approached by reconsidering notions of materialism.<sup>5</sup> Williams's adoption of a production paradigm rooted in that of Marx is recognised as just such a material model, and the proximity of this move to Adorno's critical musicology is recognized. The chapter's conclusion establishes the potential for reading different theoretical approaches to material mediation against each other, identifying Bourdieu's model of cultural production as just such an alternative to Williams's use of a Marxist production paradigm. These reflections lay the groundwork for chapter 2, which discusses the work of Williams and Bourdieu in more detail, and chapter 3, which discusses how the two can be drawn together and what is gained from this.

#### 1.1.1 Idealism, Materialism, and the Development of Alternative Musicologies

While critiques of idealist notions of culture have played an important and explicit role in the development of alternative musicological practices, aspects of materialism have received less attention, even becoming occluded. Ethnomusicology and popular musicology appear to have engaged more readily with these debates. For example, Thomas Turino introduces Bourdieu's work to ethnomusicological circles in his “Structure, Context, and Strategy in Musical Ethnography”. Various uses of Bourdieu are evident in studies of popular music, such

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<sup>5</sup> I refer to the broad sweep of reforming musicologies as “alternative”; they are no longer “new”, and this emphasis on an alternative to “traditional” musicology reinforces the notion of disciplinary exploration raised below. Within this, it is possible to define “cultural” musicologies which draw heavily on post-structuralist traditions (Kramer and McClary, for example), and “critical” musicologies which try to establish a more direct relationship with Adornian critical theory (such Alastair Williams, Max Paddison, and so on). While I acknowledge the paucity of labels, I think that this is a more instructive approach than using the terms seemingly interchangeably.



as Alan O'Connor's "Local Scenes and Dangerous Crossroads: Punk and Theories of Cultural Hybridity". Uses of Williams are less evident in either sphere. Section 2 of this chapter argues that the tendency to neglect material aspects of cultural analysis in relation to classical musical practices leads to some problems in the alternative musicologies' focus on social factors. Recovery of these aspects may be usefully deployed for the interrogation of mediation. This can be put more strongly: the aspirations of the alternative musicologies to constitute a musical text via its relationships with other texts and social structures *require* the deployment of a thorough-going material elaboration of mediation.

In trying to unravel the emphasis on theory in contemporary musicology, it is useful to distinguish between the various methods for designating and describing cultural activities which have informed more recent developments in cultural theory. The following discussion is drawn from Raymond Williams's mapping of the sociological field in *Culture*, in which he subjects the term "culture" to his method of historical semantic dissection, mapping the resulting categories onto particular intellectual traditions.<sup>6</sup> Here Williams identifies the contemporaneous pressures in the field which lead to the widely felt urge for disciplinary redefinition. I have found this position useful for identifying the context of the alternative musicologies, the status of the legacy of materialism in their work, and therefore the possibilities Williams and Bourdieu may offer to the discipline.

First, Williams identifies a usage of the term "culture" which has tended to reinforce notions of Western autonomous artistic practices and products, designating an area of activity which attempts to maintain a distance from politics and economics while also aiming to critique both. This notion of a superior autonomous artistic sphere is traced to European Romanticism. Williams makes two important observations on this version of culture: first, that it occupied a position of importance to the extent that it communicated the distinctive "informing spirit" of a cultural formation, community, or even nation; second, that it was

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<sup>6</sup> I recognize that this mapping has its ambiguities. The understanding of the discipline of sociology is somewhat narrow; it is rather Anglo-centric, and it places emphasis on the importance of materialism. I hope that despite these qualifications the usefulness of the debate will become clear.

placed in opposition, as art, to the increasingly dominant mechanisms of modernized industrial society.

Williams describes the constellation of these themes as “idealist”: they tend to reinforce the notion of culture as a superior ideal which in turn informs the structure of feeling of a social group (1981, 11-12). He argues that they derive at first from the classical idealism of the German philosophy of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, particularly that of Kant and Hegel; the intellectual traditions of English literary studies (Williams’s “Cambridge English”) and German sociology come to articulate similar idealisms as central components of their programmes. Williams goes on to identify a second definition of culture, characterized as the product of an order constructed by other social activities: “materialism” (1981, 11-12). This definition characterizes the most oppositional strands of modern Western thought to idealism. Williams goes on to argue that rigorously materialist systems would understand notions of culture as indistinguishable from economic and political spheres. That is, culture, as artistic works, would be constituted (very generally speaking) as commodities subject to the rising pressures and limits of the market. Idealism, especially notions of autonomy, would oppose such a view. However, in Marx’s materialism, culture isn’t excluded, but nor does it take centre stage; the base and superstructure metaphor is the clearest example of Marx’s acknowledgement of culture, with the base determining the range of superstructural practices (the legal, political, religious, artistic, and so on) and related forms of consciousness.<sup>7</sup>

The thrust of this argument is that cultural theory, such as it was in the early part of the twentieth century, can be seen as being compounded to varying extents of these two accounts: the idealist and the materialist. Andrew Milner argues this point more forcefully, finding only extremes:

For much of the twentieth century, cultural theory was polarized between idealist accounts, most obviously those proposed by traditional literary humanism, but also those deployed in both post-Weberian sociology and post-Durkheimian anthropology, and materialist accounts normally of a specifically ‘vulgar’ Marxist kind. (17)

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<sup>7</sup> Importantly for Williams’s arguments regarding practical consciousness in *Marxism and Literature*, Marx doesn’t define the forms of these consciousnesses as superstructural in themselves.



The residual legacy of these two paradigms is important for understanding the subsequent trajectory of cultural discussion. Williams acknowledges this centrality while also usefully foregrounding the emphasis that each places on the social aspects of culture. This is arguably one of the major thematics of the more recent cultural studies, critical theory, and alternative musicologies:

[T]he importance of each position, by contrast with other forms of thought, is that it leads, necessarily, to intensive study of the relations between 'cultural' activities and other forms of social life. Each position implies a broad method: in [idealist models] illustration and clarification of the 'informing spirit' [...] in relation with other institutions and activities, the central interests and values of a 'people'; and in [materialist models] exploration from the known or discoverable character of a general social order to the specific forms taken by its cultural manifestations. (Williams, 1981, 12)

Further, the 1960s and 1970s saw the development of new theoretical paradigms and debates within the humanities and social sciences which Williams argued sought to establish the materiality of culture itself as constitutive. For Williams, culture thereby achieves a new characterization as "the *signifying system* through which necessarily [...] a social order is communicated, reproduced, experienced and explored" (1981, 13).<sup>8</sup> In retrospect, the centrality of materialism in Williams's prognosis for the study of culture responds mainly to his own interests. However, the central point remains that the 1960s and 1970s did indeed see theoretical attempts to transform these early disciplinary roots of idealism and materialism.

The particularly interesting point to draw out of this is the sense in which Williams and others (not least Bourdieu, as he negotiated a field structured between the French structuralism of Levi-Strauss and the phenomenology of Sartre) were using theory to work around old disciplinary limitations of a particular character. Williams's struggle with the disciplinary constraints received from Cambridge English literature is the clearest example of this. The essay "Crisis in English Studies" is a concise summary of these theoretical struggles (1983, 192-211). Interestingly, here Williams acknowledges the potential power of the emergent "radical semiotics" (referring to the post-structuralist theoretical practices of

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<sup>8</sup> A more extended discussion of the central theoretical place of Williams's late formulation of "culture" is offered below.

Derrida and Barthes), precisely because of their ability to incorporate into their analysis factors outside the range of traditional disciplinary limits.

This stress on the de-centring of received disciplinary legacies calls to mind the rhetorical strategies of the alternative musicologies also emergent in this historical moment. For example, the central themes of Rose Rosengard Subotnik's *Developing Variations: Style and ideology in Western Music* constitute a manifesto designed to attack the limitations of traditional musicology:

[M]any Westerners, however modern in style or technology, continue to adhere uncritically to a comforting Enlightenment belief in universal laws and certainty, or at least, one might add, to some newer, thinly disguised, but essentially unchanged version of that belief. [...] I would argue that mainstream American musicology in its current state constitutes one such backwater. The ruling concept of knowledge within that mainstream seems to me to be shaped by an uncritical and outmoded notion of science, grounded on a dogmatic Enlightenment ideal of general laws and absolute verifiability, and overlaid with an accretion of equally dogmatic, though narrower and supposedly value-free or nonideological, positivist reverence for the so-called hard certainty of empirical fact. (1991, 90-91)

Subotnik proposes a massive expansion of the scope of musicology by suggesting in place of this traditional positivism a broadly defined criticism whose sphere of activity is: “huge, potentially encompassing all of human experience and thought” (1991, xxix). Subotnik recognizes that musical scholars not familiar with criticism could construe the admitted epistemological limitations as “evidence that criticism involved neither hard work nor rigorous qualitative standards”. Consequently, she emphasizes the importance of trans-disciplinary theory, noting the “demands on responsible scholarly critics, for example, reading widely and intensively in a number of fields, organising highly diverse variables, and articulating a persuasive rationale with painstaking care” (1991, xxix).<sup>9</sup>

To be explicit: the emergence in the 1970s of the so-called “new musicology”, with its emphasis on demonstrating the social character of music and its desire to question some of the more pervasive legacies of the Romantic idealist view of music, is written in terms which

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<sup>9</sup> While this theme is recurrent in Subotnik (one of the “developing variations”), the argument is most clearly articulated in her essay *Musicology and Criticism* written in 1981 (the same year that Williams formulated his “contemporary convergence” in *Culture*). It was first published in Holoman and Palisca (1982) and re-published in Subotnik (1991, 87-97).

closely resemble Williams's "contemporary convergence" of definitions of culture. This is not to argue that Williams was a direct influence, but rather that he was attempting to make sense of the theoretical paradigms and debates coalescing in the same period. His work is a clear attempt to engage with the very general desire, recognisable across a surprisingly broad range of disciplines, to provide models which emphasise the social aspect of culture and to break away from the perceived dogmatic Enlightenment ideologies of traditional disciplines. Lawrence Kramer provides a no-nonsense (retrospective) definition of the new musicology which is useful to underline this point:

The idea is to combine aesthetic insight into music with a fuller understanding of its cultural, social, historical, and political dimensions than was customary for most of the twentieth century. This is not as easy as it sounds, and sometimes working at it has sometimes involved conceptual tools whose complexities are not musical. (2003, 6)

This captures the sense of broadening the musicological field to include the social, the dissatisfaction with earlier disciplinary models, and also the consequent sense of theory as an inter-discipline. Additionally, in interrogating idealist notions such as artistic autonomy an implicit recourse is made by the alternative musicologies to materialist models whereby the text is constituted via other relationships within a social order (this is clear in intention, if not in theoretical specificity, in Kramer's statement). It will be my argument that this latter materialist strand remains undeveloped in musicology and deserves some further examination.



### 1.1.2 Musicology and Mediation – Towards an Engagement with Materialism

Stephen Miles articulates the need for theoretical elaborations of relationships between society and cultural processes capable of accounting for the material contestation of musical meaning and experience:

[T]he social contingency of autonomous music is no longer seriously questioned; rather, the debate has shifted to how this social contingency is to be interrogated. (1997, 722)

Miles goes on to argue that the success of trans-disciplinary alternative musicologies has turned on how convincingly this interrogation can be executed:

If they [detractors of the “critical” musicology] have not been convinced by the arguments of the critical musicologists, perhaps it is because the arguments are insufficiently grounded, the relationship between autonomous music and society inadequately developed. Indeed, critical musicology is in danger of undermining itself through a lack of attention to the problem of mediation – the concrete links between music and society on the levels of production and reception. (1997, 723)

Successful critiques of idealist residues have been carried through in musicology, notably “social” examinations of individualized autonomous musical structures, but certain key questions of materialism remain. Ethnomusicologist Thomas Turino recognizes this tension early on in his review of *Music and Society: The Politics of Composition, Performance and Reception* (Leppert, 1987), observing that “the most striking feature of these two papers [by Subotnik and McClary] is their lack of any real social context, ideology, or politics when the chosen works were compared. Both articles begin with lengthy attacks on decontextualized, formalistic studies, and then proceed precisely along this line” (1989, 739). It is here, on notions of mediation, that the cultural materialisms of Williams and Bourdieu offer a valuable theoretical contribution to musicological debate. This section therefore traces the declining status of Marxism as one of the influential forms of materialism in Western thought, arguing that this process has led to the occlusion of certain bodies of work. I go on to argue that whatever the current status of Williams’s work, his deployment of a production paradigm based on Marx’s model of labour is designed to provide a material account of very contemporary cultural practices. The theoretical proximity of Williams’s model to Adorno’s

use of production in his discussion of musical mediation is highlighted and some brief discussion of attempts to extend an Adornian paradigm to a contemporary context is offered. This sets the groundwork for identifying the particular character of the cultural materialisms of Williams and Bourdieu and what is gained by drawing them together in the following two chapters.

In terms of its theoretical target, I agree with the sentiment of Miles's statement above. However, Miles goes on to contribute to the occlusion of one of the major legacies of materialism by dismissing the work of Adorno on the grounds that it is insufficiently scientific. There is no rigorous study here of Adorno's categorical definition and deployment of mediation – derived from reworking Marx's model of production – as the attempt to approach just this problematic. It is my contention that Marxist models have been one of the major sources by which materialist concerns have been introduced into intellectual debates in the twentieth century and that the status of this legacy in cultural debate has steadily declined during the theoretical efflorescence of the late 1960s, 1970s and 1980s.

Some preliminary points should be made here: it is essential to make a distinction (important to Williams) between the writings of Marx himself and the various Marxisms that have since developed, and it is important to delineate the scope of the argument here as exploring the usefulness of legacies of Marxism specifically in the study of culture.<sup>10</sup> In this sense the pivotal category of Western Marxism (which indicates the Frankfurt School, including the musicology of Adorno, amongst others) becomes key.

In quite general terms, the theoretical debates in the 1970s appeared to have hosted Marxist perspectives, variously reworked, as a given. The emergence in the late 1970s and 1980s of theoretical and cultural post-modernism put this privileged position under stress.

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<sup>10</sup> A basic distinction should also be made between Marxism and communism, with the former being the theoretical elaboration on which the latter attempted to build. In general terms, it can be noted that the political credibility of communism slowly eroded in Western European societies over the course of the twentieth-century while the influence of theoretical Marxism has persisted in intellectual practices (albeit in different, and occasionally difficult, forms). It is this distinction, and the consequences for theoretical Marxism following the political events which lead to the collapse of Soviet and Eastern European communism, that underlies much of Derrida's engagement with the work of Marx in *Specters of Marx* (1994).

Increasingly, central Marxist concerns were rejected as no longer relevant to contemporary culture or as increasingly theoretically illegitimate. Again arguing in general terms, the evidence for this can be traced through the increasingly decentralized position of broad social and class interests by a growing interest in other facets of cultural delineation: for example, gender, sexuality, race, or ethnicity. Eagleton makes a similar point when he argues that the “golden age” of theory is past:

On the wider shores of academia, an interest in French philosophy has given way to a fascination with French kissing. In some cultural circles, the politics of masturbation exert far more fascination than the politics of the Middle East. Socialism has lost out to sado-masochism. Among the students of culture, the body is an immensely fashionable topic, but it is usually the erotic body, not the famished one. There is a keen interest in coupling bodies, but not in labouring ones. Quietly spoken middle-class students huddle diligently in libraries, at work on sensationalist subjects like vampirism and eye-gouging, cyborgs and porno movies. (2003, 2-3)

My reason for emphasising the view that the thematics of Marxism have been dropped to some extent from the theoretical circuit, and to suggest that we may benefit from revisiting some of these arguments, is precisely because its theoretical focus is primed to address just this issue of mediation. That is, it aims to provide a material account of the moments of production and reception within a specific polity. The reason for emphasising the category of the Western Marxists is that they generally offer some elaboration of the place of culture within Marx's original formulations. This leads to the usefulness of Raymond Williams's work in particular (discussed more fully below). First, Williams's work insists that even a complex Marxist base and superstructure model cannot account for contemporary cultural practices which now, in post-modern late capitalism, are more completely located in the institutions of the base. Second, he argues that a developed model of Marx's notion of production deployed in the realm of culture accounts, more clearly than the base and superstructure model, for the peculiarities of the late-capitalist system.

Williams's emphasis on the category of the base is first found in the essay “Base and Superstructure in Marxist Cultural Theory” (1980, 31-49). Here he argues that Marx's emphasis on a particular kind of basal productive force (the piano maker is base, the piano



player superstructure) is a consequence of his attempt to analyse a specific type of production (capitalist commodity production) (1980, 34-35). However, there is no theoretical block to considering those engaged in cultural practices as themselves productive forces. This leads to Williams's cultural duplication of the categories of the base. This is more overtly discussed in the seemingly little-known essay "Marx on Culture", in which Williams explicitly questions Marx's division of mental and manual labour and finds, as a consequence, "the neglect of the real social and material *production* of art and ideas: a form of production which, like everything else, has to be studied as 'the practical activity and the practical process of development of men'" (1989, 210). The key to understanding the wide and occasionally disparate writings of Williams is his consideration that the complexities and discontinuities of the whole social process lie in the common character of the cultural and general processes of production and reproduction. The theoretical tools he provides amount to a material approach to mediation.

This move places Williams in an often difficult and oppositional position to other contemporaneous Marxist theorists. The rejection of the base and superstructure model appeared to cause some discomfort: the editors of the *New Left Review* probe the resulting position from different angles without satisfaction (Williams, 1979), and Eagleton argues that without this metaphor Williams's adoption of the cultural production paradigm is no longer Marxist but "pre-Marxist":

Essentially Marxist concepts – of practice, mode of production, material conditions of possibility – were transplanted into the cultural realm to 'materialize' cultural processes, thus rendering them equivalent to other forms of material production, and so intensifying Williams's pre-Marxian 'circularity'. (1989, 171-172)

While there is some force to this critique, the specific target of Williams's theory is the tendency in developed capitalism to conflate production in general with commodity production in particular. He argues that the base and superstructure model theoretically reproduces this conflation. The original capitalist moment may indeed have removed certain practices (legal, religious, artistic) from the economic base, allowing for the theorising of an independent (autonomous) superstructure: under these conditions the usefulness of a model such as the

base and superstructure is clear. However, developments in capitalism in the latter half of the twentieth century, particularly dictated by the terms of an increasingly voracious and globalized market economy, have seen a reintegration of these apparently autonomous cultural practices with terms traditionally associated with the base. This tendency gives rise to the commodity culture of post-modern late capitalism, a culture which Williams argued was not amenable to analysis via the base and superstructure metaphor. The model of production, the theoretical force behind the formulation “cultural materialism” so often associated with Williams’s work, becomes the tool for examining culture in this period. The desire to problematize the economic model of production is evident in *Politics and Letters*:

Today [...] I am interested in the increasing influence of the idea [...] that the domination of the economic order of society is peculiar to the capitalist epoch. I find that difficult to accept in its simplest sense, but it would explain one’s sense of a qualitative alteration of the meaning of production precisely as the capitalist mode of production itself matured. It is at any rate noticeable that in the 20<sup>th</sup> century the exponents of capitalism have been the most insistent theorists of the causal primacy of [economic] production. If you want to be told that our whole existence is governed by the economy, go to the city pages of the bourgeois press – that is really how they see life. (1979, 141)

Evidence that Williams was attempting to find a theoretical model capable of explaining a world radically transformed by contemporary developments in culture, technology, and polity is articulated in his “Notes on Marxism in Britain Since 1945”:

[C]ultural theory was not reworked as a critique from within a theoretical tradition, but as a response to radical changes in the social relations of cultural process within British and other comparable societies. The failure to grasp these changing relations was evident in the distance between Marxist and other theories of ‘mass communications’ and Marxist and other theories of ‘imaginative expression’, ‘art’. (1980, 245)

Williams would have considered the “circularity” in his model of production to be one of the key conditions of the cultural organization of late capitalism.<sup>11</sup> It should also be clear from the above that Williams’s relationship with Marxist theory was far from an uncritical adherence; the drive of his work was not primarily to take part in debate over the problems of a

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<sup>11</sup> It is not insignificant that “Notes on Marxism in Britain Since 1945” was published in response to Eagleton’s critique “Criticism and Politics: The Work of Raymond Williams” (1976). See also Barnett’s “Raymond Williams and Marxism: A Rejoinder to Terry Eagleton” (1976) for further detail on this disagreement which split the editorial board of the *New Left Review*. See also footnote 41.



theoretical tradition, but better to understand and respond to the lived experiences of post-modern late capitalism.<sup>12</sup>

In terms of Stephen Miles's argument above, it is interesting to note that the only major theoretical model to develop and deploy a model of the production paradigm in musical criticism is that of Adorno. The very premise of Adorno's culture *industry* thesis strongly implies the presence of a production paradigm deployed in the cultural sphere. The centrality of such a paradigm is more explicitly stated in his *Introduction to the Sociology of Music*. Here his discussion of mediation directly relates the notion of artistic objectivation to a form of production equivalent to the social labour occurring in the base. Further, Miles's dismissal of Adorno on the grounds of his unscientific over-reliance on analogy finds some blunt rebuttal in Adorno's own elaboration of the need for material mediation: "so far, what we know in musical sociology is unsatisfactory. It consists in part of largely unproductive scientific activities and in no small measure of unproven statements. Its every cognition rests upon mere analogy" (1989, 194).

The essay goes on to argue that the theoretical source for a suitable material mediation between the musical and the social is to be found in a reworked model of production. In his discussion of Adorno's key essay "Subject-Object" Jay notes:

Adorno [...] differed from Marx [...] in his explanation of the ultimate source of the exchange process. Rather than emphasising the genetic role of alienated and abstracted labour in creating a world of commodities whose human origins were forgotten [...] Adorno insisted on an even earlier origin. Following his friend Alfred Sohn-Rethel, whom he credited in *Negative Dialectics* with the insight that abstract thought was a function of the abstraction of the market place, he located the 'original sin' in the division of mental from manual labour. (1984, 67)

In a statement that has remarkable echoes of Williams's discussion with the editors of the *New Left Review* Jay argues:

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<sup>12</sup> This tension between theoretical hope (variously cast as intellectual work, ideological political commitment, or an explicit combination of the two) and the daily circumstances of actual lives become one of the recurring themes in Williams's fiction. Perhaps the most thorough-going exploration of these tensions occurs in his *Loyalties*.

[U]nlike many in that tradition [Marxism, Western or otherwise] Adorno did not privilege the economic dimension, the mode of production, in his attempt to conceptualise the whole. In the twentieth century, he contended, it was necessary to give equal weight to psychological, cultural and generically social factors. Rather than write a new critique of political economy, the major ideology of the classical capitalist era, it was more important to attempt critiques of late bourgeois theories in those areas instead. (1984, 80-81)

It is therefore possible to argue that there is a strikingly similar commitment on the parts of both Williams and Adorno to the elaboration of an extended production paradigm based in the work of Marx and deployed in the service of cultural criticism, with the goal of interrogating social contingency. While Williams acknowledged the work of Adorno, he never acknowledged the proximity of their positions on the production paradigm. There is also little evidence that this closeness has been recognized in musicology. Much of Adorno's cultural elitism, the problems of his cultural industry thesis which refuses anything but total mass manipulation, and his commitment to the values of structural listening over any other musical parameter can be re-worked in light of Williams's contributions. These differences, along with Williams's greater exposure to the development of capitalism and culture towards the end of the twentieth century, have the potential to offer valuable contributions to musicology.

There are a good number of discussions in the alternative musicologies which seem to *start* from the lessons that Adorno's epistemological project has for the practice of musicology, and then move directly towards more contemporary theoretical pastures (usually related to post-structuralist positions). This would seem to be an echo of the steady occlusion of Marxist materialist interests occurring in the broader intellectual field. There is something of this Adornian revisionism in Miles's essay, where Adorno is credited with being a "seminal influence" on the "critical musicologists", but it is claimed "one will search Adorno's work in vain for something like a theory of mediation, especially one that would connect music concretely to the problems of power and class" (1997, 75).

This is a difficult position because, insofar as Adorno works from within a revised Marxist-Hegelian tradition, it would seem to me that a great deal of his theory is dedicated to dealing with the problems of reflectionism, homology, and the base and superstructure model. His

attempts to provide solutions to these problems constitute precisely a material theory of mediation. There are of course peculiarities in Adorno's work. For example, working at a time of dominant positivist sociology, he rejected the use of empirical evidence to interrogate the moments of mediation he identified (see the extract from *Introduction to the Sociology of Music* above); it is true that one result is an over reliance on analogy. However, my concern is that Miles doesn't reject this Marxist position after a rigorous exploration of the potentials of a materialist understanding of cultural mediation as developed from within the tradition of critical theory, but because there is a concomitant 'scientific' theoretical framework available from within the dominant French academic field (which, incidentally, is that belonging to Bourdieu) which is used to trump it. More interesting, for me, is the attempt to see how the model can be carried into late capitalism in the service of musicology, via the work of Raymond Williams.

There have, of course, been moves to extend Adorno's model to more recent debate. Subotnik's work is exemplary in this regard. However, her mature position with relation to Adorno critiques his work through the deployment of French post-structuralist theory.<sup>13</sup> Andrew Bowie's "Music, Language, Modernity" makes some attempt to revivify Adorno in the context of the relationship between language and music in the shift from modernism to post-modernism. Bowie argues for an extended understanding of modernism, discussing structuralism and post-structuralism in this context and positioning Adorno's continued usefulness within this framework.

The work of Max Paddison is particularly influential in Adornian scholarship. *Adorno's Aesthetics of Music* expounds Adorno's philosophy, aesthetics, and his positions on particular composers (1993). This text is perhaps the most extensive available discussion of the place of material mediation in Adorno's work and builds on Paddison's PhD research: *Music and its Social Mediation: The Concepts of Form and Material in T.W. Adorno's Aesthetics of Music* (1990). The later *Adorno, Modernism and Mass Culture* considers the continued usefulness of Adornian

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<sup>13</sup> See especially "Towards a Deconstruction of Structural Listening: A Critique of Schoenberg, Adorno, and Stravinsky" (1996, 148-176).



critical theory for contemporary musicology. The exegesis of the “grand themes” of critical theory in chapter 1 of this volume makes some comment on the relationship of modernism and the avant-garde to mass culture and post-modernism (1996, 39-42).

Paddison also tackles what he terms the “post-avantgarde”, the rejection of modernism, and attempts made by Huysen and Habermas to understand this phenomenon; he considers the implications of “the call for a new critical paradigm after Adorno” (1996, 39). Here Paddison rejects the optimism Huysen advocates regarding post-modernism, arguing that any affirmation of the commodity character of mass culture and post-modern cultural practices constitutes a denial of the commitment of the modernist avant-garde to the ideal of autonomous art. Such a move must also be the end of the critical potential of theory or culture, producing “a culture of total affirmation of the status quo” (1996, 40). Habermas appears to offer Paddison greater potential for the extension of the critical project. Unlike Huysen, Habermas refuses to consider modernism a completed project superseded by a post-modern paradigm. Paddison therefore uses the efforts of Habermas to argue for the continued relevance of an Adornian paradigm:

The current engagement of Critical Theorists like Habermas with postmodernist/antimodernist critics hinges on a fundamental disagreement regarding the nature of subjectivity and the relation of the Subject to the objective ‘life-world’. Critical Theorists oppose to the decentred Subject of postmodernism the persistent modernist ideal of an autonomous self-reflecting Subject, battered and fragmented as it has now undoubtedly become. If the history of music is taken as one manifestation of the historical development of subjectivity, then the implications of an analysis of this kind for an understanding of music today in its relation to the socio-economic totality are profound. The roots of such an analysis are to be found deep in Adorno’s aesthetic theory. (1996, 42)

Here is an argument for the continued relevance of critical theory, and in particular the work of Adorno. Paddison points to the work of Alastair Williams as an example of a more complete attempt to deploy the work of Habermas to extend a discussion of the “new” in music to the late twentieth century. This project is most extensively presented in *New Music and the Claims of Modernity* (Williams, 1997), where Adorno’s importance is argued, his continued relevance to musicology in a post-modern climate is iterated, and the necessity of updating his aesthetics is acknowledged. Like Paddison, Alastair Williams makes use of the

second generation of Frankfurt critical theorists (particularly Habermas, but also Wellmer) to offer an exposition, critique and continuation of Adorno's thought.

In "Torn Halves: Structure and Subjectivity in Analysis" Alastair Williams argues explicitly that Adorno should be reconsidered by the alternative musicologies which have largely taken their lead from poststructuralism (Williams, 1998). He follows Jameson in arguing that post-modernism is a continuation of modernism: again Habermas is invoked to 'update' Adorno. This essay concludes with a call for analytical pluralism which restates Adorno's continued worth, but which also identifies a need for musicology to shift towards the analysis of "structures of feeling" (Raymond Williams is not cited).<sup>14</sup> "Adorno and the Semantics of Modernism" argues that post-modernism can be understood as a "re-reading" of modernism rather than its antithesis. In this sense modernism is understood as a multiple phenomenon.<sup>15</sup> Two paradigms of musical material are identified in the work of Adorno: that of the "highly structured", which Alastair Williams examines through the work of Brian Ferneyhough, and the "inclusive" or "semantic" aesthetic, examined through Wolfgang Rihm. This distinction is used to argue that there is less of an opposition between modernist and post-modernist practices than is usually asserted. This is an admirable study which recognizes the complexities of Adorno's argument that the mediating moment is embedded in musical material. However, the continuing privileged emphasis on musical form sidesteps the relationship between cultural and otherwise organized production. There is, for example, in the discussion of the place of

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<sup>14</sup> The notion of "structure of feeling" is discussed in some depth below. John and Lizzie Eldridge offer a useful general definition: "the concept of 'structure of feeling' is ... both a practical experience and a theoretical tool ... [it] embodies the interconnective approach adopted by Williams throughout all of his work, creating a base from which he can explore various areas and issues, and to which he can continually return. [For Williams it is] a conceptual means of examining, and simultaneously positing an interrelation between, areas of individual and general experience, private and public processes, and social structures and historical formations" (1994, 112). Williams presents his fullest discussion of the concept in *The Long Revolution* (1961, 57-88), but as a phrase it occurs in the earlier *Culture and Society* (1958), and even *Preface to Film* (published with Michael Orrom in 1954). Despite challenges, it remains active throughout Williams's work.

<sup>15</sup> There are clear parallels here with Raymond Williams's attempts to identify multiple modernisms through a critical reading of the dominant selective tradition, and so maintain the potential of a critical model (Williams, 1989, 31-36).

“the new” in contemporary repertoire no systematic discussion of artistic organization in terms of institution or formation.<sup>16</sup>

There are a great many similarities between the uses Paddison and Alastair Williams make of Habermas and my own attempt to make use of the work of Raymond Williams. Briefly, I consider the work of Raymond Williams to be a necessary gain for musicology for three reasons. First, and most centrally, while Habermas pursues the critical promise of his notion of a “public sphere” of communicative political action (Habermas, 1989), Raymond Williams remains specifically dedicated to the analysis, and promise, of culture. Second, like Habermas Williams attempts to extend the normative aspect of his critical project to account for the impact of late capitalism on subjectivity (discussed more extensively in part 2). Third, he insists on the continued usefulness of the production paradigm rejected by Habermas in favour of his theory of communicative action. Raymond Williams makes the production paradigm the keystone of his integrated attempt to theorise the contemporary culture industries (as is most programmatically outlined in *Culture* (1981)) and contemporary developments in communications technologies. He ties this to a strongly shaped normative commitment and his reading of the travails modern subjectivity. There is some reconstruction required to fully identify this project, but it is my contention that Raymond Williams, in maintaining the continued usefulness of the production paradigm, extends a project more directly related to Adorno and which offers a materialist theory of mediation reworked for a contemporary moment.

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<sup>16</sup> Alongside the above examples, I have found the work of David Clarke and Arnold Whittall useful foils in the attempts to extend a critical model. Especially relevant here are Clarke’s *The Music and Thought of Michael Tippett: Modern Times and Metaphysics* and “Alongside Adorno” (2001, 2003) and Whittall’s reviews “Subjectivity, Synthesis and Hermeneutic Narrative: Dissenting Voices” and “Contriving Construction” (2000, 2002). However, this work is less deeply concerned with the mediational moment in Adorno and as such is less central to my concerns.





### 1.1.3 Conclusion – Two Models of Cultural Production

This chapter has attempted to identify the need for a material model of mediation in contemporary musicology. Much of this exposition has been geared towards elaborating Williams's proximity to Adorno through their strikingly similar deployments of a reworked production paradigm as a theorization of material mediation. The place of Bourdieu in this discussion has hovered in the wings for some time. It is in Bourdieu's deployment of a model of cultural production worked out from within a very different theoretical legacy that I found a convincing and provocative alternative form of material mediation to that advocated by Williams and Adorno. Some discussion of the projects of Williams and Bourdieu will form the substance of the next chapter, before chapter three moves to establish the usefulness of utilizing their different characteristics. What can be signposted here is a brief overview of these models of production.

A comparison between Williams's and Bourdieu's examinations of cultural production reveals that both recognize the emancipatory potential of cultural practices while also denying the terms of the dominant selective tradition or hierarchies of taste. Most centrally, the mediating concepts developed by each are designed to achieve a similar goal: the delineation of theoretical positions able to circumnavigate the problems of objectivist or subjectivist models of culture. Further, these theoretical positions aim to preserve the agency of the individual and insist that practice is materially located.

This emphasis on material practice is the key point of linkage between these two theorists, and it is here that interesting perspectives can be identified that speak to the theoretical problem of an adequate notion of mediation between music and society. It is important to recognize that while the general goal is similar, the two positions emerge through radically different struggles with the different states of their respective academic and social fields. The constitution of these fields consequently shapes the detail of their engagement. This point is drawn out over the next two chapters, but some initial points can be made. Williams's intellectual trajectory is shaped by his response to the English literary tradition of Cambridge



University in the early to mid twentieth century. The dominant modes of criticism that Williams was exposed to here were certain received “vulgar” Marxist literary practices and the practical criticism of F.R. Leavis. The importance of cultural practices (expanded to “signifying practices” in *Culture*, 1981, 207-209) and the developing communications technologies were established, and remained a central concern throughout his work. The Western Marxists came to play an important role in the development of his theoretical models, as did the later influence of structuralism (especially the Althusserian structuralist Marxism as it impacted on the British academic scene) and the developments of post-structuralism, which Williams (like Bourdieu) acknowledged but resisted easy or fashionable formulations. The rise and decline of British socialism and the attenuation of the political and economic conditions of late capitalism also exerted an influence on Williams’s normative utterances.

Bourdieu’s intellectual trajectory is shaped initially by his response to the legacies of Sartre and Levi-Strauss, and subsequently by his emergence at the same time as the influential French intellectuals of the 1970s (Derrida, Lyotard, Baudrillard, Foucault, et al.). While often being linked to this generation, he never formed professional links with these iconic intellectuals. Like Williams, he considered much of this philosophy to be moving in pessimistic collusion with the effects of late capitalism and so to be conformist and ultimately conservative. He would acknowledge post-modern artistic practices as activities responding to and constituting what Jameson has termed the “cultural logic of late capitalism” (2005), but the theoretical basis of the philosophy of post-modernism (as expounded by Lyotard and Baudrillard in particular) is in many ways antithetical to his work. Bourdieu’s theory has been described as a “different poststructuralism” (Calhoun, 1996) and even a “deconstructive sociology” (Grenfell, 2004) and there are merits to both terms. However, the influences of Weber, Durkheim and Marx are also central to the detail of his theoretical project. The emphasis on discussions of materialism in this chapter is intended to prepare the ground on which these two projects can legitimately be drawn together.

## I.2 CHAPTER 2 – Raymond Williams and Pierre Bourdieu

### Introduction

The focus of this chapter is Williams's and Bourdieu's respective attempts to understand cultural production as material, and the pressures and limits exerted on this work by their respective intellectual cultures. If the discussion of Williams is slightly more substantial than that of Bourdieu, this is because more reconstructive work is necessary to establish the terms of Williams's mature projects and to tease out the important connections to Adorno's work. The case study in part 2 will draw out more of the detail of Bourdieu's model.

Perhaps the most difficult aspect of this thesis is the "return" to the work of Raymond Williams. There is a strong and often tacit resistance to Williams's work in recent times which can be difficult to characterize. I agree to a great extent with John Higgins's consideration that "even those who wish to lay claim to at least a portion of his intellectual legacy have felt inclined to do so only in a particularly guarded and defensive manner" (1999, 171). Higgins goes on to identify various attempts to "revise" Williams's work by introducing aspects of Derrida, Barthes, Lacan, Machery, and Bataille (amongst others) into his theoretical apparatus. There is some connection here with a tendency to occlude the legacy of critical theory in theoretical debates in the late 1970s and 1980s. Such moves assume that Williams did not engage with the work of these theorists on his own terms. A good deal of the scholarship for this thesis has involved tracing and evaluating the themes of Williams's later theoretical projects and attempting to measure the extent to which there is a continued usefulness for this work, both in general and specifically for musicology.

The years following Williams's death in 1988 saw the publication of various retrospectives which paid respect to his work as that of a founding father.<sup>17</sup> However, there is evidence in recent times of a second wave of evaluation which attempts to maintain a more critical

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<sup>17</sup> For example: Eagleton's (1989) *Raymond Williams: Critical Perspectives*; Tredell's (1990) *Uncancelled Challenge: The Work of Raymond Williams*; Dworkin's (1993) *Views Beyond the Border Country: Raymond Williams and Cultural Politics*; Eldridge's (1994) *Raymond Williams: Making Connections*.

distance.<sup>18</sup> Alongside the work of John Higgins this is also evident in Australia where sociologists Andrew Milner and Paul Jones have both recently published works arguing for the continued relevance of Williams. More recently again, Hywel Dix's *After Raymond Williams: Cultural Materialism and the Break-Up of Britain* (2008) explores the salience of Williams's theory for analyses of literature and film produced after his death. The *Raymond Williams Society*, an outgrowth of work done in Nottingham University's Literature department, is dedicated to exploring how Williams's ideas can be deployed in the present climate. At Swansea University, CREW (the Centre for Research into the English Literature and Language of Wales) also actively debates Williams's work, recently hosting the conference *Culture and Society @ 50*. Dai Smith, author of the seminal biography *Raymond Williams: A Warriors Tale*, occupies the Raymond Williams Chair at Swansea University, and is perhaps the foremost interpreter of Williams's fiction. A seemingly common thread within these projects is the urge to develop a critical position whereby a rigorously theorized political engagement can be realized. My own research, which explores the connections between a form of Frankfurt School ideology critique and Raymond Williams's late project, offers a potentially valuable contribution to contemporary debate.

My reading of Bourdieu will not hold any great surprises for the academic field as perhaps I hope the work on Williams may. The main contribution it can offer musicology is to question the tendency to focus on Bourdieu's cultural work as presented in *Distinction* (1984) and the early elaboration of his theoretical model (as presented in *Outline of a Theory of Practice* or *The Logic of Practice* (1990, 1977)). Bridget Fowler, in *Pierre Bourdieu and Cultural Theory: Critical Investigations* argues that there are two distinct moments in the Anglo-American reception of Bourdieu's work. The first coincides with the publication of his *Reproduction* (1977) and the second with *Distinction*. This second moment is identified as being Bourdieu's "cultural" moment and takes in the later works of *The Rules of Art* (1996) and *The Field of Cultural Production* (1993). What this model misses is the radical emergence of the concept of the field

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<sup>18</sup> I am thinking here of Paul Jones's (2004) *Raymond Williams's Sociology of Culture: A Critical Reconstruction*; Andrew Milner's (2002) *Re-Imagining Cultural Studies: The Promise of Cultural Materialism*; and John Higgins's (1999) *Raymond Williams: Literature, Marxism and Cultural Materialism*. Most recently, Dai Smith's (2008) biography *Raymond Williams: A Warriors Tale* indicates a continued interest in Williams's work.

from the shadow of *capital* and *habitus* in these latter two works as the key element in a fully elaborated model of cultural production. The work here is therefore on a very different footing to that of *Distinction*. Part 2 of this thesis considers the implications of this in more detail.

As discussed in the introduction, the impetus to read Bourdieu was to explore alternatives to Williams's deployment of an overtly Marxist production paradigm, and so develop a more critical approach to the central theoretical problematic of how to examine material mediation. The aim of this chapter is to define Williams's use of such a paradigm and its proximity to that of Adorno, before offering an overview discussion of Bourdieu's theoretical model. Chapter 3 will show that there are some similarities between Williams's and Bourdieu's general goals, but that there are also important and useful differences between their approaches. What needs to be established before these arguments can be made is that Williams advocates a form of materialist cultural production clearly and explicitly based in the work of Marx, while Bourdieu articulates a model of production shaped by his relationship with the contemporary structure of the French intellectual field.





### 1.2.1 Raymond Williams's Mature Project

#### Overview

Williams's written output encompasses a wide range of interests, finds expression in a variety of modes, and was produced over a broad period. The most important modes are theory, political and social commentary, literary criticism, and fiction. While one or other of the first three modes of writing is often presented as the privileged body, the complexity of their interrelation should not be discounted. Reading one of Williams's modes of writing illuminates the other. While I am closely familiar with all Williams's published fictional writing, and recognize that it is essential to fully understanding the range and nuances of his late theoretical position, I have at no point in this thesis attempted to systematically elaborate the links between his theory and fiction.<sup>19</sup> That Raymond Williams is a divider of opinion is beyond doubt, and there are many routes through his work; what follows is my own reading of his thoughts on the production paradigm. I make no claim to encapsulate and represent the range of his work.

While the whole body of Williams's output is difficult to periodize, his mature work has proved particularly important for my research, turning on the paired works of *Culture and Towards 2000*. The former is a tight theoretical statement shorn of Williams's political commitments. The latter is a looser discussion of contemporaneous political pressures and determinations which reinstates Williams's normative positions to his project. Together, these works present Williams's mature method for the materialist critique of culture. Also important is the posthumous *The Politics of Modernism: Against the New Conformists* (1989) which continues these concerns, both theoretical and normative, through to Williams's last reflections on

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<sup>19</sup> I recommend Tony Pinkney's (1991) *Raymond Williams* as a sensitive yet critical account of Williams's fiction. Nicolas Tredell's (1990) *Uncancelled Challenge: The Work of Raymond Williams* also presents a critical discussion of the place of Williams's fiction in his literary criticism. Perhaps the most extensive discussions of Williams's published and unpublished works are to be found in Smith's (2008) biographical *Raymond Williams: A Warriors Tale*. Smith's discussion of the interrelation of themes between the fictional *Border Country*, Williams's seminal *Culture and Society*, and his biography are salutary (2008, 441-469).

avant-garde formations. Williams's earlier writings on communications are also central to the shape of his late theoretical project (especially *Britain in the Sixties: Communications and Television: Technology and Cultural Form* (1962, 1974)). This latter work is explored in the appendix.

*Culture* proposes an approach to the study of culture and society based on two closely related theoretical models. First, Williams expands his deployment of a production paradigm, based on Marx's elaboration of labour in *Das Kapital*, within the sphere of culture (discussed below). Second, he develops a complementary method for studying cultural form based in the work of the Russian social formalists. This latter is evidenced in Williams's definition of "Formalist" in *Keywords*, which recognizes the positive contributions of the social formalism of Mukarovsky and Volosinov (1988, 139), and in more detail in the discussion of language in *Marxism and Literature*. Here the formalism of the signification of semiology is rejected in favour of the Volosinovian notion of the "signal", which is seen to allow discussion of the material production and contestation of meaning (1977, 21-44).

This allows Williams to develop the theoretical grounds by which the production paradigm can be extended to the study of form: "signification, the social creation of meanings through the use of formal signs, is then a practical material activity; it is indeed, literally, a means of production" (1977, 38). One of the central topics of *Culture* is the development of these theoretical understandings of form into a coherent, historicized, and material methodology. This method recognizes that cultural forms are embodied signals of social relationships across a variable range from the relatively external, the "signalled places, occasions and terms of specifically indicated types of cultural activity", to those so firmly embedded in the practice that "they are at once social and formal, and can in one kind of analysis be treated as relatively autonomous" (1981, 148). It is here that Williams makes one of the few direct theoretical connections to the work of Adorno, citing *The Philosophy of Modern Music* as the only attempt to develop an "important comparable analysis" in the study of music (1981, 179).

The split between *Culture* and *Towards 2000* leaves an uneasy distance between Williams's theoretical iterations and his emancipatory commitment to a participatory, educated democracy. *Culture* acts as a deceptively straight-forward theoretical clarification of the tools for Williams's analysis of culture. *Towards 2000* builds on the normative statements of *The Long Revolution*, even republishing the chapter "Britain in the Sixties" in full, reviewing and updating its analysis of the economic implications of post-industrial society, the political implications of developments in democracy, and the cultural pessimism and technological determinism of contemporary culture. Through its refutation of technological determinism, *Towards 2000* also reintroduces Williams's discussions of communications technologies to this mature body of work.

To be explicit, Williams's late projects attempt to deploy his re-worked production paradigm to analyze the organization of culture across a number of parameters: artistic organization in terms of its formations and institutions, formal organization, modes of reproduction, and modes of communication.<sup>20</sup> This understanding, linked to the discussions of cultural production and the rising dominance of a globalized market economy, allows a more nuanced exposition of the terms of a culture industry than that expounded by Horkheimer and Adorno. If the tightly argued theoretical statements, the normative commitments, and the reflections on communication technologies of Williams's late work can be rejoined, then they offer a method of emancipatory ideology critique comparable to that of Adorno and the Frankfurt School but more engaged with contemporary developments. Such a method would also have particular relevance for music's increasingly close relationship with technological developments and commodification in the latter half of the twentieth and early twenty first centuries (this is discussed more fully, in relation to Williams, in the appendix).

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<sup>20</sup> Part two of this thesis discusses Williams's view that the common character of production and reproduction accounts for the indissolubility of the whole social process. His theoretical project can be thought of as the attempt to provide a model capable of accounting for multiple and potentially clashing processes of production.



## Williams, Marx and Marxisms

Central so far is the place Williams gives to a Marxist production paradigm as an organizing principle in his theory. Some effort should be made to support this assertion. It is important to note that Williams turned to Marxism in order to interrogate the methodologies of contemporary orthodox literary traditions rather than through any sense of political duty. Perry Anderson offers a discussion of the term “Western Marxism” which is useful here (1976). He deploys the term to delineate tendencies in the development of critical Marxism which were oppositional to communist “scientific” Marxisms and which included a strong focus on culture in the normative criteria for their critical theory. The critical theory of the Western Marxists replaced the revolutionary potential of earlier theorists (such as Gramsci) with an emphasis on the emancipatory potential of human activity. Martin Jay articulates this change in emphasis between Marx’s and Adorno’s work:

[W]hile Marx had written at a moment when philosophy was energetically and aggressively descending into the material world, confident of the imminent unity of theory and practice, Adorno’s philosophizing was carried out amidst what seemed a very unfortunate fall. (1984, 67)

The attempt to make sense of this “fall” brought into focus the analytical target: the dual themes of the negative effects of ideological coercion and human emancipation in cultural praxis. The tension between culture as praxis and culture as ideological domination characterises the central thrust of Western Marxist critical theory and its various legacies. The method and purpose of the Western Marxist emancipatory ideology critique must be understood in this context: the combination of cultural analysis with normative values derived from social analyses that are, at least in aspiration, transformative.<sup>21</sup>

Much of this Marxist work, along with the structuralist Marxism of Althusser, reached Williams in English translation within a fairly short period:

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<sup>21</sup> It is in defining “emancipatory critique” in such general terms that the extent to which Williams’s mature project constitutes just such a process become clear: a rigorously theorised approach to the study of culture whose articulation is clearly designed to connect to a more generally articulated normative commitment. While this remains unacknowledged as a methodology in his work, making the connection adds weight to the use of Williams’s work as an attempt to extend an Adornian paradigm into more contemporary contexts.

It was in this situation that I felt the excitement of contact with more new Marxist work: the later work of Lukacs, the later work of Sartre, the developing work of Goldmann and of Althusser, the variable and developing syntheses of Marxism and some forms of structuralism. At the same time, within this significant new activity, there was further access to older work, notably that of the Frankfurt School (in its most significant period in the twenties and thirties) and especially the work of Walter Benjamin; the extraordinarily original work of Antonio Gramsci; and as a decisive element of a new sense of tradition, newly translated work of Marx and especially the *Grundrisse*. As all this came in, during the sixties and early seventies, I often reflected, and in Cambridge had cause to reflect, on the contrast between the socialist student of literature in 1940 and in 1970. More generally I had reason to reflect on the contrast for any student of literature, in a situation in which an argument had drifted into deadlock, or into local and partial positions in the late thirties and forties, was being vigorously and significantly reopened. (1977, 4)

The early results of this process were presented in the 1970s, especially evident in the essays "Literature and Sociology: In Memory of Lucien Goldmann" (1971), "Lucien Goldman and Marxism's Alternative Tradition" (1972), and "Base and Superstructure in Marxist Cultural Theory" (1973). In the latter, Williams locates the "crisis in cultural theory" in an aesthetic rather than an anthropological sense of culture, thus placing Marxism as a resource in his attempts to solve the methodological problems of abandoning a received orthodox literary paradigm. The mature projects of *Culture* and *Towards 2000* can be understood as the culmination of this drive.

Williams rejected the dominant "vulgar Marxisms" of received interpretations of Marx which he saw as products of the "transfer from Marx to Marxism" (1977, 75). The central theoretical problem for Williams here was an inadequate reception of the base and superstructure model, which he considered led to a reflectionist reductionism. Williams reconstructs his relationship with the metaphor in "Base and Superstructure in Marxist Cultural Theory", "Marx on Culture", and *Marxism and Literature*. In this body of work Williams draws on the Preface to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* and *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Napoleon* to demonstrate that Marx's own use of the metaphor is highly variable. In the former, the most common source for the elaboration of the metaphor, Marx discusses an epochal understanding of the base (such as the capitalist mode of production). Williams notes in *Marxism and Literature* that *The Eighteenth Brumaire* demonstrates that the metaphor can also be applied to smaller determinants, especially to

class fractions, and therefore that Marx's understanding of the base is operable within smaller timeframes than the epochal (1977, 76). For the purposes of cultural analyses, Williams ultimately rejects the model of determination presented in *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, but recognizes the necessary gains of the *The Eighteenth Brumaire's* more nuanced understanding of the base in *Marxism and Literature* and "Marx on Culture" (1989, 223-224).

Despite this acknowledgement, the model of base and superstructure in *The Eighteenth Brumaire* never becomes, for Williams, a universal paradigm for cultural analysis. However, the text does occupy an important place in his work as "the source of the important modern Marxist conception of *homology*, or formal correspondence, between certain kinds of art and thought and the social relations within which they are shaped" (1989, 224). Williams thus recognizes that the reflectionism of the vulgar Marxist deployment of the base and superstructure model is not inherent to the work of Marx itself:

This conception can reveal determining relations at a quite different level from the bare proposition that 'ideas are nothing more than the ideal expression of the dominant material relationships'; among other reasons in the fact that something more than reflection or representation is then often in question, and art and ideas can be seen as structurally formed, but then also actively formed, in their own terms, within a general social order and its complex internal relations. (1989, 224)

From this position, Williams develops an account of the determination – the "pressures and limits" (1988, 101) – of the superstructure that allows the formation of signifying practices determined in their own terms and by material traditions. Williams is keen to limit this form of mediation, arguing in *Marxism and Literature* that the key category of artistic formations acts in a mediating role between determination and production: "it [determination] is always also a constitutive process with very powerful pressures which are both expressed in political, economic, and cultural formations and [...] are internalized and become 'individual wills'" (1977, 87).<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> See the discussion of ECM in chapter 6 for a more extended discussion of formations.



It is in making these arguments that Williams also develops the notion of cultural production. In “Marx on Culture” he acknowledges the division of mental and manual labour Marx makes in *Das Kapital*, aiming to elaborate the category of mental labour (maintaining Marx’s emphasis on its material and social history) for the analysis of cultural processes. In doing so, he develops the notion of a culturally productive force which is distinct from the notion of a superstructural activity. In the latter

none of these [artistic practices] can be grasped as they are; as real practices, elements of a whole material social process; not a realm or a world or a superstructure, but many and variable productive practices, with specific conditions and intentions. To fail to see this is [...] to lose contact with the actuality of these practices [...]. It would be more reasonable to get back on both feet again, and to look at our actual productive activities without assuming in advances that only some of them are material. (1977, 94)

Williams therefore argues for a cultural production paradigm rooted in the conception of labour, whereby productive activity is considered to be both mental and manual, producing both mental and manual work in response to specific determinations (pressures and limits). The two pillars of the “base” (manual work, or “general production”) and “superstructure” (mental work, or “cultural production”) metaphor are thereby problematized, though they are not completely cast down, as Williams maintains the distinction between general and cultural productive forces in his model of production.<sup>23</sup> It is the attempt to refine this model that brings Williams to the Western Marxists, as is particularly evident in his reworking of Goldman’s conception of homology (1980, 11-30) and the cultural expansion of Gramsci’s notion of hegemony (1977, 108-115). Adorno’s and Benjamin’s category of mediation (discussed below) is also centrally important.

This use of the production paradigm, and the subsequent attempts to develop from it a theory of culture, is the clearest way of understanding the often reductive notion of “cultural materialism” used to designate Williams’s work.<sup>24</sup> Williams explicitly expresses the

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<sup>23</sup> Much of the theoretical work of *Culture* is the attempt to theorize adequately the relationship between these two modes of production: chapter 4 below elaborates the range of this work.

<sup>24</sup> This contention is also central to Jones (2005) and is critically discussed by Gyorgy Markus (1990), who also notes the resulting proximity of Williams to Adorno.

development of this cultural materialism through a discussion of his relationship with Marxism generally and production in particular:

It took me thirty years, in a very complex process, to move from that received Marxist theory [...] through various transitional forms of theory and inquiry, to the position I now hold, which I define as “cultural materialism”. [...] What I would now claim to have reached [...] is a theory of culture as a (social and material) productive process and of specific practices, of “arts”, as social uses of material means of production [...]. (1980, 243)

Williams assesses the work of Marx and the Western Marxists, and comes to deploy a Marxist production paradigm in the sphere of culture with a close proximity to some of the theoretical position of Adorno.

### **Williams, Adorno, and Mediation**

Another way of characterizing Williams’s theoretical travails with the base and superstructure model is to suggest that he moves from an understanding of the relationship as one of “reflection” to one of “mediation”. This is most clearly evidenced in *Marxism and Literature*, which describes these as two types of materialism, with the former characterizing the reductionism of the “vulgar” Marxisms and Williams clearly moving to establish the central importance of the latter (1977, 95-97). This notion of mediation is initially described as follows: “a more neutral sense [of mediation] had developed, for interaction between separate forces. The distinction between ‘mediate’ and ‘immediate’ had been developed to emphasize ‘mediation’ as an *indirect* connection or agency between separate kinds of act” (1977, 98).

Williams goes on to insist that he rejects a “negative” form of mediation in which the analysis works back “through the mediation to their original forms”, resulting in a sort of “unmasking” of concealed ideology (1977, 98). However, he notes that alongside this negative mediation there coexists a “positive” notion of mediation which is the special contribution of the Frankfurt School:

Here the change involved in ‘mediation’ is not necessarily seen as distortion or disguise. Rather, all active relations between different kinds of being and consciousness are inevitably mediated, and this process is not a separable agency – a ‘medium’ – but intrinsic to the properties of the related kinds. “Mediation is in

the object itself, not something between the object and that to which it is brought.” Thus mediation is a positive process in social reality, rather than a process added to it by way of projection, disguise, or interpretation. (1977, 98-99)

Importantly, the quotation in the above statement comes from Adorno’s *Theses on the Sociology of Art* (but not, significantly, the more extensive discussion of mediation in *Introduction to the Sociology of Music*, which more explicitly relates this notion to a production paradigm). The understanding that “mediation is in the object itself” is a key Adornian position, established to argue against the understanding of mediation as an ideological disguise and to profess that *all* forms of relationship must be mediated. It is this understanding which allows for Adorno’s assertion that cultural works can be studied as objectifications of society, rather than studying their position in society. This understanding of mediation therefore becomes necessary for Adornian emancipatory critique: central to understanding Williams’s late methodology is the recognition that in acknowledging Adorno’s conception of mediation Williams also tacitly accepts the conception of emancipatory critique as a key methodological principle.

Adorno’s discussion of mediation in *The Introduction to the Sociology of Music* (1989, 194-218) relates the concept to the notion of production. The argument moves through three phases: first, the notion of artistic objectivation is mooted; second, he argues that this objectivation must be related to forms of basal production; and third, he contends that these forms of production are in turn grounded in a common form of labour: “productive forces unfold in the same way, and as the same forces, in areas not immediately dependent upon each other. The mediation of music and society is apt to be taking place in the substructure of the labour processes underlying both realms” (1989, 206).

In both Williams and Adorno the category of productive cultural formations, adapted from the traditional Marxist characteristic of the base, becomes central as a mediating category.<sup>25</sup> In Adorno this use of the production paradigm as mediation is closely linked to his culture industry thesis. Artistic formations are able to work at the progressive forefront of cultural

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<sup>25</sup>The importance of artistic formations as culturally productive forces, and therefore as a key category of mediation, is central to the shape of the following study of Arvo Pärt and the record label ECM.



production (as an avant-garde) or to make use of existing techniques in cultural production (including the deployment of knowledge of cultural form or other intellectual skill). For Adorno, the dangers of the culture industry are that these objectivations risk becoming mechanically fetishised, or that the progressive potential of cultural production becomes over-dependent on alienated social productive forces (such as the “new” technologies).<sup>26</sup> Williams also recognizes a distinction between the means of production, the means of communication, and the means of general production, but (as we shall see below) he sees a far greater range of possibilities within this formulation than the cultural pessimism of Adorno.

### **The Production Paradigm and the “Culture Industry Thesis”**

Williams’s mature work is compelling because of its use of an extended Marxist production paradigm in relation to culture, closely paralleling theoretical moves made by Adorno. However, Williams’s expanded conception of: culture (to “signifying practices”, 1981, 207-210); communications and communications technologies (1980, 50-63); and his engagement with the fragmentation and plurality of late capitalism, are significant developments in the use of the paradigm. These modifications sidestep many of the problems to be found in Adorno’s culture industry thesis, which were due in great part to his inability to formulate a positive conception of culture beyond his privileging of autonomous culture. Further, Williams’s commitment to a deepening educated and participatory democracy alongside his use of Adorno’s positive notion of mediation allows the development of an emancipatory ideology critique based on his experiences of Britain from the 1930s to the late 1980s. This position allows him to rethink the elitist aspects of Adorno’s critical theory and offer the potential for a more contemporary critical position. The proximity of these aspects of Williams to Adorno is not often acknowledged, and as far as I can tell has not been recognized at all in musicology. I contend that there is potential in these theoretical observations, considering the shadow that Adorno’s scholarship has cast over the study of music in recent years.

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<sup>26</sup> This latter point is, of course, the crux of Adorno’s disagreement with Benjamin.



In wider intellectual circles this proximity is recognized and elaborated by Paul Jones (2004), Gyorgy Markus (1986), and also by Frederic Jameson's (1990) *Late Marxism: Adorno, or, The Persistence of the Dialectic*.<sup>27</sup> Jameson seems to support the above observations, arguing that Williams extends Adorno's culture industry thesis through the expanded reach of his understanding of culture. Jameson contends that Adorno's elitism and occasionally strange formulations in relation to popular culture are due in large part to an under-theorized account of culture. In contrast, Jameson contends that Williams's theory is

despite his seeming nostalgia, a very contemporary one indeed, which corresponds to an acculturation of social life far more thoroughgoing and 'total' than could have been achieved in the 1930s (when, with industrial mass production of cultural goods – so-called Fordism – the process was only beginning). (1990, 140)

This is a compelling, if generalized, case for the continued relevance of Williams. Perhaps more challenging is Jameson's argument that Williams's revised conception of Gramsci's hegemony offers the opportunity for discussing developments in culture, industry, and technology without automatically falling into Adorno's emphasis on the negative impact of commodified culture as ideology. This is never fully expounded by Jameson, although it is possible that it could be demonstrated. In order to test the proposition it would be necessary to consider Williams's approach to critique alongside the complex relationships between the various domains of his production paradigms (communications technologies, cultural form, means of cultural production, and means of general production) and the role that his formulation of hegemony plays in these relationships. In Williams's work these complex, discontinuous and asymmetrical relationships are the only means by which an adequate conception of a "culture industry" can be identified. While *Marxism and Literature* has played a key role in the exposition of the theoretical terms of these various categories, it is in *Culture* that the ways of ways of bringing these positions into relations are discussed. The case study in part 2 of this thesis is designed to address these key issues.

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<sup>27</sup> The argument is implicit in many sections of Jameson's book, but perhaps is most explicitly stated on 143-144.

While Jameson never tackles this project in detail, it is evident that his more widely cited *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* makes explicit use of the key terms of Williams's adaptation of hegemony (dominant, emergent, residual) as well as the earlier "structures of feeling". The key exposition here is his introduction (2005, ix-xxii) where the distinction between dominant and emergent cultural forms is used to postulate an account of post-modernism that is different to those found in radical post-modernisms (such as Lyotard's account, 2005, xi). The analyses that Jameson consequently works out emphasize the discontinuous nature of post-modern cultural forms, while also establishing continuities with what preceded them, attempting to contextualize developments in post-modernism within the broader framework of late capitalism. It is this understanding that allows Jameson to risk a definition of the post-modern in terms that are useful to this thesis:

Postmodernism is the consumption of sheer commodification as process. The "life-style" of the superstate therefore stands in relationship to Marx's "fetishism" of commodities as the most advanced monotheisms to primitive animisms or the most rudimentary idol worship; indeed, any sophisticated theory of the postmodern ought to bear something of the same relationship to Horkheimer and Adorno's old "Culture Industry" concept as MTV or fractal ads bear to fifties television series.

It seems to me that Williams's work is central to Jameson in this regard. However, there is room for understanding how Williams himself interpreted this shift from modernism to post-modernism, and how he deployed his theoretical apparatus to account for it. While I agree with Jameson's view to a great extent, I find that the appropriation of certain theoretical terms robs Williams's argument of its overall coherence, especially Williams's attempts to offer a normative critical dimension to the situation of late capitalism. Further, Jameson's struggle to provide a definition of a post-modern "structure of feeling" (2005, ix-xx) would perhaps have benefited from a consideration of Williams's own attempt to identify the dominant contemporary structure of feeling that "enacts the world" as expounded in *Modern Tragedy* (1966, 100). This is discussed more fully in chapter 4.

This exploration has perhaps taken me deeper into the realms of critical theory than is currently fashionable. However, Subotnik's reception of Adorno aside, the contemporary

strands of musicology with which I can attempt to establish some kind of solidarity are to be found in Klumpenhouwer's provocative call for a Marxist poetics of music as an essential component of contemporary musicological research (Klumpenhouwer, 1998, 2001), and Paddison's problematization of the relationships between critical theory, cultural musicology, and post-modernism (Paddison, 1996). Perhaps the closest parallel is to be found in the reflections of Alastair Williams who deploys the work of Habermas as a way of extending Adorno's critical theory to a contemporary climate (1997, 17-20).

### **Williams and Post-Structuralism**

Considering its current theoretical preponderance, some brief mention should be made of Williams's relationship to post-structuralism. The above discussion has moved to show that Williams executed something close to a deconstruction of the base and superstructure model in order to account for the deployment of a culturally duplicated production paradigm. It should also be clear that a similarly radical reworking of the discipline of literary studies occurs in his work. For Williams, the literature paradigm is unable to account for written culture as a practice within a whole material social process. In *Marxism and Literature*, in order to unpick this category of "literature", Williams applies his categories of hegemony to the notion of tradition in an attempt to take apart the notion of a privileged canon. He identifies a "selective tradition" defining it as "an intentionally selective version of a shaping past and a pre-shaped present, which is then powerfully operative in the process of social and cultural definition and identification" (1977, 115).

This tradition "is a version of the past which is intended to connect with and ratify the present. What it offers in practice is a sense of *predisposed continuity*" (1977, 116). Of course, this continuity is always in favour of certain social fractions of society and made to the exclusion of others. The recognition and refusal of this dominant hegemonic tradition therefore becomes a key task for Williams: "[The selective tradition's] selective privileges and interests, material in substance but often ideal in form, including complex elements of style [...] can still be recognized, demonstrated, and broken" (1977, 119). This *raison d'être* carries



through to virtually all aspects of Williams's work: the critical analyses can be understood as the attempt to identify the characteristics of this tradition and rescue the power of emergent categories; the theoretical work is designed to recognize power within discourse and the material, historical, and socially arbitrary nature of the sign; the normative projects, based in a commitment to an educated and participatory democracy, are designed to offer a critique and an alternative to this dominant hegemony. It is possible to consider that this expansion of "culturalist" categories has strikingly similar characteristics to the relativistic turn of post-structuralism's critiques of structuralist categories.

Williams's engagement with British culturalism and Marxism produces a theoretical position with some general symmetry with post-structuralist concerns. This is not to imply that there was no direct engagement with the work of Derrida and the late Barthes. Some clearer idea of Williams's response to these post-structuralisms is evident in his essay "The Crisis in English Studies" (1983, 192-211). The "crisis" of the essay title is the attempted incorporation of post-structuralism to the British intellectual field, a process which threatened to unsettle the status of the literature paradigm (1983, 192-3). Williams notes that the practices of Marxism and structuralism have been subsumed by this paradigm: "the surprising thing is that in so many of their actual tendencies they have been accommodated, or have accommodated themselves, *within* the paradigm, where they can be seen as simply diverse approaches to the same object of knowledge" (1983, 196).

Williams goes on to offer a concise summary discussion of the impact of Marxism and Althusserian structuralist Marxism in literature, noting in the latter the unfortunate reduction of agency to ideology. This sets the context for a discussion of the emergence of "a tendency which undoubtedly has a relation to structuralism, certainly to structural linguistics, yet which – validly in my opinion – denies that it is a structuralism" (1983, 208). The key differences are defined as follows:

[I]nstead of seeing literary works as *produced* by the system of signs, which has been the central emphasis of the most orthodox structuralism, this later semiotics has on the contrary emphasized that productive systems have themselves always

to be constituted and reconstituted, and that because of this there is a perpetual battle about the fixed character of the sign and about the systems which we ordinarily bring to production and interpretation. (1983, 208)

Following this identification, Williams offers one of the few definitions of “deconstruction” in his oeuvre, noting that it is “not the technical analysis of an internal organization to show where all the parts, the components, have come from, but a much more open and active process which is continually taking examples apart, as a way of taking their systems apart” (1983, 209). This leads to the explicit attempt to draw a connection with his project and the emergent deconstructive post-structuralisms:

It was here, perhaps to our mutual surprise, that my work found new points of contact with certain work in more recent semiotics. There were still radical differences, especially in their reliance on structural linguistics and psychoanalysis, in particular forms; but I remember saying that a fully historical semiotics would be very much the same thing as cultural materialism [...]. (1983, 210)

The danger to the received literature paradigm lies in the challenge of this “radical semiotics” to the explanatory power of the paradigm itself: a challenge never fully mounted by Marxism or structuralism as they were prone to incorporation within the terms of the paradigm. Williams welcomed this challenge, identifying it in general terms with his own project of cultural materialism. It is in this challenge, precisely this attempt to stake out a position *outside* of the paradigm, that he saw common ground between “radical semiotics” and cultural materialism. Williams takes this opportunity for a re-elaboration of cultural materialism, defining it as “the analysis of all forms of signification [...] within the actual means and conditions of their production”. In other words the relativistic turn, the recognition of the arbitrariness of the sign, and the urge to expand the paradigm of literary studies, all point to Williams’s own assessment of and engagement with deconstruction and post-structuralism. His cultural materialism is not seen as superseded, but rather as a material and historicist parallel.





## 1.2.2 Bourdieu's "Structuralist Constructivism"

### Overview

The work of Pierre Bourdieu emerges from the French intellectual field in the latter part of the twentieth century. The extent to which Williams and Bourdieu confront similar problems, given the pressures of their respective traditions, is surprising: this will be considered in more detail in the following chapter. What needs to be presented here is some delineation of the character of Bourdieu's work in general terms, and his attempts to develop a model of cultural production in particular.

Like Williams, the breadth of Bourdieu's work is extensive both in subject and in mode. In overview it can be noted that his intellectual work began with an early period of field work in Algeria. In *Algeria 1960* he recognizes the central role that education plays in social and economic reconstruction. This led to further analysis of the education system and its social effects. Bourdieu's central thesis in *Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture* was that the content of scholastic culture acts as a vehicle for social distinction (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977). He also became centrally concerned with the role of culture, recognizing that, like education, it had the power to transform lives. Bourdieu's position here is reminiscent of the Western Marxist dual character of culture: on the one hand the potential for emancipation is valued and on the other its transformation into a form of distinction, supporting and legitimating established social hierarchies, is to be resisted. This theme runs throughout Bourdieu's work on education and culture: both are key features of human development that have the potential to revolutionize as well as subordinate. While the character of Bourdieu's work, with its emphasis on scientific objectivity, resists the notion of a normative theoretical methodology, the recognition of this dual potential constitutes the grounds for his political engagement. Bourdieu stepped into the public domain late in his career, using his position to argue on behalf of those fractions of societies subject to what he saw as the symbolic and cultural violence of neo-liberal economics. This project is presented in *Acts of Resistance Against*

*the New Myths of Our Time, The Weight of the World: Social Suffering in Contemporary Society and Firing Back: Against the Tyranny of the Market* (1998, 1999, 2003).

The key moment of Bourdieu's work on culture is often characterized as an interest in cultural consumption; that is, in the systems and patterns of social access to, and methods of perceiving, artworks. This research is most extensively presented in *Distinction*, which elucidates a critique of social aesthetics and the mechanisms of social reproduction inherent in particular cultural practices and behaviours (Bourdieu, 1984). Bourdieu's work on cultural production has received less attention and is represented by two main volumes: firstly the collection of essays titled in its Anglo-American publication *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature* and, the central work here, *The Rules of Art* (1993, 1996).

While it would be antithetical to the work of Bourdieu to draw a predetermined connection through the production of his work, each project contributes to the development of a coherent model.<sup>28</sup> While this model undergoes adjustments, revisions, and small additions as it is fitted to the scope of each subject, there is no need, as in the work of Williams, to reconstruct the terms by which Bourdieu's model of cultural production works. What can therefore be said of the *The Rules of Art* and the essays in *The Field of Production* is that they radically overhaul and expand on the place of the "field" in Bourdieu's theoretical system. The details of these arguments are drawn out in part 2 of this thesis. What can be presented here is an overview of Bourdieu's theoretical model with the goal of emphasising the character of its moment of material mediation. This section is therefore more exegetical than the reconstructive elaborations of Williams's position above.

### **Towards a Conception of Mediation in Bourdieu's Theoretical Model**

This discussion will first elaborate the place of two central influences in Bourdieu's theoretical development before moving on to consider a self-definition of its salient features as "structuralist constructivism". Unpacking this definition leads to the identification of the two

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<sup>28</sup> This is to say that there are other determinations at work than the theoretical. For example, the securing of funding from Kodak for the production of *Photography: A Middle-Brow Art* (1990).

key theoretical notions of *habitus* and field, arriving at the goal of the discussion: the recognition that the moment of material mediation in Bourdieu's work occurs in the relationship between these two.<sup>29</sup> A brief description of some of Bourdieu's key terms is then offered in relation to this understanding.

It is essential to highlight two key influencing factors. First, Bourdieu's debt to the body of classical social theory should be noted, especially the work of Karl Marx, Emile Durkheim and Max Weber.<sup>30</sup> Rogers Brubaker states:

At the risk of oversimplification, it may be suggested in summary that Bourdieu attempts to systematize Weber's thought in a quasi-Marxian mode and to "subjectivize" Marxian thought by incorporating the Durkheimian concern with symbolic forms and the Weberian concern with symbolic power and symbolic goods in its systematic view of the social world as a structure of class-based power and privilege. (1985, 749)

Weber's work on the sociology of religion (1965) provides Bourdieu with the basis for emphasizing *symbolic* practices; especially symbolic power, symbolic goods (and their relationship to the economy), and symbolic capital.<sup>31</sup> Durkheim's work, also in the religious sphere (1976), allows Bourdieu to develop some understanding of the correspondence between social and symbolic structures. As he puts it in *Distinction*, "the cognitive structures which social agents implement in their practical knowledge of the social world are internalized, 'embodied' social structures" (1984, 468).

Bourdieu's reading of Marx is less evident as a constituent part of his developed theoretical model. As is perhaps to be expected, however, it is in this reading that I found an exciting parallel with the project of Williams. This is not so much to do with his most evident Marxian debt: the retention of social class as a key element of analysis (although this is not an insignificant point). Instead, the key connection emerges in Bourdieu's explicit attempt to

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<sup>29</sup> I have followed Bourdieu's own scheme for italicising his terms: only those that he derives from a Latin root (e.g., *habitus*, *illusio*) or Greek root (e.g., *nomos*) are presented in italics.

<sup>30</sup> The major theoretical statements of *Outline of a Theory of Practice* and *The Logic of Practice* constitute the central iterations of Bourdieu's engagement with this work (1977, especially 159-197).

<sup>31</sup> Perhaps the core establishment of the theory of symbolic power is to be found in *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, especially the chapter "Structures, Habitus, Power: Basis for a Theory of Symbolic Power" (1991). These notions are further refined in Bourdieu's reflections on language in *Language and Symbolic Power* (1991, especially 10-25).



materialize (through Weber) the aspects of the superstructure which Marx had attributed to the “mental” category following his mental/manual division of labour. Through this move, Bourdieu attempts to develop a model of materialism better able to account for the Marxist superstructural categories. That is, like Williams he works through Marx’s conception of labour to take apart the base and superstructure metaphor, insisting that the ultimate basis for all practices (including the cultural) is material:

I must say that, on this decisive point, my reading of Max Weber – who, far from opposing Marx, as is generally thought, with a spiritualist theory of history, in fact carries the materialist mode of thought into areas which Marxist materialism effectively abandons to spiritualism – helped me greatly in arriving at this kind of generalized materialism. (1990, 17)

This position clearly mirrors the intention behind Williams’s cultural duplication of the base in his development of a cultural production paradigm as a model of material mediation. However, the steps Bourdieu moves through to build a model of material practice are radically distinct from those of Williams. Most centrally, the aim of this “generalized materialism” is to allow the placing of the symbolic categories of power, capital, and so on, on the same footing as the pursuit of their material counterparts. He wants to argue that even the most apparently disinterested symbolic practices – for my purposes, participation in the production of autonomous music is a good example – are ultimately geared towards the maximization of either material or symbolic profit. Crucially, he considers there to be an exchange mechanism between these two.

In attempting to understand how Bourdieu proposes to develop this understanding to account for the material mediation between the economic and the symbolic, it is necessary to consider a second central and influencing factor: the organization of the French field at the time of Bourdieu’s intellectual development. This field was structured by the key, and opposing, influences of Sartre’s phenomenological subjectivism and Levi-Strauss’s structuralist objectivism. Raymond Williams and Nicholas Garnham identify this as a central theme in Bourdieu’s work, “developed as a specific critique of these two schools of thought which he sees as two successive dialectical moments in the development of a truly scientific theory of



practice” (Garnham and Williams, 1980, 119). The importance of transcending this received subjectivist/objectivist opposition is highlighted by Brubaker:

Social life is materially grounded and conditioned, but material conditions affect behavior in large part through the mediation of individual beliefs, dispositions, and experiences. [...] Only a theory based on conceptualization of the relation between material and symbolic properties, and between external, constraining social facts and experiencing, apprehending, acting individuals, can be adequate for the human sciences. (750)<sup>32</sup>

Consequently, my understanding of Bourdieu’s extensive theoretical projects is organized through the recognition that he attempts to deploy a material sociology of practice as an intervention in this objectivist/subjectivist debate. The tools of this theoretical project develop over a number of years and are shaped and refined with each project. I have always used their most developed understanding, and haven’t attempted to comment systematically on the nature of this development.

In order to develop a more detailed discussion, it is useful to consider the telling self-characterization Bourdieu offers of his work as “structuralist constructivism” (1989, 14). He immediately moves to distance the sense of *structure* here from the structuralisms of Saussure or Levi-Strauss (and also presumably of Althusser), instead arguing that he means to indicate “that there exist, within the social world itself and not only within symbolic systems [...] objective structures independent of the consciousness and will of agents, which are capable of guiding and constraining their practices or their representations” (1989, 14). Bourdieu here betrays the legacy of phenomenology in his training, found in his engagement with Sartre but perhaps more centrally in his education as a student of Merleau-Ponty. More particularly, he appears to advocate a Husserlian understanding that (to put a complex argument briefly) in interacting with the world an agent establishes intensional structures with it in a dynamic model of interaction. It is this emphasis on dynamic structuring that explains Bourdieu’s emphasis on “constructivism”, which is intended to indicate a “twofold social genesis, on the

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<sup>32</sup> For an excellent discussion of Bourdieu’s own engagement with these two models, see John B. Thompson’s introduction to *Language and Symbolic Power* (Bourdieu, 1977, especially 1-4). For Bourdieu’s most extensive critique of the models, see *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (1990).

one hand of the schemes of perception, thought and action [...] and on the other hand of [the] social structures [...] of groups, notably those we ordinarily call social classes" (1989, 14).

This characterization of "structuralist constructivism" allows the discussion of two of Bourdieu's key theoretical concepts: the *habitus* and the field. The term *habitus* is adapted to indicate the sets of "subjective" dispositions an agent inculcates through their interactions with an "objective" social space.<sup>33</sup> Randall Johnson, in his introduction to *The Field of Cultural Production*, offers a particularly clear discussion of these properties:

[I]t [the *habitus*] is a set of dispositions which generates practices and perceptions. The *habitus* is the result of a long process of inculcation, beginning in early childhood, which becomes a 'second sense' or a second nature. [...] the dispositions represented by the *habitus* are 'durable' in that they last throughout an agent's lifetime. They are 'transposable' in that they may generate practices in multiple and diverse fields of activity, and they are 'structured structures' in that they inevitably incorporate the objective conditions of their inculcation. [...] Finally the dispositions of the *habitus* are 'structuring structures' through their ability to generate practices adjusted to specific situations. (Bourdieu, 1993, 5)

Bourdieu's concept of the "field" is designed to account for the view that the dispositions of the *habitus* are surrounded by physical and social space. He argues that this space is itself structured by the "objective relations" between available positions, which in turn govern the "distribution of the resources which are or may become active [...] in the appropriation of scarce goods of which this social universe is the site" (1989, 17). It is when an agent encounters this structured space that the *habitus* is formed. The distinctive pattern of dispositions an agent inculcates in this process determines the potential positions they are then able to occupy in the field. With this understanding it is possible to approach the mechanism of "mediation" which becomes the central pin around which Bourdieu's theory turns; he considers there to be a homologous relationship between the *habitus* and the field:

[O]n one side it is a relation of conditioning, the field structures the *habitus* [...] on the other side, it is a relation of knowledge or cognitive construction: *habitus* contributes to constituting the field as a meaningful world. (1989, 47)

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<sup>33</sup> *Habitus* is a key recurring facet of Bourdieu's work, but perhaps receives its clearest expositions in *The Logic of Practice* (1977) or *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (1999) which concern themselves with the theoretical need for the *habitus* and its terms.

This leads to the difficult phrase often used to describe *habitus*: “structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures” (1990, 53). That is, the logic of the generative and determining principles of the *habitus* and the field are common to both, and, Bourdieu contends, this produces a material “ontological complicity” between them (Wacquant, 1989, 44).

Bourdieu’s theory attempts to rework the subjectivist and objectivist modes by understanding the subjective and the objective as mutually constituting in an ongoing dynamic way. The *habitus* and the field are the key concepts designed to theorize this process. The particular range of practice determined by this homology, understood as the available actions within a set of “pressures and limits”, becomes for Bourdieu the “logics of practice” available to a particularly positioned agent in a particular field. This understanding should never become too determinist. Bourdieu is keen to always emphasize that this practice is an embodied sense, a “feel for the game”:

Practical sense is a quasi-bodily involvement in the world which presupposes no representation either of the body or of the world, still less of their relationship. It is an immanence in the world through which the world imposes its imminence, things to be done or said, which directly govern speech and action. [...] A particularly clear example of practical sense as a proleptic adjustment to the demands of the field is what is called, in the language of sport, a ‘feel for the game’. This phrase [...] gives a fairly accurate idea of the almost miraculous encounter between the *habitus* and a field, between incorporated history and an objectified history, which makes the possible near-perfect anticipation of the future inscribed in all the concrete configurations on the pitch or board. (1990, 66)

This virtuosic, intersubjective sense of social practice should not be lost from Bourdieu’s theory which, with its objectivist emphasis in the formulation of the *habitus*, on occasion runs the risk of lapsing into objectivism.<sup>34</sup> It is also crucial to emphasize the complexities of analyzing the relationship between the field and the *habitus*. Bourdieu recognizes that while both aim to maintain their defining principles and relationships, and to reproduce them in different forms, both are also in constant development and therefore resist any perfect fit. It is in managing these variations that the rest of Bourdieu’s theoretical terms are addressed.

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<sup>34</sup> This critique is evident in Evens (1999), and extended in King (2000).



The dynamic relationship between field and *habitus* defines the range of what is doable and thinkable within a field. It defines what constitutes legitimate practices in a particular social space. Bourdieu attempts to theorize the struggle over the power to consecrate the dominant legitimate practices in the field by drawing on the terms *doxa*, *heterodox* and *orthodox*. The *doxic* society is defined as the one in which “there is a quasi-perfect correspondence between the objective order and the subjective principles of organization”, leading to the situation in which “the natural and social world appears as self-evident” (1977, 164). In such a situation even the notion of opposition is unthinkable; social power rules without opposition, and questions of legitimate practice do not arise. When some crisis threatens the stability of this *doxa* the processes of *orthodoxy* and *heterodoxy* become instituted. Briefly, *orthodoxy* constitutes practices which attempt to defend the dominant *doxa* and *heterodoxy* those practices which attempt to challenge it.<sup>35</sup> It is critical to acknowledge that the ultimate basis for these struggles is arbitrary, and that this leads to Bourdieu’s assertion that the value instilled in the legitimation and consecration of practices in the field are based on a collective act of belief.<sup>36</sup> There are, of course, different orders of legitimation within the *doxa*, and Bourdieu argues that the state holds the greatest power to impose the official forms of orthodoxy. It is through this sense of struggle that Bourdieu accounts for the ability of fields to evolve.<sup>37</sup>

Because these material social structures (both physical and mental) become differentiated by the disparate logics of practice available in the field, they also become valued differently, both from each other and the prevailing *doxa*. The mechanism Bourdieu develops to define these valuing bases is *capital*. It is important to understand that the value of this capital only becomes evident in terms of the socially defined structures of the field: that is, its value is socially arbitrary and its power depends on the collective consecration of legitimate practices. It is in this sense that capital for Bourdieu must be understood as *symbolic* rather than as having any material worth. This sense of symbolic capital then becomes divided into three central

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<sup>35</sup> There are some parallels here with Williams’s attempts to theorize the clash of hegemonic forces with his notions of residual, dominant and emergent practices.

<sup>36</sup> Both the notions of “arbitrary” and “belief” in this argument owe much to the work of Marcel Mauss (Bourdieu, 1990, 53). See also (Bourdieu, 1977, 164-171).

<sup>37</sup> The clearest account of the terms *doxa*, *heterodox* and *orthodox* occurs in *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (1977, 159-170).

categories. First, *economic* capital is designed to designate money, possessions, and so on. Second, *social* capital is identified to indicate contacts and social networks. Finally, *cultural* capital is designed to indicate education, qualifications, marks of distinction such as accent, clothing, and objects such as books, artworks, and so on. It is important not to reduce this notion of symbolic capital to the narrower economic sense, as John B. Thompson makes clear, Bourdieu

wishes to treat the economy in the narrow sense as one field [...] among a plurality of fields which are not reducible to one another. Within fields that are not economic in the narrow sense, practices may not be governed by a strict economic logic [...] and yet they may none the less concur with a logic that is economic in a broader sense, in so far as they are orientated towards the augmentation of *some* kind of 'capital' (e.g., cultural or symbolic capital) or the maximization of *some* kind of 'profit' (e.g., honour or prestige). (Bourdieu, 1991, 15)

The specific contemporary content of the three forms of symbolic capital, and how they are distributed among individuals or groups, depends on the structure of the field. Centrally for Bourdieu, there will always be competition for what is available because what is valuable is scarce. There is therefore competition within and between fields: there is a struggle to assert particular forms of capital, formulate new definitions, and devalue others. Such a struggle between dominant forms and their representatives is defined by Bourdieu as *symbolic violence*: a formulation designed to indicate a struggle to impose the arbitrary instruments of knowledge and expression on social reality (1991, 168). Further, the power to designate what is legitimate (to have a say) is distributed among agents in the field in proportion to their accumulated symbolic capital. This capital is valuable to the extent that it is recognized as legitimate by the group. It is in this sense that Bourdieu is able to formulate a notion of symbolic power. Bourdieu designs his theory to account for the specific details of these struggles.

Bourdieu's theoretical work is the struggle to offer a material theory of practice, turning on a mutually structured and structuring mediation between *habitus* and field, able to puncture the illusion of society as a given representation. Further, through his call for a break with field-based knowledge, Bourdieu hopes to establish an emancipatory norm of "scientific



knowledge”.<sup>38</sup> A great deal more could be said on the theoretical terms of Bourdieu. The above has attempted to define the central moment in which a materialist model of mediation is approached and to extrapolate from this the key terms which enable the model to function. As with the discussion of Williams above, I have deliberately not attempted a more complete but abstract exegesis here, but have incorporated more detailed discussions of the relevant theoretical terms as necessary in the case study of part 2 of this thesis. The range of Williams's and Bourdieu's work is broad, and the goal of this thesis is not to introduce this scope and all of the small theoretical adjustments, additions, and revisions. Instead, the aim is to establish that the two models offer potential for considering of material mediation in musicology. Further, these are models which address remarkably similar concerns but through suggestively different formulations. The next chapter moves to explore the terms on which the models of Williams and Bourdieu can be drawn together.

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<sup>38</sup> This is meant most especially in the social sciences. Bourdieu argues for an end to theoretical sparring between different disciplines, which he sees as a particular form of capital accumulation and so caught in the illusion of social distinction. Only a difficultly characterized “scientific” commitment can hope to transcend this. He argues for an end to the perceived split between the theoretical systems of different cultures, which often argue for the same goal but are unable to mount collective action because of different articulation (this is perhaps part of my drive to find commonalities between his work and that of the very differently situated Williams). One of the strongest articulations of this call is to be found in the postscript of *The Rules of Art: “For a Corporatism of the Universal”* (1996, 337-348).

## 1.3 CHAPTER 3 – Two Material Approaches to the Study of Culture

### 1.3.1 The Grounds for Comparison

Chapter 2 attempted to establish that the work of Raymond Williams and Pierre Bourdieu can be read as elaborations of theoretical positions which materialize cultural practices and then move to develop a notion of mediation between these processes and wider societal processes. Crucially, for both theorists the moment of mediation is rooted in the understanding that these processes are seen as possessing a *common character*. Williams attempts to theorize the relations between cultural and general production while Bourdieu moves to place forms of symbolic practice on the same footing as material determinations.

The central complexity here is that while Williams and Bourdieu appear to be worlds apart, emerging from the very different traditions of French sociology and British literary criticism, their attempts to develop an understanding of material mediation exhibit remarkable similarities. The divergences between the two positions therefore become less a theoretical block to their use, but rather indicate suggestive points of departure for any critical reading. In summary, it could be said that I attempted to read Williams and Bourdieu in the context of the “pressures and limits” of their respective intellectual milieus; what became increasingly clear was the proximity of the central theoretical problems that each encountered within their different cultures. With this understanding in place, the difficulty of imagining these supposedly divergent and contradictory intellectual traditions as closed systems emerges. Each culture is clearly the product of a complex process of internal struggle and external cross-pollination whereby the discontinuous, partial, and even simultaneous impress of forms of Marxism, literary culturalism, structuralism, and post-structuralism have been felt. The exploration of this complexity, and the implications for musicological readings, is a central interest of this thesis. This section will therefore briefly reiterate my understanding of the essential influences bearing on these theoretical projects, before moving on to discuss how they can usefully be discussed together.

In Williams, the central importance of Marx's writing to his mature work is explicitly evident, as is the work of the later Western Marxists Goldmann and Gramsci.<sup>39</sup> The work of Marcuse and Benjamin is also acknowledged by Williams, while the impact of Adorno is implicit but arguable.<sup>40</sup> The influence of a British literary culturalism, represented by Leavis and the Cambridge literature paradigm, is also heavy, although this becomes much reformed in Williams's expansion of the category and discipline of "literature studies". The influence of structuralism and post-structuralism is more subterranean: Williams was opposed to the most popular structuralist variant to come to Britain in his field (Althusserian Marxism).<sup>41</sup> He read the late Barthes (his later works reference *Mythologies*, *Image*, *Music*, *Text*, and *S/Z*), and was aware of Derrida. While Williams never explicitly engages with Derrida's work, he does react positively to the impact of a "radical semiotics" on the British literary paradigm (1983, 209).

The most rigorous way of thinking through the impact of the French field on Williams's work is by considering the reception of these theories by British cultural and then tracing the ambivalent relationship between Williams and the cultural studies movement. Stuart Hall's essay *Cultural Studies: Two Paradigms* constitutes an attempt to map the 1980s British intellectual scene with the goal of defining the disciplinary remit and theoretical roots of an emergent cultural studies movement. Hall sets up the culturalist and the cultural studies categories as oppositional moments in recent British intellectual developments. In this story, E. P. Thompson, Richard Hoggart and Raymond Williams become the founders of the cultural

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<sup>39</sup> Williams's consideration of Goldmann's work is explicit in his essay "Literature and Sociology: In Memory of Lucien Goldmann" (1980, 11-30). The adaptation of Gramsci's hegemony is to be found in *Marxism and Literature* (1977, 108-114).

<sup>40</sup> The evidence of Williams's general reception of this Western Marxist body of work is perhaps most clearly present in a review entitled "The Frankfurt School" (Williams, 1974). Williams does frequently reference Adorno (the important points here have been made above), but the proximity of their use of production is not acknowledged.

<sup>41</sup> Eagleton launches an Althusserian critique of Williams's work in "Criticism and Politics: The Work of Raymond Williams" (1976). Williams replies to this critique in "Notes on Marxism in Britain Since 1945", which moves to identify the various legacies of Marx. In the process, the "reforming" Marxisms are positioned and the specific contributions of his own cultural materialism are highlighted. The core of Williams's objection to Althusserian work lies in the designation of all superstructural practices as ideological. See Williams's discussion of hegemony in *Marxism and Literature* for the detail of this (1977, 109).



studies movement but also the representatives of the older of his two paradigms.<sup>42</sup> Hall offers the following definition of the concerns of this first paradigm:

It stands opposed to the residual and merely-reflective role assigned to 'the cultural'. In its different ways, it conceptualizes cultures as interwoven with all social practices; and those practices, in turn, as a common form of human activity: sensuous human praxis, the activity through which men and women make history. It is opposed to the base-superstructure way of formulating the relationship between ideal and material forces, especially where the 'base' is defined as the determination by 'the economic' in any simple sense. It prefers the wider formulation – the dialectic between social being and social consciousness: neither separable from its distinct poles. (39)

The second paradigm is introduced as an intervention into this culturalist tradition:

The 'culturalist' strand in Cultural Studies was interrupted by the arrival on the intellectual scene of the 'structuralisms'. These, possibly more varied than the 'culturalisms', nevertheless shared certain positions and orientations in common which makes their designation under a single title not altogether misleading. (39)

Any attempt to engage with the work of Williams must indeed acknowledge that he emerges from a tradition of Cambridge literary criticism with its own intellectual legacy. The strongest contemporary influence of this on Williams was the criticism of F.R. Leavis. Beyond Leavis lay the weight of the Romantic anti-utilitarianists such as T.S. Eliot, Matthew Arnold, and Samuel Taylor Coleridge. In general terms, it is this Leavisite tradition that Hall came to refer to as "culturalist", and this legacy became reworked in the latter part of the twentieth century by trans-disciplinary theoretical work rooted initially in the work of Western Marxism and subsequently by structuralism and post-structuralism. It is here that the tensions between this culturalism and the emergent and reforming cultural studies movement become apparent.

If the Leavisite culturalist tradition experienced a sense of crisis when it encountered the developments in European cultural theory, the cultural studies movement can usefully be thought of as the attempt to reform aspects of this received discipline by eagerly engaging with

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<sup>42</sup> The main texts of this paradigm are: E. P. Thompson's *The Making of the English Working Class; Whigs and Hunters; The Poverty of Theory*; Richard Hoggart's *The Uses of Literacy*; and Williams's *Culture and Society*.



Frankfurt critical theory, French structuralist semiology, and eventually post-structuralism.<sup>43</sup> All of these theoretical innovations were imported into the British intellectual field and became an integral part of cultural and theoretical reformations in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s. Much of Williams's work trod a line between what eventually became the residual culturalist tradition and the dominant cultural studies reception of European cultural theory. Indeed, Williams's mature position can be understood as an attempt to rework and expand the focus of this culturalist vision into a more general cultural sociology without the theoretical rashness of the new cultural studies movement (especially evident in his relationship with the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) and his disagreements with Hall and Eagleton over the value of Althusserian Marxism).

Bourdieu's relationship to the field of French theory is similarly complex. In some senses (analogous perhaps to Foucault's extension of structuralism) he cannot properly be called "post-structuralist". In terms of any general understanding the label more clearly belongs to Derridean deconstruction and the late Barthes which anticipates it. As the arguments in chapter 2 have indicated, Bourdieu works to transcend what he sees as the objectivism of structuralism (most evident in his treatment of the anthropology of Levi-Strauss but also the linguistic work of Saussure) and the Marxist phenomenological subjectivism of Sartre. However, he was also antagonistic to the post-structuralist theory which developed from the late 1960s onwards, seeing the fashionable explosions of "Theory" as ploys in field struggles rather than seriously aimed at scientific understanding:

This [the linguistic turn] is the origin of what I have called the "-ology effect" to designate the desperate efforts of philosophers to borrow the methods, and to mimick the scientificity, of the social sciences without giving up the privileged status of the "free thinker:" thus the literary semiology of Barthes (not to mention Kristeva and Sollers), the archaeology of Foucault, the grammatology of Derrida, or the attempt of the Althusserians to pass the "pure" reading of Marx off as a self-sufficient and self-contained science. (Wacquant, 1989, 49)

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<sup>43</sup> This general thrust towards disciplinary re-evaluation and definition, with a concomitant emphasis on the social, is surprisingly close in character to many of the moves being made by the alternative musicologies in the same period. Certainly, Subotnik's dissatisfaction with "traditional musicology" often has echoes of Williams's urge to reform Cambridge English literature.

More specifically, Bourdieu rejects Derrida's "deconstruction" because it remains trapped by the field which produced it:

While opposing to structuralism and its notion of 'static' structure a 'post-modernized' variant of the Bergsonian critique of the reductive effects of scientific knowledge, Derrida can give himself the air of radicalism. He does this by using, against traditional literary criticism, a critique of binary oppositions which goes back, by way of Levi-Strauss, to the most classical analysis of 'forms of classification' so dear to Durkheim and Mauss. [...] this critique is likely to discourage the search for the foundation of the aesthetic disposition and of the work of art where it is truly located, namely, in the *history* of the artistic institution. (1993, 255)

There are echoes of Williams in this, especially in the call to historical constitution of the institution. The importance of the use of "institution" here should not be overlooked, as it is also in Williams's culturally productive forces (theorized in *Culture* as artistic formations and institutions – this will be discussed in more detail below) that material mediation, the foundation of a materialist sociology of culture, is to be discerned. Williams would also agree with Bourdieu's hostility to the Derridean treatment of the binary nature of the sign (although for slightly different reasons). While his project of historical semantics, as embodied by *Keywords*, entails a separating of the Saussurian signifier/signified relationship in a move not dissimilar to Derrida's *différance* (Derrida, 1982), Williams also critiques the sign itself. Utilizing the Volosinovian notion of the signal, he applies his production paradigm to utterance: "signification, the social creation of meanings through the use of formal signs, is then a practical material activity; it is indeed, literally, a means of production" (1977, 38). Importantly for my purposes, he thus insists on the social and historical determination of meaning and thereby restricts the free play of signification.

Despite his rejection of deconstruction there is a sense in which Bourdieu occupies a post-structuralist sphere in more general terms. He discounts the structuralist claim to the status of scientific truth (although he doesn't reject the *aspiration* to scientific objectivity) along with the desire to discover the truth of a text within its own structures. Generally, post-structuralism also betrays this drive to a structuralist model of truth by insisting that there can be no single

meaning within the text. However, Bourdieu argues more completely for the importance of material institutions in the method of analysis as well as discourse or representations.

It is also possible to recognize in the materialist work of Bourdieu dissatisfactions with received Marxist theory similar to those that led to Williams's revision of the production paradigm. Bourdieu attempts to reject and move beyond the legacy of the Marxist base and superstructure model, while carrying the importance of materiality through to the displaced superstructural categories. He considers the struggles over symbolic power to be fully and actively material themselves rather than the outcome of the activities of a separate economy (as theorized in the base). He attempts to theorize a "generalized materialism" in which symbolic capital and symbolic power owe their structures to the conditions of their production and reproduction. The important point is that there are poststructuralisms which engage with a material understanding of the sign, even if this is in an attempt to revise the received materialisms of Marxism.

The work of Williams and Bourdieu are not identical, but they do respond to similar desires and dilemmas active within their respective intellectual cultures. Williams makes a similar point himself in the context of the higher education system, in his review of Bourdieu's and Passeron's *Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture*:

I have collaborated with Bourdieu [...] in a seminar at the École Normale Supérieure. The initial differences could hardly have been more striking, and some deep divergences were undoubtedly there. But not only did I find, then, an extraordinary convergence of themes and interests. Also in reading their integrated analysis of methods of selection, teaching and examination, I have to keep rubbing my eyes to believe that it is not an internal description of the Cambridge arts faculties. (1977, 240)

There appear to be various theorists (Habermas and Foucault could be added to Williams and Bourdieu) across a range of sibling intellectual cultures who demonstrate a contemporaneous interest in the materialism of culture in these general terms. Of these theorists the connection between Williams and Bourdieu, made between their respective notions of cultural production as material mediation, speak most clearly to each other. Alongside this "convergence" of interests there are also, as Williams notes above, significant

“deep divergences” between these respective positions, explained, at least in part, by the inherited differences between French structuralism, German critical theory, or the ‘culturalism’ of British literary criticism and its interaction with the cultural studies movement. In claiming that the combination of Williams and Bourdieu can usefully contribute to questions of mediation within the field of contemporary musicology, the task is now to draw out these “significant divergences” and points of emphasis and what they can tell us in the course of an analysis.





### 1.3.2 The Emphases on Objectivity and Experience

Consider an attempt by Eagleton, in conversation with Bourdieu, to draw a comparison between Williams and Bourdieu:

- T.E. Running throughout the whole of your [Bourdieu's] work is a sort of steady subtext which is a deep preoccupation with the conditions of your own work itself – or more generally, with the difficulty of a sociological discourse that seeks, for whatever good, potentially emancipatory, reasons to analyse the common life. That is, there is a very powerful commitment in your work – not always explicit, but present as a kind of sensibility – to what one might inadequately call 'the common life'. This is one of the ways in which your work parallels that of Raymond Williams in this country. [...] it seems to me that your work [...] is marked by the tension between some sense of common value that has nothing to do with intellectual in the first place, and the other dimension which is very much to analyse the academic institution [...].
- P.B. [...] You have expressed my personal feelings exactly. I try to put together the two parts of my life, as many first-generation intellectuals do. (Eagleton and Bourdieu, 1992, 116-117)<sup>44</sup>

Eagleton's statement makes connections between Williams and Bourdieu which are both intellectual and political. Politically, both Williams and Bourdieu retain a sense that social class is important in the social structures of late capitalism and that this emphasis allows work of emancipatory potential to be carried forward. In *Towards 2000* Williams offer the clearest expression of his late normative commitments through a description of a "new politics of strategic advantage" determined by the pressures and limits of late-capitalist political economy (1983, 243). Considering Williams's interest in market developments (discussed more fully below) it is not unreasonable to equate his position here to a critique of an increasingly globalized market economy. There is some proximity here to Bourdieu's analysis of the social impact of the neo-liberal economics of globalization (discussed in the context of artistic production below). This came to occupy an increasingly important position in Bourdieu's work, resulting in the massive collaborative research project *The Weight of the World: Social Suffering in Contemporary Society* (1999), amongst other work. Grenfell summarizes these commitments as follows:

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<sup>44</sup> Williams himself made much of his own status as a first-generation intellectual; an interloper to the privileged world of Cambridge from a working class Welsh family. The impact of this alienation on Williams's work is the central thesis of Gorak's *The Alien Mind of Raymond Williams*.

Bourdieu analysed a certain economic philosophy, neo-liberalism, and the effects it had on the lives of ordinary men and women. He showed how this philosophy worked, activates and is activated [...]. He attacked this economic philosophy in its own terms, as a given theory of practice, as well as the way it had imposed itself (and by whom) in the contemporary world. Behind these arguments is an implicit assertion that it does not have to be this way, and that there is an alternative. (139-140)

Both Williams and Bourdieu considered the elaboration of this situation to be an essential facet of their work and were opposed to the effects on cultures and communities of these economic and political developments. For both, this was one of the key conditions of post-modern late capitalism and both rejected it. The attempt to formulate at least the possibility of an alternative position within this dominant hegemony becomes a central component of their respective work.

While Eagleton's observation of a reflexive focus on "the common life" is evident in the emancipatory focus of these normative commitments, it is also to be found more deeply rooted in their respective theoretical formulations. As has already been stated, they both retain a sense of the centrality of culture in the social organization of late capitalism, articulating this through a differently theorized notion of cultural production. Within this, both are determined to retain a sense of the agency of the individual. There is a key parallel here between Williams's revisions of the notion of determination (the setting of "pressures and limits") and Bourdieu's logic of practice: in both the goal is to theorize the strategic actions of individuals within a limiting (but not overly-determining) context. Most centrally, the reflexivity of both insists that this broader context is simultaneously structured by and structuring of the agent, and that the process is materially produced.

Closely related to these emancipatory commitments and reflexive attempts to resolve structure/agency debates is Williams's and Bourdieu's desire to incorporate considerations of power. Briefly, Williams deploys his revisions of hegemony to develop his notion of the "selective tradition" which recognizes the presence of power within the selective process. Applied to the artistic sphere this leads to various necessary gains such as the critique of canon formation and propagation. Such a move necessarily recognizes value as socially arbitrary,

historically determined, and, in the case of Williams, material. Bourdieu theorizes a very similar relationship by nesting the field of cultural production in a dominated position within the wider field of power, which is in turn positioned within the wider field again of the social.

While these similarities are compelling, perhaps more interesting problems are to be found in the recognition that similar intellectual positions are given different expression when articulated from within the inherited differences of specific intellectual cultures. One of the commonly made distinctions between French philosophy and critical theory is the extent to which the latter is readier to account for “historical” movement. This is evident, for example, in Subotnik’s reading of Adorno, Levi-Strauss and Nattiez, whereby she explores the “tensions, incongruities, and questions that emerged from confronting that tradition [Adornian critical theory] with the essentially ahistorical concerns of structuralist semiotic theory” (Subotnik, 1991). While Bourdieu’s work cannot be ahistorical (nor strictly structuralist) – he accounts for the changing distribution of symbolic capital within his field theory – Williams’s notion of hegemony involves a wider range of historical debate with the formulation of residual, dominant, and emergent hegemonies. Further, Williams ties this more closely into his cultural readings by incorporating both his critique of tradition and the formation of new artistic movements directly into his hegemonic categories (especially those of the dominant and the emergent). This model of change finds a clear and integrated normative parallel in Williams’s notion of a long revolution. In his identification of emergent cultural formations, demonstrably capable of articulating structures of feeling distinct from the constraints of the dominant hegemony (the “resources of hope”, 1983, 241-269), Williams seamlessly combines the diverse areas of his interests.

This leads necessarily to the recognition that Williams’s commitment to theory is explicitly critical: a result of his engagement with Marx and the Western Marxisms. Bourdieu’s theory, by contrast, is organized by its continued aspiration to scientific objectivity: a result, perhaps, of the continuing influence of structuralist anthropology. This has a number of ramifications. First, Williams’s political and cultural materialist projects are irrevocably interlinked (despite



the separation of texts such as *Culture and Towards 2000*), while Bourdieu's political commitments often seem to be external to his theoretical model. This means that Williams's cultural readings are always undertaken in a critical spirit, with normative socialist criteria.<sup>45</sup> On the other hand, Bourdieu's analysis of cultural production moves to objectify the space of position-takings via his reflexive sociology, and then to analyze the distribution of these various objectifications (the nature of this "objectivity" as part of the field theory is discussed more fully below). This leads to a difference in political rhetoric between the two theorists. Williams always reserves a place for prospective analysis which indicates a way forward, however desperate his analysis of the current organization may seem. This is most obviously to be seen in his qualified restoration of the utopian mode in *Towards 2000* (1983, 12-15), but is evident throughout the range of his writing. In Bourdieu, the placement of the intellectual in a dominated position in the field of power often leads him to pessimistic and cynical observations. Williams and Garnham tackle this tendency when they note:

DiMaggio recently described his [Bourdieu's] position as that of a Durkheimian anthropologist rather than a Marxist revolutionary and the French Marxists who are so often the target of his attacks, have in turn accused him of a relativistic pessimism. If to be as objective as possible about the possibilities of a major and immediate transformation of advanced capitalism is to be pessimistic, then Bourdieu is, rightly in our view, pessimistic. (Garnham and Williams, 1980, 129)

However, the article goes on to note three points which find connection with the socialist theory of the British left: first, Bourdieu is committed to a "materialist theory of class struggle" and to "the position of symbolic struggle within that wider struggle"; second, he "exhibits that very rare attribute of the left, namely a positive and unpatronizing valuation of the cultural values and aspirations of the working class"; third, the terms of his theory allows room for the contradictions between modes of production and forms of consciousness and practice; that is, "contradictions that might offer the concrete possibility of revolutionary mobilization and action" (1980, 129). However, despite these connections, Williams and Garnham argue:

[T]here seems to us (and this is very much a question of tone, nuance and attitude) to be a functionalist/determinist residue in Bourdieu's concept of

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<sup>45</sup> There are a good many examples of this in Williams's work, but the short essay "Utopia and Science Fiction" is a clear instance (1980, 196-212).

reproduction which leads him to place less emphasis on the possibilities of real change and innovation than either his theory or his empirical research makes necessary. (Garnham and Williams, 1980, 129)

I agree that this is a matter of tone and that it is evident in Bourdieu's favoured modes of exposition. However, I disagree that it is not an integral part of his theory, finding both the key to his theory and the source of this "residue" in Bourdieu's relationship to his intellectual tradition. The place of *objectification* is central here. The stress on the character of objectivity is deeply rooted in intellectual differences, and it is perhaps here that the key distinction between Williams's and Bourdieu's work can be identified. Bourdieu places great emphasis on the value of objectivity. The formulation of the *habitus* and the field emphasizes the construction of the individual: aspiring to an objective methodology by building up a rigorous and reflexive method of analyzing what is being interpreted and by whom. This epistemological emphasis is much less evident in Williams, who places great importance on identifying the character of experience and feeling. The reflexivity of Williams is not founded on wide and systematic philosophical reflection, but rather on the elaboration of political commitments and positions, social loyalties (to family, friends, political parties, and so on), and daily pressures and limits. It is possible to argue that Williams's work is produced from within a British intellectual culture which emphasizes empirical work with a stress on experience, leading to his central notion of "structure of feeling", while Bourdieu's work extends a commitment to the potential of a social science.

This difference finds emphasis throughout the diverse aspects of Bourdieu's and Williams's work. However, most centrally the methods for theorizing the agency of the individual within a structured space respond to this divergence, through the structure of feeling in Williams, and the relationship between *habitus* and field in Bourdieu. For Williams the structure of feeling emphasizes the experiential, while in Bourdieu this theorizing becomes more abstract. Systems of positions and position-takings take the place of patterns of experience. Both the positions and position-takings of Bourdieu's field theory and Williams's structure of feeling are discussed in more detail below.

It is also possible to consider that this is the most striking difference in the experience of reading Williams and Bourdieu. The stories that they tell are revealing in this regard, and can be demonstrated by a brief digression on their methods of producing narrative biographies. The movement of their lives is remarkably similar: from rural isolation and dominated social position to industrial centres and intellectual prestige. Both felt this movement keenly, and its impact can be found throughout their intellectual work, but it is expressed extremely differently. Williams's sense of this finds its outlet most prominently in his fiction. *Border Country* describes a situation which can perhaps be understood as Williams's attempts to express the discontinuities of his own experience. In the novel, Matthew Price, the son of a working class family on the Welsh / English border, moves away from this rooted experience to start an academic life. When his father becomes ill Matthew returns to Wales, giving occasion for reflection on the different qualities of these two lives and the struggle to reconcile them.

In one passage Matthew walks in the Black Mountains, agonizing over the value of academic pursuits:

There along the outcrop stood a frontier invisible on the surface, between the rich and the barren rocks. On the near side the valleys were green and wooded, but beyond that line they had blackened with pits and slagheaps and mean grey terraces. [...] He looked out in each direction in turn, his eyes narrowed against the keen wind, his mind excited [...]. The mountain had this power, to abstract and to clarify, but in the end he could not stay here; he must go down where he lived.

On the way down the shapes faded and the ordinary identities returned. The voice in his mind faded, and the ordinary voice came back. Like old Blakely asking, digging his stick in the turf. What will you be reading Will? Books sir? No, better not. History, sir. History from the Kestrel hill, where you sit and watch memory move, across the wide valley. That was the sense of it: to watch, to interpret, to try to get clear. Only the wind narrowing your eyes, and so much living in you, deciding what you will see and how you will see it. Never above, watching. You'll find what you're watching is yourself. (2006, 365)

The last paragraph here expresses the notion of 'structures of feeling' as felt patterns of experience particularly clearly (though not in theoretical specificity which will be explored below). It is in Williams's fictions that we find the clearest articulation of his attempts to



grapple with these conflicts of theory and experience. This is perhaps most closely tackled in *Loyalties*, which explores the intersection of political commitment, family loyalty, and academic aspiration (Williams, 1985). This body of fictional writing is a richly suggestive counterpoint to Williams's theoretical project.

Bourdieu, in his discussion with Eagleton, describes his entire theoretical enterprise as the attempt to make sense of his trajectory:

My main problem is to try and understand what happened to me. My trajectory may be described as miraculous, I suppose – an ascension to a place where I don't belong. And so to be able to live in a world that is not mine I must try to understand both things: what it means to have an academic mind – how such is created – and at the same time what was lost in acquiring it. For that reason, even if my work – my full work – is a sort of autobiography, it is a work for people who have the same sort of trajectory, and the same need to understand. (Eagleton and Bourdieu, 1992, 117)

Bourdieu's move is to immediately try to objectify his experience and to place it within his own theoretical framework, just as he would any other subject. This is more explicitly emphasized when he turns the full glare of his theory back on his life, in the posthumously published *Sketch for a Self-Analysis*:

In adopting the point of view of the analyst I oblige (and authorize) myself to retain all the features that are pertinent from the point of view of sociology, in other words necessary for sociological explanation and understanding, but only those. But, far from seeking to produce thereby, as one might fear, an effect of closure, by imposing my interpretation, I intend to subject that experience, set out as honestly as possible, to critical confrontation, as if it were any other object. (2007, 1)

This distinction, of the experiential and the objectifiable self, seems to be the characteristic moment of these two theorists which place them in their respective theoretical legacies (to which they have admittedly difficult relationships): Bourdieu to French structuralism, and Williams to British culturalism. I can find no way of privileging either of these positions, and find that there is, in fact, some attraction to the distinction. If one of the problems facing a study of contemporary classical music is the extent to which 'traditional' methods of analysis are unable to account adequately for its impact beyond the notes on the page, then a theory such as Williams's, which emphasizes the material construction of patterns of feeling or



experience, is clearly of value. I think that it can be no mistake that Alastair Williams argues, in the conclusion of an essay dedicated to the continued relevance of Adorno:

When sensitively engaged [...] the new themes of musicology have a resonance with a tradition of aesthetic thought, in its imploded Adornian form. To be really post-Adornian will require a commensurate overturning of his theories from within. A post-formalist analysis, meanwhile would contemplate turning an understanding of structural rigour towards an empathy with structures of feeling. (1998, 291)

The sudden appearance of the phrase “structures of feeling” at the conclusion of this essay is surprising; the phrase is so closely associated with Raymond Williams, but Alastair Williams makes no move to elaborate on this. However, I welcome the implicit connection, and it is my contention that Raymond Williams does indeed take on some of the most problematic elements of Adornian critical theory (summarized in the formulations of the culture industry thesis). Further, the combination of this influence and his reworking of the legacy of British culturalism, which produces among other things the concern with patterns of felt experience, presents a useful and compelling body of work for musicology. The relevance of Bourdieu is that he allows the tools and strategies for relativizing such positions. If Williams’s engagement is always critical and normative, Bourdieu’s methodological challenge is to engage objectively with patterns of experience as *logics of practice*. Here, then, is the central tension, the fault-line, along which these two theorists can be productively combined.

## Conclusion – Materialism and the Study of Music

The emphasis on materializing musical cultural production leads to a necessary problematization of the relationship between the various reified embodiments of music (such as the score, the recorded artefact, and so on) and the material conditions of its production. This latter must include performing and composing, but also the aspects of printing, recording, distribution, purchasing, and so on. It is in this broad context that the constitution and contestation of musical meaning is to occur. The goal is not to locate social meaning solely within musical semantics (as is evident in much of the work of the alternative musicologies), but rather to consider music as itself a form of material social activity which is, in Bourdieu's terms, structured by and structuring of specific musical logics of practice socially determined by the constitution of the field of production. There is to be no idealization here of musical medium, or of those agents producing the musical utterance. Instead, there is the desire to understand how the "objective" conditions of production inculcate particular musical meanings, and how this meaning is continually contested, legitimated, and consecrated as acts of belief within social groups.

Williams also moves to emphasise the importance of practices over products in his attempt to reserve a place for *experience* in the critical analysis of culture: "the strongest barrier to the recognition of human cultural activity is this immediate and regular conversion of experience into finished products" (1977, 128). As has been stated, it is in the notion of "structure of feeling" that Williams encapsulates this concern with experience.<sup>46</sup> Defined as an attempt to articulate a concern with "meanings and values as they are actively lived and felt", the notion is closely linked to his revision of practical consciousness which designates "what is actually being lived, and not only what it is thought is being lived" (1977, 130-133). Further, this notion of cultural activity as felt process rather than object inheres in the changing productive categories of institutions and formations. Therefore, the notion of musical "work" must be extended to

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<sup>46</sup> Williams himself concedes that "structure of experience" may be a more suitable term, but ultimately rejects it because some of the senses of "experience" imply a past tense, putting the sense of an active process in jeopardy (1977, 132).

all human activities involved in its material production and distribution (and this of course includes reception as a productive activity).

Reading with Williams as well as Bourdieu, the understanding of music must be reworked as a practice which is to be defined in its historical, social and material specificity. In such a formulation there is no room for the kind of post-modern position which divorces the play of musical meaning from the material conditions of its production; there can be no unconnected reading of the abstracted sonic medium, nor the more traditional musicological abstraction to considerations of musical formalism. Instead, such analysis must move to try and show how a musical articulation expresses the potentialities inscribed in the organization of the social field, and examine the realization of this potential in its full materiality as process. What Bourdieu and Williams offer in the attempt to formulate such an understanding are theoretical models with an emphasis on objectivity and experience, respectively defined in their notions of “field” and “structure of feeling”. This will be taken forward in part 2 of this thesis.

## 2 PART 2: Arvo Pärt and ECM

At a time when publicists worldwide are clamouring to apply the media-driven rules of popular culture to sell 'high' art, the music of Arvo Pärt seems particularly vulnerable. The 'minimalist', 'mystical', 'contemplative' tags and their tired associative meanings abound, as does the continuing image of Pärt the pious pontiff. In the musical world, too, his work is carelessly dismissed as a fashionable, neo-medieval short cut to quasi-enlightenment and has attracted relatively little serious musicological study. (1999, 19)

Geoff Smith's introduction to "Sources of Invention", his interview with Arvo Pärt.





## Introduction

If the arguments above represent the attempt to think through problematic aspects of an existing musicological tradition in a quite general way, what follows could be described in the terms Williams uses to describe his analyses in *The Long Revolution*: as the “attempt to reach new ground” (1961, 8). In this sense, the method becomes part of the subject matter and the following discussions combine both theoretical and musical reflection. Bourdieu argued that in wanting to understand the contemporary logic of distinction in cultural consumption he analysed high fashion rather than revising the theories of Max Weber.<sup>47</sup> In trying to understand a particular contemporary social situation he found it necessary to pinpoint the relationships in which that phenomenon is encapsulated and practised. The study below follows this example, aiming to draw out some of the pressures and limits acting on the practices of Arvo Pärt and ECM as particularly interesting examples of an attempt to maintain autonomous conditions of practice in the face of an increasingly dominant market economy. It draws on my readings of Bourdieu’s and Williams’s interpretation of the progress of modernism into late capitalism.

The theories of both Williams and Bourdieu want to uncover the pressures acting on practice and the nature of the consequent limits to which they are pushed. These determinations may be antithetical to the stated desires of the agent under scrutiny – in this case a composer – to the order of attributing cynical position-taking or capital accumulation to a practice of apparent complete innocence or disinterestedness. This study is the effort to read along with (listen along with) a particular cultural instance, aiming to understand something of the prevalent logics of practice, or structures of feeling, and not to discredit or undermine the values it embodies. I have not excluded myself from this scrutiny, and note that the production of this thesis and the nuances of its arguments can be derived from my own dispositions and trajectory, analysable as the product of my particular *habitus* as it encounters the organisation of the present social, academic, and musical fields and their relationships to the field of power.

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<sup>47</sup> This comment comes out in *The Rules of Art* in a discussion of the status, place, and use of “theory” in studying contemporary culture (1996, 177-184).

This particular *habitus* is very close to Bourdieu's description of a middle-class drive towards understanding: well-enough equipped with both economic and symbolic capital to undertake an apparently disinterested academic study of a rarefied field such as Western classical music. I can imagine Bourdieu reading the emphasis on theory in this thesis as a particular stake in academic production, with the specific use of his work and that of Raymond Williams as attempts at distinction. However, all academic work of this kind, operating within the *illusio* of 'a contribution to knowledge', will necessarily deploy a strategy of some kind: striving for legitimation and consecration among the networks of relationships which constitute the academic field. Bourdieu argues that if debates within the social sciences over the study of artworks are still at an early stage, even after so much debate in the twentieth century, this is because those who operate them are engaged in the very struggles which constitute the meaning and value of the work of art. I agree with Bourdieu's contention that a social science of culture, including music, must be concerned at some level with the terms of these struggles over truth. It must attempt to grasp the determinations of the logics of practice, or structures of feeling, which produce particular stakes, camps, positions, movements, disagreements, alliances, strategies, and so on. Conceptual apparatuses, approaches to musical study, musical debate, the object of the musical study itself, must all be related back to the social conditions of their individual production and use. The reflexive theoretical tools of Williams and Bourdieu offer just this opportunity, but I acknowledge that they, and my uses of them, are situated within a particular range of debates.

Chapter 4 problematizes the notion of modernist autonomy and outlines Williams's and Bourdieu's assessment of modernism and modernity. The treatment of an autonomous notion of refusal is recognized as central to their theories of 'structures of feeling' and the 'field of cultural production' respectively, and is identified as the ground on which to draw their work together. The privileged place of an avant-garde mechanism of change in this theory is noted and contrasted with an increasingly disparate and fragmented notion of cultural change related to an increasingly dominant heteronomous market. Chapter 5 discusses the emergence of Arvo Pärt into the Western musical field, drawing on elements of Bourdieu's theory to

demonstrate the stakes of this struggle and Williams's dominant structure of feeling as an organizing principle. A range of rhetorical strategies are identified in the legitimation of this position-taking, which is understood to be, in part, the attempt at distinction from the received terms of the Western musical avant-garde. The notion of the dominant structure of feeling is used here as an organizing principle. Chapter 6 explores the record label ECM as an institution and formation, recognizing that institutional analysis is central to the mediating "cultural productive forces" of the production paradigm. These discussions are linked back to the notions of autonomous practice discussed in chapter 4. In particular, the presence of consciously espoused autonomous values of production, positioned on a difficult notion of market asymmetry, is asserted.





## 2.4 CHAPTER 4 – Questions of Autonomy

### 2.4.1 Autonomy, the Topos of Refusal, and the Wager on the Future

#### A Distinction between Autonomies

This chapter develops an understanding of ‘autonomy’ in terms of the conditions of practice in a late capitalist system driven by global market pressures. Autonomy in this sense describes specialist social groups (composers, performers, recording engineers, and so on) who are perceived to function somehow at a remove from the direct impact of the market and the polity. These autonomous groups operate a specialist *practice* as a condition of their autonomy. It is towards understanding the conditions and complexities of the interactions of this field of practices that much of the theory in this thesis is directed. Because of the emphasis placed on autonomy by a section of the field of contemporary musicology, it is necessary to maintain some distance from the use of autonomy to describe the development of autonomous individualized musical structures *except* as they emerge as part of the logic of the social practices of a specific period. This distinction between notions of autonomy connects to arguments made earlier in this thesis regarding the distinction between “idealist” and “materialist” critiques of culture. The materialisms of Williams and Bourdieu emphasise a notion of autonomy in terms of the social conditions of practice. The idealist critique, which seems to have been particularly dominant in musicology, works to interrogate the notion, content, and even the possibility of the autonomous utterance.

Subotnik offers valuable discussions of the travails of this autonomous musical structure in “The Challenge of Contemporary Music” (1991, 265-294) and “Towards a Deconstruction of Structural Listening: A Critique of Schoenberg, Adorno and Stravinsky” (1996, 148-176). Here Subotnik moves to define the characteristics of the autonomous musical structure, to account for its development, and to challenge its terms. She offers some clear statements of definition which may be useful here:

For almost 200 years, Western art music has tried to secure a social guarantee of its own existence, precisely as if it were as “self-evident” a structure as science. Basing its case on the realization of its own internal laws, Western art music has tried to project the necessity of that realization by defining itself, in its individual manifestations, with an ever-increasing degree of precision. (1991, 269)

As the autonomous structure enters the twentieth century Subotnik observes that:

Attributing a quasi-objective necessity to the demands of their craft, contemporary composers have in fact taken a romantic tendency to its extreme; they have located musical significance not just metaphorically but literally – coextensively and exclusively – in the structure of their works. (1991, 270)

Much of the target of cultural or critical musicologies has been the interrogation of this notion of autonomy and the attempt to find bases for musical meaning which cannot be attributed to the formal. Lawrence Kramer clearly articulates this thrust:

For most of the twentieth century, subjectivity, in the sense of the private monad, was regarded as an obstacle to both musical experience and musical knowledge. Too much emphasis on feeling or ascription of meaning could only obscure what was truly musical about music, its articulations of style, form, and structure. Musical knowledge was knowledge of the variety and history of these qualities; musical experience came from following them with rapt attention. [...] Cultural musicology tries to pay more heed. It takes that appeal as a sign that music both reflects and helps to produce historically specific forms of subjectivity in the sense of lived positions. Far from being an obstacle, subjectivity is the medium in which music works, and through which it reveals its cultural significance. (2003, 1-2)

Thinking of autonomy in terms of an idealized (and individualized) autonomous musical structure which can be revealed to have social origins (and whose meanings are demonstrably social) has produced valuable musicological work. I contend that autonomy must also be imagined in terms of the autonomy of practice of specialized artistic groups. These two understandings are linked in general terms: a tradition concerned with notions of an autonomous musical structure could not have arisen without the struggle for autonomous conditions of practice. Drawing the distinction helps to frame the central themes of this thesis. Perhaps most usefully it demonstrates why Adorno's culture industry thesis presented itself as a theoretical problematic. Adorno's reflections here constitute, among other things, the recognition of a potential and massive shift in the social structures which, Bourdieu and Williams would argue, *are* cultural practice.

The main target of this musicological notion of autonomy can be described alternatively by Bourdieu's argument of a developing, reflexive, specialisation in the fields of production: a specialisation instituted by the logics of practice at the autonomous pole of production. What the work of both Williams and Bourdieu offer from within their respective traditions are ways of examining the processes and stakes of this drive towards specialization: how it becomes defined, contested, instituted, and practicably available.<sup>48</sup> Further, both work to show that artistic perception and appreciation are socially constituted *in the same struggle*. Finally, both present their reflections trans-epochally as part of the recognition of the contingency of the present organization. If what have been presented so far in this thesis are the generative principles of these projects and their general terms (which may have some broad application or specific re-application in another field of musicology), this part explores the particular reflections of each on the organization of modernism, modernity, and the perceived threat of late capitalism.

Both Williams and Bourdieu attempt to understand modernity as a change in the conditions of practice, and to theorise the changing pressures and limits acting in and through the subject and the group, especially evidenced in the struggle between heteronomous market and autonomous principles. Here the examination of the aesthetics of autonomy (of disinterestedness, refusal, and so on) offers not the opportunity to question the social bases of a pure form or the attempt to see in the idealized autonomous musical structures of modernism the refusal of the negative character of a *doxic* bourgeois modernity.<sup>49</sup> Rather, such a study offers the opportunity to examine artistic confrontation with social conditions at the inception of modernity as a condition of practice.

This chapter constitutes the first, most general, level of analysis: an elaboration of the organization of cultural production and its relationship to the "field of power" (after Bourdieu)

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<sup>48</sup> These processes and stakes are complex, ranging from the formal to the methods of production, the relationships of production, etc. Formal developments should be thought of as social (in the sense of Volosinovian signals). These notions can never be fully disembodied from the condition of their struggle for legitimation and subsequent trajectory in the field. For example, the class interests of certain classical music clearly remain a stake in the field, becoming amplified, dampened, distorted, and so on.

<sup>49</sup> This is not to argue that bourgeois modernity plays an unimportant role in their reflections.



or the “general organization” (after Williams). It is divided into two sections. Section 1 moves over three areas, with the first discussing the explicit centrality of autonomy in Bourdieu’s theorization of the field of cultural production and the second arguing through the more implicit importance of autonomy to the late project of Williams. In both these sections I highlight the perceived threat to the autonomous principle by an increasingly vigorous and globalized heteronomous principle. Third, I discuss the position of both Bourdieu and Williams in relation to modernism via John Orr’s discussion of Lucien Goldmann’s notion of a tragic refusal and a wager on the future. In the conclusion, I draw together the projects of Williams and Bourdieu along the lines discussed above, finding in this notion of a topos of refusal a fault-line which both theorists address from within their different traditions. Section 2 is a short linking discussion laying the groundwork for the more detailed analysis in chapter 5.

### **Bourdieu: the Struggle for Autonomy, and its Place in the Laws of the Field of Production**

Bourdieu’s work on artistic production is the second phase of his work on culture rather than a continuation of the work on consumption found in *Distinction*. What *The Field of Cultural Production* and *The Rules of Art* offer theoretically is an elaboration of the concept of the field with the notions of capital, symbolic violence, and even *habitus*, taking supporting roles. This emphasis is designed to interrogate the logics of practice in a field system divided by autonomous and heteronomous principles, thereby describing and analyzing a process of autonomization which leads to the development of specialized social fields.<sup>50</sup> These fields are shown to be paradoxical social spaces operating internal logics dependent on, but crucially also at odds with, the laws of the surrounding social world, especially at the level of the economic. Bourdieu argues that it is this social process which allowed an aesthetic of disinterestedness to develop in the fields of cultural production. In analysing the logics of practice in these fields, *The Rules of Art* examines three historical moments. The earliest notes the struggle to institute autonomy in the fields of cultural production (1996, “The Conquests of Autonomy” 47-112).

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<sup>50</sup> Even those essays on cultural production concerned with historical periods not organized via an autonomous principal (such as “The Quattrocento Eye” (1996, 315-321)) are designed to elucidate Bourdieu’s theories of the contemporary social practices of production.

The second describes the established nature of this field (1996, “The Emergence of a Dualist Structure”, 113-140). The third identifies the development of a market for symbolic (autonomous) goods (1996, “The Market for Symbolic Goods”, 141-176). It is this last moment that is particularly useful for the discussion of Pärt and ECM: some brief overview is necessary to get there.

The argument of the earliest moment explores the relations between the fields of cultural production and the field of power, stressing the forms and effects of dependence and independence active in the second half of the nineteenth century. Here Bourdieu notes “new forms of domination” active on artists in this period, arguing that the often expressed artistic rejection of the bourgeois as the ruling class of the newly dominant modernity is a reaction to the impact of the emergence of “industrialists and businessmen” (1996, 48). A product of industrial expansion, this bourgeois class were “uncultured *parvenus* ready to make both the power of money and a vision of the world profoundly hostile to intellectual things triumph within the whole society” (1996, 48). The dominance of the new industrial economy came to be felt in many areas of life, gaining political legitimacy, and forging close links between the political and economic worlds.

This development exerts pressure on the relationships between cultural producers and the dominant classes which were dominated through the eighteenth century and earlier by some form of patronal allegiance.<sup>51</sup> Bourdieu argues for a modern *structural subordination* of the field of production to the financial demands of the field of power (see especially 1996, 48-54). This “subordination”, in which the market exerts pressures and limits on cultural production, is shown to be imposed via two mechanisms: directly through sales of tickets, artworks, and so on, or through new opportunities offered by industrialized cultural production. In this new organization, links are established between groups of artists occupying certain positions in the field of production and the dominant classes of the field of power based on symmetries in lifestyle and systems of belief and value, and operating through institutions occupying positions

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<sup>51</sup> This is an observation also central to Williams’s work.

in both fields. This “structural subordination” becomes, for Bourdieu, the mechanism by which should be approached the terms of both financial domination and the attempts to legitimate and institute an artistic position-taking based on the values of autonomy.

The structures of these fields of cultural production are argued to be constituted through a complex opposition between the emergent and dominating bourgeois model of production, and an also emergent assertion of an autonomous sphere of art which refuses the dominance of bourgeois economic pressures. The bourgeois class fraction asserted its values to control and change the machinery of legitimation and consecration in the domain of cultural production, and was consequently seen to have imposed a “degraded and degrading definition of cultural production” (1996, 58). Bourdieu therefore charts a tendency in writers of the period in the French field (most notably Baudelaire and Flaubert) to oppose what is described as the “vulgar materialism” of the rule of these new bourgeois figures and the servility of artists who conform to the new terms of production. This becomes the key contributory factor in the urge to break with the everyday social and political world and the drive to constitute the world of art as a world apart.

There is some parallel here with the case of Beethoven in the musical field. Perhaps surprisingly, considering his topic, Bourdieu only refers to Beethoven once in his argument, but this reference acknowledges Beethoven as the “object *par excellence* of hagiographic exaltation of the ‘pure’ artist” (1996, 149). Indeed, in many discussions of the position-taking of heroic modernism in musicology Beethoven is the paradigmatic object of study. It evidently becomes a central, preoccupying, and organizing principle in much of Adorno’s work with a concomitant legacy in musical thought in the twentieth century: “let us reflect on Beethoven. If he is the musical prototype of the revolutionary bourgeoisie, he is at the same time the prototype of a music that has escaped from its social tutelage and is esthetically fully autonomous, a servant no longer” (Adorno, 1998, 43).<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> The collection of Adorno’s texts edited by Rolf Tiedemann and collected together in *Beethoven: The Philosophy of Music* are revealing on this point, as are discussions on Beethoven and autonomy in *Quasi una Fantasia* (1992, 34, 163, 205-6). Lydia Goehr’s postulation of a “Beethoven Paradigm” (1992, 205-



Subotnik's extensive critiques of Adorno's work seek to clarify his reading of this musical development. For example, in a discussion of Adorno's reading of Beethoven's late style she makes the following observation:

From Adorno's perspective, the great achievement of human history took place during the bourgeois era, which in music he dates back approximately to Monteverdi [...] From [his] Kantian-Hegelian viewpoint, this highest of all possible conceptions of the human could become a reality only through the coinciding of individual and social interests in a condition of human wholeness or integrity; and the latter, in turn, came close to a realization at one unique moment in history, represented in music by Beethoven's second-period style. (1991, 17)

Subotnik argues further that it is in Beethoven's late style that Adorno charts the beginning of a pure aesthetic in the field of musical production:

The crux of Adorno's aesthetic theory is that the degree of social reality embedded in art is directly proportional to the conceptual autonomy of art [...]. [...] Adorno argues [...] the only protest left for authentic art is withdrawal from society; for art such as Beethoven's late work to preserve its critical force and protect the musical (i.e., human) subject, the artist must sever, as cleanly as possible, the overt connections of his or her art and society. (1991, 25)<sup>53</sup>

This connects with Bourdieu's attempts to chart the development of a section of the field which advocated independent or pure art. He identifies the problem of the *subject* of such an art as a point of contestation, noting that it is through these debates that the position of art for art's sake was instituted in the field of production. Interestingly, the case of music is argued as capable of reconstructing this debate in purely structural terms, leading to the institution of the autonomous musical structure.

Although this summary argument may appear reductive, Bourdieu is at pains to make clear that it is only the precise positions and position-takings that Flaubert, Baudelaire, Manet (and I would add Beethoven) are able to occupy in their social and respective artistic fields that allow

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242) is an example of the lasting impact of this line of thinking, again presenting Beethoven as the paradigmatic example of musical autonomy (both in structure and in social practice). I recognize that the field of scholarship on Beethoven is a broad one, and only touch on it here to provide suitable landmarks in Bourdieu's exposition.

<sup>53</sup> For a critical reading of Adorno's view on Beethoven which points along a similar trajectory to the line of thinking developed in this thesis, consider DeNora's comments in her *After Adorno: Rethinking Music Sociology* (2003, 27). DeNora also offers a particularly enlightening reading of the social construction of Beethoven's worth, or "genius", in *Beethoven and the Construction of Genius*, in the process touching on "The Emergence of Serious Music Culture" as the emergence of autonomous practice in music (1995, 11-36).



them to become aware of the political and economic situations and establish their drive towards artistic independence, or, autonomy. This understanding introduces the notion of a “heroic struggle” to establish an area within the fields of cultural production which is able to support the autonomous position-taking. This is necessarily a complex struggle over a wide range of practices and institutions, as the principles of autonomy cannot be inscribed as a logic of practice in the field through the heroic striving of a composer, painter, or writer alone, no matter how heroic. Bourdieu’s move is to interrogate how the values of autonomy become instituted in the functioning logics of a section of the social field striving to become independent from the debilitating impact of economic and political power.

This autonomous position-taking undergoes a struggle to be recognized as a legitimate approach to practice in the field of cultural production. It thereby establishes as recognizable such practices which exhibit refusal of the social and economic gains on offer in the field of power. As the autonomous position-taking manages to secure a greater level of consecration, so autonomous practice comes to achieve a greater domination of the practical *doxa* at work in the field. The early struggle to articulate autonomous values in cultural production should be understood as the attempt to establish an autonomous position and a definition of practice as legitimate:

Rather than a ready-made position which only has to be taken up, like those founded in the very logic of social functioning, through the social functions they fulfill or lay claim to, ‘art for art’s sake’ is a position to be made, devoid of any equivalent in the field of power and which might not or wasn’t necessarily supposed to exist. Even though it is inscribed in a potential state in the very space of positions already in existence, and even though certain of the romantic poets had already foreshadowed the need for it, those who would take up that position cannot make it exist except by making the field in which a place could be found for it, that is, by revolutionizing an art world that excludes it, in fact and in law. (1996, 76)

Bourdieu argues that this period saw a *symbolic revolution* in which artists struggled to emancipate themselves from the newly instituted bourgeois demand by insisting that approaches to cultural production become the central guiding necessity, thereby attempting to circumnavigate the demands of the market. This recognition leads to the institution of what

Bourdieu termed “the economic world reversed”.<sup>54</sup> Briefly put, in attempting to remove bourgeois pressures from the struggle for control over the meaning and function of artistic practice the autonomous position-taking also removed a section of the social field as a potential consumer. In making art *beyond* commercial value it also became *without* commercial value: in attempting to circumnavigate the market it came to have no market.

The position of this world is ultimately ambiguous as it attempts to say two things at the same time: that art is of supreme value but also beyond the valuations of the market. This produces a structural mechanism which begins to dominate the functioning of the autonomous field. The circulation of symbolic capital comes to mirror the laws of the economic world while denying its principles. Bourdieu argues that as the legitimation of the autonomous position grows in the field of cultural production, and success in the market is increasingly discreditable, the gap between supply and demand becomes a “structural characteristic” (1996, 82). Here the remuneration for producers of autonomous work is deferred, although not indefinitely, unlike the agent involved in commercial or industrial cultural production who is assured of an immediate market. This leads to the theorising of an inverted economic world: the artist cannot have success in the symbolic arena except by renouncing the economic world, and vice versa.<sup>55</sup>

The above summarizes Bourdieu’s description of the heroic formation of the autonomous position in the fields of cultural production. In this period, the principles of autonomy were still to be found inscribed in the dispositions and actions of particular agents. The next historical phase of Bourdieu’s argument presents these principles as converted to “objective mechanisms, immanent in the logic of the field” (1996, 113). Bourdieu’s argument here traces the impact that the “heroic” autonomous position-taking has on the organization of the field. He contends that the aesthetic of refusal is converted into an objective logic of practice which becomes inscribed into the laws of the field of production. Consequently, he proposes a

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<sup>54</sup> See for example the essay “The Field of Cultural Production, or: The Economic World Reversed” (1993, 29-73) and the sections in *The Rules of Art*: “An Economic World Turned Upside Down” (1996, 81-85) and “Two Economic Logics” (1996, 142-146)

<sup>55</sup> This question of production cycles is given more expansive treatment in the chapter on ECM below.

structure of the field of cultural production. This field, at the beginning of the twentieth century, tended to divide into an autonomous sector and a commercial sector: two poles of the same social space defined through their oppositional relationship. This opposition came to structure the practices of the field, taking over from a differentiation and opposition of particular genres, defining a pole of pure production where the audience tended to be composed of other producers and a pole of large-scale production functioning in response to the expectations and demands of a large audience. There is perhaps some proximity here to Subotnik's observation that "as a category of positive value [...] the concept of 'contemporary' music was created and developed not by the general public but within a musically and intellectually elite tradition of specialists" (1991, 272). This becomes the crux of Subotnik's "challenge" of contemporary music. In Bourdieu's model the opposition between autonomy and heteronomy is generalized and remains the organizing logic of the fields of cultural production up to the present day:

[O]ne would need to construct a true chronicle of events to get a concrete appreciation of how this universe, anarchic and wilfully libertarian in appearance (which it also is, thanks in large part to the social mechanisms that authorize and favour autonomy), is the site of a well-regulated ballet in which individuals and groups dance their own steps, always contrasting themselves with each other, sometimes clashing, sometimes dancing to the same tune, then turning their backs on each other in often explosive separations, and so on, up until the present time. (1996, 113)

Bourdieu also identifies the development of a more autonomous sector at the heart of each field of cultural production: an avant-garde. Alongside his principle differentiation between autonomous and heteronomous practices a subsequent differentiation is found within the autonomous pole itself: between an avant-garde and a consecrated avant-garde. These variations in the degrees of consecration come to separate artistic generations, defined by the gap between styles and lifestyles that are structurally opposed: the "old" and the "new", the "outmoded" and the "original" (1996, 122). Bourdieu uses these observations to identify one of the key strategies of this avant-garde mechanism of change:

The occupants of avant-garde positions who are not yet consecrated, and especially the older ones (biologically) among them, have an interest in reducing the second opposition to the first [that is, reducing the avant-garde/consecrated



avant-garde opposition to the autonomous/heteronomous opposition], and in making the success or recognition that certain avant-garde writers may obtain in the long term appear as the effect of a repudiation or a compromise with the bourgeois order. (1996, 123)

This relies on an equivalent and opposed understanding of the range of practices and strategies available at the heteronomous pole: that the various available bourgeois consecrations (most especially immediate economic profit, but also prizes, awards, qualifications) are given to artists producing for the bourgeois market. In contrast, the autonomous area of the field becomes governed by a particular logic of permanent revolution: each successive avant-garde legitimates itself through a symbolic revolution described by Bourdieu as “the institutionalization of anomie”. Bourdieu thus theorizes a social arena in which all actions taken by a producer must be a reaction, in whole or in part, to the configurations of artists and artworks which constitute the field. Bourdieu describes the secondary differentiation between artistic pretenders and the consecrated avant-garde as creating a tension at the heart of autonomous production between those who try to deconsecrate and those who try to hold on to consecrated positions. That is, he identifies an operative “dialectic of distinction” (see especially 1996, 126-7). There are a number of temporal parameters occurring in Bourdieu’s theory of the art field, as Michael Grenfell summarizes:

[F]irst, socially recognized, physical time moving back from future to present to the past; secondly, an individual artist’s lifespan which has a beginning and end; thirdly, the speed and therefore degree that the artists pass through a particular artistic generation or recognized movement; fourthly the speed or degree to which that movement or generation passes through the present recognized *field*. At one extreme, an artist founds a movement or school of painting which is recognized and remains a part of the present field; for example, the work of Leonardo da Vinci. At the other extreme, an artist works but never receives public recognition, or does and quickly loses it, or forms part of a movement that is not considered important enough for further acknowledgement and passes out of the field. Generations proceed and precede generations: the avant-garde becomes a consecrated rear-garde as another avant-garde displaces them. (100-101)

This tension, the struggle between those who possess capital and those who are deprived of it, produces a continuous transformation in the supply of symbolic products. Alongside this, Bourdieu notes that more substantial revolutions in the artistic field, such as the over-throwing



of a strongly established and consecrated artist in the field, can only be successful when there are related external changes in the field of power or the broader social field. The examples provided are of a sudden increase in the number of producers with access to autonomous production (reliant, in turn, on the expansion of the educated population, itself linked to an economic expansion), or, perhaps related, a growth in the market of available consumers who can then become the audience for successive challenging avant-gardes and their cultural products (1996, 127-128). In summary, while internal struggles in the field of production attempt to remain independent of these external changes, their outcomes are in great part dependent on the relationships with external developments in the field of power and the social field more broadly.

Bourdieu also argues that the field of production, as well as creating the available strategies for cultural production, creates the schemas of perception and appreciation by which art is received and understood. The further the field develops towards autonomy, the more the meanings and values of its products are determined by the shape of the field as a whole. The production of a particular work brings into play other producers in the field, including critics and institutions; all those who have a stake in a practice are involved in the struggle over the definition of its meaning and value, and collaboratively constitute the value of art works and artists through precisely this struggle. The categories of perception and appreciation are doubly linked to historical context. First, they are associated with a particular organization of the field which is situated within the broader field systems (the field of power and the broader social field), and secondly, they are the object of practices which are marked by the social position of the practitioners. The range of notions developed by artists and critics to define their practice or analyse their subject are strategic moves in the struggles of the field. These combative concepts, if they are successful, become the technical categories on to which a permanence (or autonomy) is conferred. This is reductive of the range of Bourdieu's arguments on artistic perception and I hope to draw out more of these points in what follows, but generally the institution of social autonomy in the artistic field is inseparable from a process, defined through social struggle, of 'formal purification' (particularly evident in the

development of the autonomous and individualized musical structure). Here the 'essential principles' which define each art and genre are isolated and paralleled by the genesis of a mode of perception capable of apprehending these moves:

The social construction of autonomous fields of production goes hand-in-hand with the construction of specific principles of perception and appreciation of the natural and social world (and of the literary and artistic representations of that world); that is to say, it goes together with the elaboration of an intrinsically aesthetic mode of perception which situates the principle of 'creation' within the representation and not within the thing represented, and which is never so fully asserted as when it is able to constitute aesthetically the base or vulgar objects of the modern world. (1996, 132)<sup>56</sup>

So Bourdieu theorises a process whereby social, economic, and political conditions (of a field, the dispositions of a particular *habitus*, and their complex complicity) allowed the development of an autonomous space of cultural production which is also necessarily relatively dependent on the economic and political fields. The values and status of this initial 'heroic' position-taking become progressively inscribed into the generative laws of the field of cultural production as a newly defined area of practice. This area deploys an "inverse economy", operating a logic founded on the particular characteristics of symbolic products: objects with twin aspects of "merchandise" and "signification" (1996, 141). This produces two opposed extremes of production: one operating a logic which produces goods for the market and the other producing pure goods which are destined for consumption by the autonomous field. The approaches to practice in the field, and the strategies deployed by producers, are determined (over a hugely variable range) between these two extremes: the response to, and supply of, a bourgeois market demand, or, the attempt to establish complete autonomy from this market. In very general terms, the attenuation of the demands of the market and its threat to the opposed market for symbolic goods defines Bourdieu's understanding of the current organization of the field of cultural production, the third historical moment in his argument in *The Rules of Art*. It is this organization which I hope to interrogate with the analysis of Pärt and

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<sup>56</sup> The parallels here between the developments of the autonomous musical structure (as in, for example, Subotnik's "Schoenbergian Paradigm", 1991, 272-273) and the training required to become proficient in a certain kind of "structural listening" are compelling.

ECM: an artist and an institution which span the range of practice in Bourdieu's opposition of autonomy and heteronomy.

### Notions of Autonomy in Williams's Late Project

Bourdieu's reflections on the production of art in the modern period place notions of autonomy in an explicit and central position. An equivalent discussion is less evident as an organising principle in Williams's work. There are, however, parallels between their studies of modernism and modernization which should be drawn out.<sup>57</sup> In *Culture* Williams develops a definition of culture which is meant to account for two contemporary approaches to analysis: culture as a sociological "whole way of life" and a concomitant understanding of culture which designates a "signifying practice" beyond the received range of the arts.<sup>58</sup>

With the parallel cultural duplication of the categories of the base, necessary for the deployment of a production paradigm in the dialectically expanded realm of culture (so-defined), Williams develops theoretical devices capable of identifying, measuring, and bringing into communication various levels of practice.<sup>59</sup> These devices are most programmatically outlined in *Culture* (although they are active in some form throughout his oeuvre) and can be summarized as a range of hypotheses: the notion of a variable range of the "solution of signifying practice" (1981, 208-209); the consideration of "variable degrees of autonomy" (1981, 191-193); the "relative distance" of practices between "general" and "cultural" production (1981, 189-191); and the identification of "embedded and disembedded" cultural forms (1981, 204-205).

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<sup>57</sup> I am explicitly avoiding a discussion of *Culture and Society*, perhaps the most natural parallel with Bourdieu's project. This work was written before Williams's engagement with the Western Marxists, and so does not advance the coherent theoretical model of his later work.

<sup>58</sup> Chapter 8 of *Culture*, "Organization", is the clearest elaboration of this late definition of culture, although the whole work is designed around this conceptualization (1981, 206-233). As discussed above, this desire to acknowledge the range of determinations acting on practice beyond the realm of the arts is one of the reasons that Williams was receptive to the emergent "radical semiotics", referring to the impact of post-structuralism on British intellectual developments.

<sup>59</sup> This cultural duplication of the base is discussed in some detail above. In the rest of this argument I follow Williams in using "cultural" and "general" to indicate the spheres produced by his duplication of the production paradigm.



The first of these, the relative degrees of solution, is central to Williams's critical sociology of culture. The above definition of culture as "a signifying system" is meant to operate at a level of generality, allowing for the study of signifying institutions, practices and works but also the relations of these to "other" institutions, practices and works operating in the general social organization. The "key" to these relations is described as "turning twice". First, Williams insists that signifying practice is present in all general activities, while also maintaining the distinction that in this general area "different human needs and actions are substantially and irreducibly present: the necessary signification [...] more or less completely dissolved into other needs and actions" (1981, 209). Second, these relations are present in the opposite direction: the needs and activities of general production are to be found in all "manifest signifying activities" (1981, 209). The distinction is again maintained by arguing that in these signifying practices the needs and actions of the general are "more or less completely dissolved" (1981, 209). In this way Williams asserts that the pressures and limits of the general sphere of production are present *in solution* in cultural production, and vice versa:

The metaphor of solution is crucial to this way of looking at culture, and the qualification 'more or less' is not a casual phrase but a way of indicating a true range, in which relatively complete and relatively incomplete degrees of solution, either way, can be practically defined. (1981, 209)

The "relative distance", the "variable degrees of autonomy", and the "disembedding" concepts represent Williams's acknowledgment that in complex societies there are often difficult and discontinuous relations between cultural producers and the general social system. These theoretical notions are designed to interrogate the nature and implications of the range of these relationships. The hypothesis of a "relative distance" of practice is a theoretical recognition that the degree of autonomy of a cultural process is deducible from its "practical distance from otherwise organized social relations" (1981, 189). It is a way of distinguishing "in the whole range of social practice, different and variable measures of distance between particular practices and the social relations which organize them" (1981, 189). Williams notes an identity between the conditions of practice and the organized form of social relations (his example is the relationship in many working practices between the possibility of a practice and



the conditions of wage labour), but also the possibility, available to particular types of cultural production, of an “actual and variable” degree of distance from the general social organization (1981, 190).<sup>60</sup>

Williams uses his notion of “relative distance” to propose different degrees of distance from the general organization in the practical conditions of cultural production. His main examples are the organization of newspapers and television contrasted with minority arts as two extreme poles in a variable range.<sup>61</sup> In the former, Williams observes an “effectively predominant integration of privileged ownership of the means of production and the consequent (wage-labour) employment of the actual producers” (1981, 192). In the latter he notes that, while there are necessary connections to the economy and polity, the practices “are at a sufficient distance from the general social organization, and especially from the areas of its central concerns, to allow quite practical relative autonomies and even, at this level, seemingly absolute autonomies” (1981, 192).<sup>62</sup> These reflections constitute Williams’s proposed hypothesis of variable degrees of autonomy which is identified as being a key requirement in his sociology of cultural reproduction. The combination of these notions of “relative distance” and “variable degrees of autonomy” become a central component of Williams’s theoretical project:

[T]hese distinctions [between different levels of autonomy] [...] can be brought to bear, not only descriptively but now analytically, through the hypothesis of variable autonomy, and thus variable reproduction, according to the degrees of distance between the conditions of a practice and otherwise organized social relations. (1981, 193)

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<sup>60</sup> It should be emphasized that this argument of relative distance is closely linked to the complex processes of reproduction, both in cultural forms but also in the general order. Williams gives the example of religious history: a church can be an effective institution of social and cultural reproduction, but there is a social and historical range definable in terms of a relative distance between a “monopoly church” backed by the state, in a later phase a range of alternative churches, and later again “the practical possibility of refusal or indifference to all or any of them” (1981, 190).

<sup>61</sup> The formulation “minority arts” is perhaps a little ambiguous: Williams means to indicate forms of practice executed by a small number of people (his examples are poetry and sculpture).

<sup>62</sup> There are parallels between these two positions (or poles in a highly variable range) and Bourdieu’s bifurcation of the field of production through his theorising of the autonomous and heteronomous principles.

The last of these theoretical tools, the notion of “embedded” or “disembedded” cultural forms, is again closely related to the discussions above. Williams introduces it in his discussions of cultural forms in *Culture*:

It is clear that certain forms of social relationship are deeply embodied in certain forms of art. [...] We have first to recognize that there can be no absolute separation between those social relationships which are evident or discoverable as the immediate conditions of a practice – the signalled places, occasions and terms of specifically indicated types of cultural activity – and those which are so embedded within the practice, as particular formal articulations, that they are at once social and formal, and can in one kind of analysis be treated as relatively autonomous. (1981, 148)

He evidently considered the *conditions of a practice* to be the clearest indicating factors of the social role of cultural forms. One of the major tasks of *Culture*, following the presentation of the production paradigm in the earlier *Marxism and Literature*, is the theoretical elaboration of cultural forms as means of production. The major point to be made here is that alongside an understanding of the variable degree of autonomy in the relations of production, Williams also theorises a related variable degree of autonomy of cultural form. Here the mode of cultural production can be characterized by the degree to which it is disembedded, or potentially re-embedded, in the general social organization. Those practices which are most distant from the pressures and limits of the general organization are the most *disembedded*, while the *embedded* correspond to the anthropological aspect of Williams’s late definition of culture as a whole way of life. For example, Subotnik’s discussion of a contemporary musical paradigm whose “one rather wan hope is to coerce the public, through a sense of moral obligation [...], into supporting contemporary music for the fact, rather than the substance, of its individualistic virtue” is in many ways a reading of a practice which is highly disembedded from the general organization (1991, 275). Conversley, her recognition of the importance of popular music turns on her envy of its ability to remain more closely embedded within the lives of its audience (1991, 289-290).

Williams designs his theoretical tools to negotiate the complexities arising from his insistence that, despite the cultural duplication of the basal categories, there is still an inseparable commonality and interrelation between the two processes of production. He is

always careful to emphasise difficulty, complexity, and discontinuity, and attempts to mirror this with a theoretical model able to account for multiple processes of production. This complexity is approached with the suggestion of “variable degrees of symmetry” between general and cultural production. The notion of symmetry indicates a situation in which there is “full parity between the purposes of cultural and [...] more general social and cultural reproduction” (1981, 98). Asymmetry, qualified as a highly variable concept, is introduced to account for tensions between general and cultural production. Symmetry is given a short exposition and quickly left behind; asymmetry becomes absolutely central to Williams’s critical projects both for identifying the oppositional potential of cultural formations to the dominant hegemony, and also for measuring the pressures and limits acting on them (1981, 98-112).

The late definition of culture as “a realized signifying system” is the attempt to develop a general concept capable of indicating the complex interrelations and contradictions of the areas of analysis Williams identifies as central to his approach to the social organization of culture. These areas of analysis are: the organization of artistic production through its institutions and formations; the development of particular arts and the social formalism of their forms; and the available means of cultural production and reproduction.<sup>63</sup> The concepts identified above are the tools Williams offers for this job. At the heart of these theses is a concern with the material conditions of a practice, but also, crucially for this argument, a variable degree of autonomy of practice is a central organizing principle.

Paralleling the general views of Bourdieu, Williams theorises an increasing threat to autonomous conditions of practice in the modern period. Any systematic and explicit normative statement along these lines is missing from *Culture* but is evident as a concern throughout the range of his theoretical work, his critical work, and his fiction. The clearest articulation of this position occurs in the major normative statement *Towards 2000*, particularly when Williams registers his hostility to the “legitimative utopia” of “post-industrial

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<sup>63</sup> It is in this body of theoretical reflections that the potential emerges for an integrated theory of industry and cultural practice, able to account for the complexities of contemporary cultural production, and suggesting (from within a similar intellectual culture) a model able to address the problems of Adorno’s culture industry thesis.



consumerism” (1983, 3-21).<sup>64</sup> What *Culture* does offer on this point is a categorization of the social relations between cultural producers and institutions capable of theorizing the ways in which practice is being affected by the rise of globalized market forces. Here Williams adopts a trans-epochal perspective, exploring the forms of relationship between society and institutions, followed by the relationships between cultural producers and institutions. This is not intended to be an easy linear historical progression, and Williams problematizes different forms of these relationships noting overlap, recurrence and transformation.

The earliest category is of a society/institutional relationship characterized by the presence of “instituted artists” completely embedded within the general social order (1981, 36-38). Here the cultural producer is not yet differentiated as ‘artist’ and is a part of a stratum of society which in turn is part of the central social organization. The next relationship identified is between “artists and patrons” and moves through a number of phases (1981, 38-44). First, Williams notes a transition phase from the social relations of an institutionalized order with integrated exchange mechanisms to relations of exchange dependent on patronage. Patronage is understood to institute a number of different forms of relationships between artist and institution characterized as “retainer and commission”, “protection and support”, “sponsorship”, and the “public acting as patron” in which the patron is replaced by a taxation-sourced revenue (1981, 38-44).

Williams also categorizes a form of society/institutional relationship between “artists and markets”, which again moves through a number of different phases in the relationships between artists and institutions. The first of these is the “artisanal”, which identifies an artist dependent on the immediate market but retaining ownership of the work until sale (1981, 44-45). This is followed by two post-artisanal social relations of commodity production: firstly a “distributive” phase in which the work is sold to a distributor who becomes the employer of the artist, and second a “productive” phase in which there is further intermediary work to be done (1981, 45-47). In this latter case, the intermediary invests in the work for the purposes of

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<sup>64</sup> This will be discussed more fully below.



profit, and it is usually at this stage that “typical capitalist social relationships begin to be instituted” (1981, 45).

Williams then categorizes the rise of a “market professional” (1981, 47-48) which develops the relations of the “productive post-artisanal” phase. Here, due to copyright struggles, the general ownership of works remains with the artist, leading to the rise of the negotiated contract and royalties as newly typical relations. These relations draw the artist into the organized professional market. This allows the development of the “corporate professional” (1981, 51-52). Here the productive post-artisanal organization has become a modern corporation tending to reduce the role of the artist to that of a salaried professional. There is also an increasing tendency to produce for a market: the “new media” of radio, TV, and cinema are strongly corporate in this sense and become dominant and typical in the late twentieth century.<sup>65</sup> I contend that this shift from patronal to market relations is one of the key shifts in the general conditions that impacts on the development of the field of Western classical music. It is for this reason that the discussion of ECM becomes so important to the following discussion.

This summary indicates that Williams considered the different phases of market culture to be very different in character. The increasing centrality of cultural institutions to the organization of the market in the late twentieth century leads him to reflect that there is an increasing tendency towards institutions *embedded* in the general social organization, but now with the para-national globalized market providing the unifying principle. This provides the theoretical grounds for discussing an institutional equivalent to Williams's theory of the acculturation of daily life and the increasing range of commodification.<sup>66</sup> Evidently, Williams would encourage the consideration of institutional analysis alongside a range of other

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<sup>65</sup> Less immediately relevant to this study, Williams also categorizes “post-market” institutions, noting the development of “modern patronal” and “intermediate” relations between artists and institutions. In the former, institutions are non-governmental organizations of public patronage of arts that are not sustainable within market relations. In the latter, institutions depend on public revenue but are able to direct their own production (for example, the BBC) (Williams, 1981, 54-56).

<sup>66</sup> If this is linked with his theories of communication and technology, then a body of ideas emerges which is surprisingly prescient in its capacity for discussing even very contemporary issues of cultural production, such as the increasing presence of the internet as a re-embedded distributive and productive tool.

considerations. However, the goal here is to show that he theorises a shift in institutional social relationships from the patronal to the market, with the effects of patronal relationships still residually present, as one of the principle difficulties in the analysis of contemporary cultural production. The pressures and limits which these complex changing and overlapping circumstances exert on practice become one of the preoccupations of Williams's late discussions, with notions of autonomy occupying a central theoretical role, finding some symmetry across the range of his normative and political writings, his theoretical works, and his fiction.

### **Goldmann's "Tragic Refusal" and "Wager" in Williams and Bourdieu**

This stress on autonomous practice in the period of cultural modernism points up some recurrent themes identifiable in both Bourdieu and Williams. John Orr's (1999) *Hidden Agenda: Pierre Bourdieu and Terry Eagleton* attempts to draw just such a comparison between Bourdieu and Eagleton, highlighting the stakes clearly.<sup>67</sup> The "hidden agenda" here is the continued influence of Lucien Goldmann on both Bourdieu and Eagleton, especially through his *The Hidden God: A Study of the Tragic Vision in the Pensees of Pascal and the Tragedies of Racine* (1964). This point is central for both establishing the themes of the following discussion of Pärt and ECM, but also for establishing the grounds of Williams's emancipatory critique.

Orr argues that opposition to a dominant polity, a central characteristic of the notions of autonomy, can be understood as embodying the two defining elements of *The Hidden God*. First, Goldmann's reading of Pascal's "wager" as an activated form of faith, the belief in the existence of God in spite of his daily absence, becomes generalized as a wager on the future. Further, Orr notes that this wager is taken on in certain circles (especially Jansenist) as fundamental to an ascetic "search for Grace". Orr traces Goldmann's contention that over a period of time the exploration of this wager by various formations and institutions slowly

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<sup>67</sup> Goldmann's work is also important to Williams's own project and development, with Williams giving a series of lectures on Goldmann's work, later published as "Literature and Sociology: in Memory of Lucien Goldmann" in *New Left Review* (1971) and republished in *Problems in Materialism and Culture* (1980). While Williams reworked many aspects of Goldmann's genetic structuralism, Goldmann's work was arguably one of the most important influences in Williams's exploration of a modern Marxist conception of homology (evidenced in the essay *Marx on Culture*, published in *What I Came to Say*).

occludes the explicitly religious overtones of the original Pascalien wager, while sustaining, in general terms, the sense of a search for purity. The key point is that Orr's discussion enables him to argue that "what entranced Goldmann was the historic point of purity of the refusal of the world" (1999, 3). For Goldmann the "wager" comes to represent a *difficult and continually transformed element of purity in the aspirations of modernism*.<sup>68</sup> More straightforwardly, the "refusal" of Racine's heroines to submit to the political powers of the newly bourgeois world is read by Goldmann as a refusal of the living present from within a dominant group. Racine's tragedies characterise initial moments of a refusal which becomes a reworked topos within the travails of modernist autonomy.

Orr's description of this finds clear echoes of Bourdieu's reading of autonomy, especially as it is characterized by the notion of "the economic world reversed":

The tragic repudiation of the game had as it were already been superseded by new dramatic forms of tragic game-playing, positing the choice of relationship to the field of power in post-classical tragedy. Either you play to lose or you did not play at all. (1999, 4)

Orr goes on to argue that Goldmann's melding of these two notions, the wager and the refusal, comes to possess a general descriptive power not just through the artworks of the modern period but also through the critical discourses which take these works as their object. It is my contention that this understanding can be used to elucidate the themes of autonomy in the work of Bourdieu and Williams, and to emphasise the grounds on which the two projects can be drawn together.

In Bourdieu, this topos of refusal is elaborated as a refusal of the social and the economic world, and as such is explicitly tied in to the inception of "heroic" autonomy as it opposes the bourgeois market. *The Rules of Art* articulates this in its discussion of the moment when pure art became an *instituted position* at the heart of the field of cultural production. Following the initial "heroic" articulation of the potential of an autonomous utterance, by artists such as Beethoven and Flaubert, Bourdieu describes a period of increasing opprobrium in which this drive

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<sup>68</sup> This is a general characterisation designed to find purchase in different arenas such as the driving preoccupation with formal specialisation ("pure" art) or a commitment to individual emancipation.



becomes more fully inscribed within the logics of practice in the field. The topos of refusal becomes less a constitutive part of the dispositions of agents struggling to assert humane values in a radically changing field, but a playing of the game, a manipulation of the play of capital and of the functioning of the field itself. Here the topos of refusal is demonstrated across a range of activity; as a mechanism for formal specialization, as a logic of practice governing a pole of cultural production, and a set of dispositions available for cultivation in the appreciation of “pure” works. *The Rules of Art* makes the refusal an inseparable characteristic of the field’s complex drive to autonomy. In the process, the struggle to articulate this refusal and assert autonomy becomes an icon among commodities, or the “economic world reversed”.

It is in *The Rules of Art* that Bourdieu also begins to articulate the grounds for his mature emancipatory projects – his wager on the future – stepping out of the jealously guarded scientific objectivations imposed by his sense of disciplinary purpose. The positive value of autonomy is recognized, the paradigmatic case seemingly that of Zola’s *J’accuse* (1996, 341-342), and is called upon to oppose the debilitating effects of the globalized market. This position is polemically advanced in the work’s postscript “For a Corporatism of the Universal” (1996, 337-348), which argues that knowledge of the logic of the functioning of the fields of cultural production can be used to organize the realistic and collective actions of producers with access to autonomous means of production. Bourdieu worked to build such national and international networks, and his late writings are increasingly characterized by a strident defence of the principles of autonomy in the face of an increasingly dominant heteronomous market. The particular dangers for culture are laid out in *The Rules of Art* postscript, and are evident in his short essay “Culture is in Danger” (2003, 66-81) and also in the short meditation “Grains of Sand”:

If I say that culture is in danger today, if I say that it is threatened by the rule of money and commerce and by a mercenary spirit that takes many forms – audience ratings, market research, pressures from advertisers, sales figures, the best-seller list – it will be said that I am exaggerating.

[...] If I recall that the possibility of stopping this infernal machine in its tracks lies with all those who, having some power over cultural, artistic, and literary matters, can, each in their own place and their own fashion, and to however small an



extent, throw their grain of sand into the well-oiled machinery of resigned complicities [...] it will be said perhaps [...] that I am being desperately optimistic. (2003, 64-65)

In comparison, the steady presence of Williams's socialism means that emancipatory commitments are explicit throughout the entire body of his work. Briefly, his pursuit of an educated and participatory democracy and a deliberative public sphere as set out in the terms of his "long revolution" (1961, 10) can be noted, as can his related defence of those emergent groups able to articulate an alternative structure of feeling to those of the dominant hegemony (his "resources of hope" (1983, 243-269)). Tracing the status of Goldmann's "tragic refusal" in this work is a more difficult prospect. Paul Jones describes Williams as pursuing the utopian promise of culture as an emancipatory ideology and argues that his critical work is a corresponding emancipatory ideology critique. From this understanding he links Williams's emancipatory commitment, his normative project, and the dominant structure of feeling Williams articulated in *Modern Tragedy*:

He had there [in *Modern Tragedy*] linked that strain of [liberal] tragedy to what he called in *The Long Revolution* 'the deadlocks of modern society'. By 'deadlocks' Williams means, in part, the incomplete bourgeois revolutions. But liberal tragedy refers to more than the masking and emancipatory senses of liberalism as an ideology. [...] Williams's thesis here resembles Goldmann's 'innerworldly refusal' in *The Hidden God*. A key component of 'liberal tragedy' is a 'liberal self' and 'liberal consciousness' that is 'trapped'. Part of this entrapment is a recognition of the falsity of all or some liberal values within 'the existing compromise order'. [...] The tragic hero is no longer ennobled by suffering, nor dies struggling against this falsity, but, crucially for Williams, internalizes the deadlock in the form of unfulfillable aspiration. (2004, 187)

Here, Goldmann's topos of tragic refusal can be traced as it encounters the period of 'modern opprobrium', characterized not in the sense of Bourdieu's objectivated functioning of the field, but as the motor for Williams's identification and description of the dominant modern structure of feeling (this distinction is discussed further below). This structure of feeling is first introduced in *Modern Tragedy* and identified through a critique of the selective tradition of tragic ideas. Williams challenges the received meanings of tragedy, arguing that contemporary tragic theory is incapable of recognizing (and in some cases actively denies) the

tragic dimensions of modernity.<sup>69</sup> In this context he assesses notions of liberalism and Romanticism (1966, 68-73), arguing that their revolutionary potential has been hegemonically reworked by the tragic selective tradition. He considers that the products of these reworkings are to be found in the ideologies of modernization and nihilism (1966, 72-74). For Williams, these latter ideologies come to play a dominant role in the contemporary period leading him to make the following definition of the dominant tragic structure of feeling:

And this is the heart of liberal tragedy, for we have moved from the heroic position of the individual liberator, the aspiring self against society, to a tragic position, or the self against the self. [...] Liberalism, in its heroic phase, begins to pass into its twentieth century breakdown: the self-enclosed, guilty and isolated world; the time of man his own victim. We are still in this world, and it is doubtful if we can clearly name all its pressures. A characteristic ideology has presented it as truth and even as science, until argument against it has come to seem hopeless. A structure of feeling as deep as this enacts a world, as well as interpreting it, so that we learn it from experience as well as ideology. (1966, 100)

Williams discerns a modern “retreat into a pessimistic assessment of future prospects” underpinned by an equally pessimistic conception of modern subjectivity, and considers that this comes to underpin modern cultural formations. Remembering his notions of “degrees of solution” and “relative distance”, this structure of feeling is considered to work across the “general” as well as the “cultural” processes of production, finding purchase across the range of these practices and taking in the functions and effects of the modern market. Williams pitched himself against what he perceived as an increasingly dominant tendency among his contemporaries to conform to the terms of this tragic structure of feeling. The Afterword to *Modern Tragedy*, significantly republished in *The Politics of Modernism: Against the New Conformists* (1989, 95-106), offers a reassessment of a utopian mode which captures this position:

Tragedy can inhere in so many shapes of the historical process: in the failed revolution; in the deep divisions and contradictions of a time of shock and loss; in the deadlock or stalemate of a blocked and apparently static period. But it is in the overlap of the last two of these areas [...] that we now find ourselves. The forms of deadlock and much more commonly of stalemate are now being intensively practiced, in deepening modes of reduction and stasis [...]. It is here

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<sup>69</sup> This includes consideration of classical and mediaeval ideas, Renaissance and neo-classical notions, Hegel and the Hegelian tradition, and Schopenhauer and Nietzsche (focusing especially on *The Birth of Tragedy: Out of the Spirit of Music*) (Williams, 1966, 15-45).

that the loss of a future is most keenly felt. It has been argued that it is time now to move from a tragic to a utopian mode, and there is some strength in this; it is a classical form of invigoration and hopeful protest; it is also, at any time, a necessary mode of one area of social thought. (1989, 104)

This position informs the discussion of utopia in *Towards 2000*.<sup>70</sup> Here Williams offers a more detailed espousal of two modes of utopianism: first, a systematic utopia able “to envisage, in general structure but also in detail, a different and practical way of life”, thereby offering “the belief that human beings can live in radically different ways, by radically different values, in radically different social orders” (1983, 13); second, a heuristic utopia whose value lies in its “imaginative encouragement to feel and to relate differently, or to strengthen and confirm existing feelings and relationships which are not at home in the existing order and cannot be lived through in it” (1983, 13). Williams carefully acknowledges the problematic legacies of these utopian modes, but concludes that “against the disappointments of current politics or a more generalized despair, but also against the incorporated and marketed versions of a libertarian capitalist cornucopia” they are an indispensable value (1983, 13).

It can be argued that Williams processes Goldman’s “tragic refusal” and “wager” as they confront the second half of the twentieth century through the conjunction of his critiques of the traditions of tragedy and utopia. The resulting position finds articulation in the range of his late writing. I am indebted to Paul Jones for aspects of this argument, and his conclusions on this point are salutary:

It is by such means that Williams ‘reinvented’ the normative dimension of his critical sociology in times that bear more than a passing resemblance to the present. [...] By placing the practice of prospective analysis on the cusp of two modal forms [...] analysis informed by the typologies and methods of his sociology of culture becomes a practicable intellectual option. (2004)

In contrast to Bourdieu’s quasi-scientific attempt to theorize a logic of practice, Williams’s identification of the treatment of the refusal and the wager in the late twentieth century is transformed into the normative criteria for an emancipatory critique deployed in the service of

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<sup>70</sup> And also his analyses of utopia in Science Fiction in the essay “Utopia and Science Fiction” in *Problems of Culture and Materialism* (1980, 196-212)



his cultural theory.<sup>71</sup> These projects constitute two approaches to the material discussion of autonomous practice: one from the field of Western Marxism as it encounters British culturalism, and one from the contemporary French intellectual field. To be explicit, I have attempted in this section to rework the argument for combining Williams and Bourdieu, focusing on their readings of modernism. The similarities are apparent: both discuss autonomy as a condition of practice, both use this to examine artistic practice as it confronts the social context of modernity, and both measure the threat to autonomy by the para-national globalized market.

More crucially, the divergences between these two projects move along the lines described more generally above, with the distinction between the objectifiable self and the experiential self holding through to the methodological treatment of the topos of tragic refusal as it enters the latter half of the twentieth century. Bourdieu works to objectify the refusal as one of the key laws of the functioning of the field of cultural production, and as such continues his commitment to an anti-positivist social science. Williams moves to identify the refusal in the dominant structure of feeling and to develop the terms of his normative project, thereby re-emphasising his commitment to Marxist critique and a British empirical tradition which stresses experience over cognition. It is not my intention to denigrate one or other of these often opposed intellectual positions, but to see in their proximity of interests the opportunity for musical discussion. The following chapters make use of the tools of Bourdieu's field theory and Williams's dominant structure of feeling, identifying these as the methodological fault-line on which their interpretations of tragic refusal are made, attempting to extrapolate their understandings of modernist autonomy as a material practice.

### **Consideration of the Avant-Garde in Williams's and Bourdieu's Theory**

The discussion of Arvo Pärt and the record label ECM in the next two chapters make an interesting study in light of the theoretical concerns of this thesis on a number of counts. First, Pärt emerges from an initial engagement with the autonomous pole of the Western musical

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<sup>71</sup> The methodological proximity of this position to Adorno's critical musicology should not be overlooked.



field to occupy a position of some success, both commercially and in terms of consecration in the subfield of restricted production. Crucially, this puts the opposition of autonomy and heteronomy, so central to both Williams and Bourdieu, under stress. Second, a range of productive practice operating over various mediums, including the musical, can be related to this position-taking. Here rhetorical strategies are identifiable, related to certain values of autonomous practice, which aim to legitimate and consecrate this ambiguous position in the field of cultural production. In other words, it is possible to identify a network of material productive practices (between performers, composers, labels, publishers and also commentators and critics) acting with a surprising unity of purpose along the faultline of the topos of tragic refusal.

To begin tying discussions of Pärt and ECM to the arguments in this chapter, it is necessary first to consider that the notions of the refusal and the wager are linked to a particular reading of the *raison d'être* of the avant-garde. In the work of both Williams and Bourdieu these most autonomous groups of the autonomous pole are characterized by the aspiration to an independent and challenging voice. In Bourdieu, particularly, with the “institutionalization of anomie”, the notion of an avant-garde becomes a clearly defined mechanism for change:

[T]he initiative for change can be traced back [...] to new [...] entrants [to the field]. These are the ones who are also the most deprived of specific capital, and who (in a universe where to exist is to be different, meaning to occupy a distinct and distinctive position) only exist in so far as – without needing to want to – they manage to assert their identity (that is, their difference) and get it known and recognized [...] by imposing new modes of thought and expression which break with current modes of thought and hence are destined to disconcert by their ‘obscurity’ and their ‘gratuitousness’. (Bourdieu, 1996, 239-240)

For Bourdieu, the refusal institutes change in the field of cultural production through a process of continuous artistic (or symbolic) revolution: collective action by artists assumed to be autonomous asserts heterodox strategies subversive to the consecrated orthodox practices in the field. Ultimately, it is this status that becomes the valuing base for modernist autonomous practice privileged by Williams and Bourdieu in their theoretical discussions of

culture in the late twentieth century.<sup>72</sup> The emergence of Pärt into a field organized along these lines, and his subsequent move, with the help of legitimating strategies of other agents in the field, to operate more centrally between the heteronomous and autonomous principles, sets the stakes of this period.

I contend that the 1970s and 1980s see a general questioning of this avant-garde logic of change in the field of autonomous musical production, giving rise to a “post-modern” emphasis which privileges fragmentation and discontinuity. This latter must be linked to market incursions into autonomous production, as it is the modernist autonomous avant-garde, operating according to a refusal of the world of the bourgeois market, which guards against this market logic. The dynamism of the following argument is located in the tension between the logics of this older and generative autonomous avant-garde and the development of a period in which this mechanism is in danger. In this sense, the early strategies of Pärt and ECM can be considered oppositional (discussed below). This follows Williams’s notion of “oppositional” artistic formations, which will be explored in more detail in the discussion of ECM as formation, but also Bourdieu’s positioning of the avant-garde as the fraction of the autonomous pole of production which confronts the heteronomy of bourgeois production. I argue that the formation strives to fulfill the role of an avant-garde, most clearly evident in the attempt to supersede the mode of production of the ‘complex’ consecrated musical avant-gardes, drawing on the constellation of values found in modernist ‘autonomy’ *rhetorically* to establish status and inoculate their respective positions against critique. However, in doing so Pärt achieves a general and popular success anathema to autonomous production and ECM establishes the roots of autonomous practice in a globalized market. To be explicit: Pärt emerges from a field organized around the terms described by Bourdieu and Williams, but in a period when changes in the general conditions are posing ever greater threats to these mechanisms. What this research aims to explore are the stakes in the struggle to establish a

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<sup>72</sup> As with discussion of autonomy above this privileging is a much a more explicit part of Bourdieu’s theory than Williams’s. However, as with autonomy, it remains central and active for Williams. Consider, for example, the late elaboration of the place of avant-garde formations in *The Politics of Modernism: against the New Conformists*.

new available position, distinct from the direct opposition of autonomous and heteronomous principles, within the changing terms of the contemporary globalized market.<sup>73</sup>

This challenge to the nature of change in the field of cultural production is a test for the topos of refusal as Bourdieu's objectivations theorise it, but also relates to Williams's dominant structure of feeling. Briefly, the avant-garde is a functioning dissidence to the bourgeois order, and so its dissolution as a functioning mechanism also puts in doubt the possibility of the normative dimension of Williams's oppositional consciousness. Consequently, there is some parallel between the increasing proximity of the fields of art, commerce, and politics which can be extrapolated from Bourdieu, and Williams's hostility to the "new conformists" who attempt to legitimate the tragic conformism identified in his dominant structure of feeling. These stakes become part of the rules of the game (the *illusio* but also the *nomos* explored below). In this study they become stakes in the deployment of the rhetoric and discussion which surround the struggle to legitimize (or denigrate) Pärt's attempt to define a new position.

If the hypothesis is accepted that the mechanisms of modernism identified by Williams and Bourdieu are under threat, the relevance of this body of theoretical work more generally should not be dismissed. The broad approaches to cultural production of Williams and Bourdieu hold true, and the legacy of autonomous mechanisms still permeate the current organization of practice. There may have been a complex move to a different pattern, a transmutation of the dominant structure of feeling, but any attempt to understand this without also understanding the forerunning and at least partly generative organization seems needlessly to make practice vulnerable to a debilitating misrecognition of the functioning of the field.<sup>74</sup> In this sense my position is in accord with the historicist programmes of Bourdieu and Williams. Further, I am convinced that the greatest challenge, the greatest characterising moment, of our present contemporary situation is the presence of market considerations at many levels of

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<sup>73</sup> Without the detail of the subsequent arguments the oppositions highlighted here are in danger of seeming overly structuralist: all oppositions are intended to be *provisional*. The structures described are not intended to be "real" and in the analysis they are often shown to be *rhetorical*.

<sup>74</sup> "Misrecognition" here is used in the sense of Bourdieu's *méconnaissance*.



cultural production. In this sense it is still possible to speak of the *attenuation* of the patterns identified in Williams and Bourdieu: the dominant structure of feeling of tragic utopianism and the opposition of autonomy and heteronomy. A discussion of the practices of Arvo Pärt and ECM offers the opportunity to examine an example of the increasing complementarity (complicity) between the fields of art and commercialism and the ambiguities which it engenders. The central thrust of my argument is to try and uncover the terms by which Pärt and ECM manage rhetorically to adopt the values and status of autonomous production *as ideology*, while also managing to secure a field position in which the conditions of autonomy are derived from a strong market position.

### **The Importance of Source Material**

The main tasks of the following research has been the reconstruction of the structure of feeling working through the object of analysis and establishing the structure of the musical field of production within a defined historical period. This latter job requires the reconstruction of the configuration of capital and its value within the contemporaneous logic of the field.<sup>75</sup> The most valuable resources for this research are contemporary examples of field structures from those active within them. Such resources should be drawn from across the available range of objectivated culture including musical scores, recorded music, reviews, critical essays, magazine articles, letters, film, television, adverts, and so on. Such documents are also methodologically essential as a survey of the “documentary culture” used in the elaboration of a structure of feeling (discussed below).

These documents are produced by the field and contain the structural characteristics inherent to it. They can be used to discover elements of the field structure including the configuration of its capital, its relationships, and its logic. This data is not read as offering an objective account (which it never could); what it provides is a commentary on the contemporary practices of the field, necessarily making some form of judgement. What is absolutely of value here is the record of a particular *habitus* engaged in a particular organization

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<sup>75</sup> This is a research task of a distinctly different kind to the empirical research of the Bourdieu of *Distinction*. For a brief overview of his method of field reconstruction see *The Rules of Art* (214-215).



of the field. Each document potentially provides an example of a position-taking determined by the perceived field structures (and their bases of value), in the process constructing the space of other possible positions. While the focus necessarily takes an international scope, as international composers and critics occupy essential positions in the field, the research has (where possible) adopted a UK perspective through its selection of sources.

## 2.5 CHAPTER 5 – Towards an Understanding of an Emergent Position-Taking

### Introduction: *Tabula rasa* – Towards a Musical Rhetoric

#### Overview

This chapter describes the emergence of Arvo Pärt into the Western field of musical production in the late 1970s, the organization of this field, and the stakes and strategies of Pärt's position-taking during the 1980s. The compositional strategies of tintinnabulation are considered to be central to the terms of this position-taking, both enabled and determined by the avant-garde area of the field of musical production, but also an attempt to reject and move beyond the logics of practice defined there. This tension is important throughout the following arguments, characterising the attempt to establish a position in the field which draws extensively on the legacies of the refusal and the wager theorized by Williams and Bourdieu, but which also moves away from some of the terms of practice so defined.<sup>76</sup>

The chapter is organized into three sections. Section I outlines the methodological place of the theoretical tools of Bourdieu's field and Williams's structure of feeling, indicating the place that each occupies in the presentation of this research. It discusses tintinnabulation in general terms, establishing the grounds on which this approach to composition can be considered to have a rhetorical character. Finally, this approach to composition is situated within the broader contemporary musical field, identifying three major areas for consideration: the Soviet field from which it emerges, a perceived opposition between avant-garde and experimental approaches to composition, and the importance of the changing position of early music in the field. Some briefer reflections are also offered on the relationship to a rear-garde and the place of technology in this period.

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<sup>76</sup> This 'attempt' takes in a broad range of practice, much of which will not be consciously directed. The sense of a "position-taking" is discussed more fully on 137.

With the general terms of tintinnabulation and the organization of the field established, section 2 moves to consider their *rhetorical* character and the terms of a range of rhetorics accompanying this musical position-taking. This discussion aims to establish relationships between these rhetorics and the treatments of the refusal and the wager. The changing organization of the wider field is noted and identified as the condition of possibility which enabled Pärt's attempt to stake out a position in the field of production. These complementary rhetorics become the stakes in the legitimation and consecration of this new position-taking. Section 3 discusses the processes of legitimation and consecration in a field of cultural production organized by Bourdieu's *illusio* and *nomos*. The central notion of the *illusio* is defined and its contemporary character identified. The rhetorics of tintinnabulation are considered in connection with this contemporary *illusio*, arguing that the struggle of the new musical position-taking can be understood as a struggle over the legitimate contemporary definitions of practice.

Having used Bourdieu to establish the structure of the space in which the struggles for legitimation take place, along with the terms of the objective treatment of the topos of refusal and its implications for practice, this section also considers Williams's dominant structure of feeling in relation to the new position-taking. The presence of tragic conformism and utopian prospect are identified in the rhetorics around Pärt. The discussion also notes the problems of establishing the terms of a structure of feeling independently of any consideration of artistic organization in terms of formations and institutions: this leads to the discussion of ECM in chapter 6. It is in the tension between the generative avant-garde and the emergent position-taking that grounds will be found in the next chapter for a correlation between the practices of Pärt, the various legitimizing rhetorics, and the practices of ECM. The symmetry of these practices will form the substance of the conclusions which describe the release of *Tabula rasa* on the ECM New Series as constituting a remarkably coherent coalescing of the field of production. This resulting position is characterized as operating ambiguously between autonomous and heteronomous principles of production. Ultimately, the conditions of

autonomy, and the rhetorical espousal of autonomous values, are provided by a market position.

### **The Place of *Tabula rasa***

Arvo Pärt's *Tabula rasa* ("clean slate") makes a compelling subject because it is one of the most extensive of the early tintinnabuli compositions, and as such is centrally present in Pärt's position-taking in the early 1980s. Scored for two solo violins, string orchestra, and prepared piano, it was commissioned by and dedicated to the violinist Gidon Kremer. It was completed and first performed in 1977 in Bonn as a live recording for West German Radio, with soloists Gidon Kremer, Tatjana Grindenko, and Alfred Schnittke. It was this broadcast that caught the attention of the ECM producer Manfred Eicher and provoked the long collaboration between Arvo Pärt and ECM. Significantly, the now extensive subdivision of the label, ECM New Series, was initially developed as a platform for the release of *Tabula rasa* (Lake and Griffiths, 2007, 3). Released in 1984 as ECM New Series 1275 *Tabula rasa*, this recording presents the live radio performance of *Tabula rasa* alongside studio versions of *Cantus in memory of benjamin britten*, and two versions of *Fratres* (for violin and piano, and for twelve cellos).

The musical processes which power the early tintinnabuli compositions, including *Tabula rasa*, will be discussed in detail below. In summary, *Tabula rasa*, explores two related musical principles variously examined over the course of its two movements. The core procedures are the expansion in one voice, through cyclical repetition, from a single central pitch to the stepwise incorporation of the notes of the diatonic scale, with an accompanying and closely related unfolding triadic figuration.<sup>77</sup> This is strictly related to various other voices, which are in turn derived from the same structural principles. Silence is included as an integral part of the procedure. The first movement, *Ludus*, opens with the two solo violins playing fortissimo A's four octaves apart, followed by a bar of silence marked with a general pause. The movement unfolds from this point through cyclically expanding passages punctuated by diminishing periods

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<sup>77</sup> See Ex. 1 *Für Alina* for a simple example of the relation of these two voices. The tintinnabuli procedures are discussed in more detail below.



of silence. These cycles strictly follow the logic of the generative principle, building through to a cadenza in which the silence is completely expunged. The second movement, *Silentium*, is again cyclical, with each pair of articulations expanding according to a strict musical principle. There is no procedural use of periods of silence in this movement, as there is in *Ludus*, but *Silentium's* last action is a descending melody line in the double basses which leads to a hovering bottom E in bar 164; the fact of its never reaching the D indicates a resolution in silence.

In the arguments below, the procedural rigour with which *Tabula rasa* is structured – indeed, it is surprising on close examination the extent to which Pärt's generative formula is present throughout all aspects of his score – is considered as one of the rhetorical aspects of tintinnabulation. It is this musical rhetoric which becomes paralleled by a surprising array of non-musical rhetorics. For example, the reception of *Tabula rasa* in the early 1980s is most clearly concerned not with a detailed response to the procedural coherence of the music but with an exploration of the implications of its sensual impact. Wolfgang Sandner describes his sense of surprise when first hearing *Tabula rasa*:

What kind of music is this? Whoever wrote it must have left himself behind at one point to dig the piano notes out of the earth and gather the artificial harmonics of the violins from heaven. The tonality of this music has no mechanical purpose. It is there to transport us towards something that has never been heard before. (Pärt, 1984)

Here the “tonality” of Pärt is acknowledged, but is discussed overtly in terms of its impact. Paul Rapoport also implicitly notes the use of a form of tonality in his review of the ECM New Series disc for *Fanfare Magazine*, giving it a certain status:

In a sense this whole piece is music more remembered than created, but paradoxically this makes it not an empty pastiche but powerfully original art. This music is a sorrowful but intense search [...]. (181-182)

John Wiser's review of this same release makes some general observations on the structural characteristics of these tintinnabuli compositions, before moving to note their impact on the audience:

Repetition and variation are used in long-term structures of some emotional significance. [...] The effect on the listeners was apparently quite perceptible; a sequence of puzzlement, restlessness, and final hypnotic absorption. [...] He [Pärt] brings to music some values estranged from it for centuries. (182-183)

Susan Bradshaw is perhaps the earliest commentator to remark on the divergence between the impact of Pärt's work and the rigour of its underlying structure:

Tabula Rasa [...] is a chameleon-like work, which so closely mirrors the style of the Italian Baroque string composers that on casual hearing it seems more closely related to pastiche than to original composition. But a study of the score soon reveals that the composer is in fact subjecting each minutely different variant of his borrowed style to the most careful personal scrutiny, and that there is a lot more eventfulness of a coolly undemonstrative kind than at first meets the ear that is unprepared for so dispassionate an experience. (1983, 26)<sup>78</sup>

I will argue that Pärt's position-taking is made in relation to a number of areas of the contemporary organization of the field of musical production simultaneously, allowing connections to be made in a number of different directions. Further, it is the development of complementary rhetorics on a number of levels which allows the establishment of not just Pärt's position in the field but *the establishment of a new field position* and the grounds on which issues of legitimation can be fought through. These complementary rhetorics can be characterized in summary as: the development of a musical process or language emergent from the space of possibles; the articulation of the sensual impact of this position; and a concomitant range of strategies seek to identify values of a general contemporary relevance.<sup>79</sup> This chapter explores the nature and function of these rhetorics.

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<sup>78</sup> There are clear problems with Bradshaw's position here. The assumption of a particular form of musical engagement engendered by the presence of a rigorous structure (seemingly along the lines of "structural listening") appears to ignore the work of (for example) the 'minimalist' composers. Consideration of Steve Reich's reflections (particularly in "Music as a Gradual Process") would reveal a much more complex set of field relations (2002, 34-36). However, the job of these extracts should be reiterated; the importance is always the articulation of a perception of the structure of the field, rather than the veracity of the argument expressed. This is approached at the end of the previous chapter and is also raised in the discussion of the field below.

<sup>79</sup>The development of a musical process or language from the space of possibles has particular relationships with the organization of the musical avant-garde (discussed below). The articulation of the sensual impact of the position is related to the field developments of early music (also discussed below).



## 2.5.1 Section I – Tintinnabulation and the Field of Musical Production

### Preliminaries – The Field and the Structure of Feeling

The arguments below are methodologically drawn from my reading of the theory of Williams and Bourdieu, and are aimed at elucidating the ways in which they treat the topos of refusal and the wager in their theoretical considerations of modernism. The preceding chapter argued that Bourdieu moved to *objectify* these themes as logics of practice while Williams sought to establish the terms of an emancipatory critique, drawing on his notion of the structure of feeling to emphasise the importance of lived *experience*. The key concepts here, which also organize the discussions of sources in this chapter, are Bourdieu's field theory and Williams's structure of feeling. The following two sections outline the basic terms of these two methodologies, laying the groundwork to discuss the situation of the music of Arvo Pärt.

#### The Field

The notion of a field is a theoretical concept designed to facilitate an understanding of the processes at work in the construction of cultural objects. Bourdieu's theoretical model is an attempt to work around the disputation of "external explanation" or "internal interpretation", which he considers to be a block to attempts to develop a "science of cultural works". He emphasises the generative importance of the social fields in which such objects are produced:

[T]he opposition between a formalism born of a high degree of autonomy, and a reductionism bent on bringing artistic forms directly back to social formations, had obscured the fact that what the two currents had in common was a lack of recognition of the field of cultural production as a space of objective relations. (1996, 181)<sup>80</sup>

In *The Rules of Art* the field, along with its relationship with the *habitus*, becomes the key methodological principle for understanding works of art. Fields both constitute and are constituted by (structuring and structured) the networks of objective relations (domination, subordination, and so on) between available positions in the field. Every position within the

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<sup>80</sup> See also "Questions of Method" in *The Rules of Art* for the detail of Bourdieu's arguments on these points (1996, 177-213).



field of production is defined by its relationships with other positions, and all positions are reliant on their current situation (and their potential *trajectory* within the field). All positions are reliant on the structured distribution of the relevant forms of capital which allow the cultivation of the potential profits available in the field (in this case, musical prestige and capital). Particular field positions determine homologous position-takings such as: compositional practices (for example, Pärt's tintinnabulation); approaches to musical works (such as those of the Hilliard Ensemble, a specialist musical group with particular approaches to performance); criticisms; discourses; manifestos, and so on. It is the homology between positions and position-takings which leads Bourdieu to question the received opposition between internal and external attempts to examine objectivated cultural products:

The [...] field is a force-field acting on all those who enter it, and acting in a differential manner according to the position they occupy there [...], and at the same time it is a field of competitive struggles which tend to conserve or transform this force-field. And the position-takings [...] which one may and should treat for analytical purposes as a 'system' of oppositions, are not the result of some kind of objective collusion, but rather the product and the stake of a permanent conflict. In other words, the generative and unifying principle of this 'system' is the struggle itself. (1996, 232)

The relationships between position-takings (which *define* the available positions) are established via the mediation of "two systems of differences": between "the universe of position-takings" and the "space of possible actions" (1996, 234). This space of possibles is the potential found in the structured space between position-takings from which solutions to artistic problems can be drawn: "the space of position-takings actually realized, as it appears when it is perceived through the categories of a certain *habitus* [...] an oriented space, pregnant with position-takings identifiable as objective potentialities, things 'to be done'" (1996, 235). This is suggestive of Pärt's attempts to resolve his creative crisis of the 1970s; the tintinnabulation procedures emerge from this crisis, and are determined, I will argue, by the available practices dictated by the contemporaneous organization of the musical field.

For any attempt at artistic innovation to be conceived it must be present "in a potential state at the heart of the system of already realized possibles" (1996, 235). It must also have the

potential to be understood by a wider group (which may only be a select group of agents occupying positions which could also have conceived of the move). While this brief explication risks reduction, these are the stakes in the field of cultural production to be considered when looking at musical innovation: the structure of the field as the site of a structured and structuring struggle between positions and position-takings, the complicity between the dispositions of specific *habitus*es and positions in this field, and the homology between a specific field position and the range of available actions theorized by the space of possibles.

The field can therefore be summarized as the structured social space of struggle between positions. These positions are occupied by agents who have attained them because of the qualities of their dispositions, derived from their *habitus*, which is in turn derived from their past positioned experience in the field (education, upbringing, and so on). The range of potential and possible actions is determined by the relationships between these positions. Bourdieu attempts to deploy the principle of reflexivity to retrospectively ‘objectify’ both the position of the researcher and the orientated positions within this social space.<sup>81</sup> It is these understandings which make the constitution of the field of cultural production and the subsequent organization of the space of possibles a crucial factor in the analysis of cultural production of any period. I have shaped my arguments below on this understanding; the principles of tintinnabulation are discussed alongside my reading of the contemporaneous musical forces deployed in the field, which are understood as the determining pressures and limits acting on Pärt’s development.

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<sup>81</sup> Using the field as a methodological tool capable of objectively placing an agent within its logic is a central and recurrent concern throughout much of Bourdieu’s work on cultural production. I have made extensive use here of the chapter ‘To Objectify the Subject of Objectification’ (1996, 206-209) which is perhaps Bourdieu’s most explicit discussion of the methodological implications of this issue. However, it appears in various different guises throughout *The Rules of Art* (for example, the tool is deployed in a rejection of Sartre’s notions of an ‘original project’ and the possibility of ‘autodetermination’ in authorial intention, 187-191). Elsewhere Bourdieu links his notion of an objectified ‘space of possibles’ to Foucault’s ‘field of strategic possibilities’; the latter is ultimately rejected because of Foucault’s refusal to relate position-takings and their homologous strategies to the social conditions of cultural production (1993, 29-37). This same shortcoming accounts for Bourdieu’s dismissal of such intertextualities (defined as “a network of relationships between texts”) which seek the principles of the literary field solely in the literary system itself (1993, 33).

The field is designed, and much extended in *The Field of Cultural Production* and *The Rules of Art* over any other formulation in his work, to offer “the real possibility of taking a point of view on the ensemble of viewpoints which come into being through it” (1996, 207). This approach leads Bourdieu to the emphasis on the science of the study of cultural works:

This labour of objectification, when it applies [...] to the very field in which the subject of the objectification is situated, allows us to achieve a scientific point of view on the empirical viewpoint of the scholar – which, being thus objectivized in the same way as other points of view, with all its determinations and limits, finds itself opened up to methodological criticism. It is by giving oneself the scientific means to take one’s own naïve viewpoint as object that the scientific subject truly effects the break with the empirical subject, and simultaneously with other agents who [...] remain enclosed within a point of view of which they are unaware. (1996, 207)

Bourdieu clarifies his emphasis on reflexivity by noting that it is not a move designed to “renounce objectivity” but rather an effort to question the privileging assumption of a “knowing subject”. He attempts to place the empirical subject in a “determined place in social space-time” and thereby “give oneself awareness and [...] mastery of the constraints which may be exercised on the scientific subject via all the ties which attach it to the empirical ‘subject’, to its interests, motives, assumptions, beliefs, its *doxa*, and which it must break in order to constitute itself” (1996, 207). It is via this formulation that Bourdieu advances a defence of the scientific principle of objectivity and also an elaboration of the topos of refusal as the dominant logic of practice in the fields of cultural production.

Bourdieu’s goal of reworking the values of objectification – also an attempt to preserve it – functions through its attempt to reconstruct *the whole space of available viewpoints*, with the researcher reflexively positioned within the same space. This reinforces my use of newspaper articles and journal reviews to develop an understanding of the musical field in the late 1970s early 1980s, indicating the distribution and configuration of the various forms of capital within the practical logic of the field of production. What the range of this documentary evidence offers, methodologically, is sources in which the structures of the field, the various distributions of capital, the available and occupied positions, and the relative value of position-takings are perceived through the *habitus* of an agent engaged in their logic. These documents



are contemporary accounts of the field and it is the subjectivity of the author, their *habitus*, which becomes useful.<sup>82</sup>

For example, if an academic writes a journal article observing the rise of a middle-aged Estonian composer with a new and popular approach to composition, perhaps bemoaning the falling standards and conservatism of new music, it matters less in this context that the terms of the argument are acceptable than that the piece reveals both a consecrated position under threat from a new position-taking and something of the character of both positions. If numerous such documents are used, then it is possible to build up a map of the “objective” relationships that make up the field. The critic’s own position, and the position-taking of their criticism, can then be understood in relation to this structure; put crudely, if the critic occupies a position which has some structural homology with the consecrated musical position, they are more likely to produce criticism which supports it, and vice versa. My own engagement with this material within the terms of this research project should also be recognized; constituted as an active subjectivity (*habitus*) occupying the position of a graduate student – at a particular arts college which can in turn be positioned within the field of UK higher education – interested in particular areas of the academic and musical fields in a particular temporal period, acting as an organizing and selective mechanism on a body of research documents.

### **The Structure of Feeling**

While the structure of feeling is perhaps the most famous intellectual legacy left by Williams, it is also a problematic concept. Williams himself concedes this, under close questioning from the editors of *New Left Review* in *Politics & Letters*, although he never renounces the term.<sup>83</sup> The structure of feeling is a hypothesis derived from Williams’s

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<sup>82</sup> This approach to the field allows us to take seriously the notion that the activity of different practices (criticism, composition, performance, recording, etc) contribute to the accrual of meaning of a work whereby the field constitutes meaning by its structures as a universe of belief. This will be discussed in more detail on 198.

<sup>83</sup> The term is interrogated in the discussion of *The Long Revolution* (1979, 156-174), with the interviewers particularly questioning how it is possible to talk of a structure of feeling of a period constituted by more than one generation. Williams clarifies that he means to indicate the structure of



attempts to understand constitutive elements of a culture, and their connections in a particular period, which must always be returned to their documentary evidence. It is present from a very early stage in Williams's work but receives its most detailed exposition in *The Long Revolution*:

The 'pattern of culture' is a selection and configuration of interests and activities, and a particular valuation of them, producing a distinct organization, a 'way of life'. [...] we can gain the sense of a further common element, which is neither the character nor the pattern, but as it were the actual experience through which these were lived. [...] Though it can be turned to trivial account, the fact of such a characteristic is neither trivial nor marginal; it feels quite central. The term I would suggest to describe it is structure of feeling: it is firm and definite as 'structure' suggests, yet it operates in the most delicate and least tangible parts of our activity. In one sense, this structure of feeling is the culture of a period: it is the particular living result of all the elements in the general organization. (1961, 64)

While this is a clear identification of the target of the structure of feeling, it is often less obvious how Williams conceived of the analytical deployment of such a structure, or how it fits with the rest of his thought. I shall begin exploring these points by detailing the relationships between Williams's notions of culture. *The Long Revolution* provides the clearest methodological discussion on this subject, introducing three "levels" of culture (1961, 66).<sup>84</sup> This exposition first describes the notion of a "lived culture" of a specific place and period which is only fully accessible to those who live through it. Second, Williams describes a notion of "recorded culture" (also called "documentary culture") of all types "from art to the most everyday facts" which gives the "culture of a period" (1961, 66-67). Third, introduced as a concept which unites the notion of a lived culture and the culture of a period, there is the

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feeling which is "most available for analysis", or the structure of feeling of the group(s) "doing the new cultural work" (1979, 157). The interviewers then ask how it is possible to talk of a structure of feeling when there is a plurality of classes. Williams acknowledges this to be a problem, then argues that he never disallows the existence of alternative structures of feeling, and that he would now want to "use the term differentially between classes", further acknowledging that such diversity is historically variable (1979, 158). The range of the term is also questioned, with the movement from a text, to a structure of feeling, to a history, considered to be indefensible. Williams responds by delimiting the notion of social experience from an articulated structure of feeling. Finally here, the extent to which the concept reinforces Williams's epistemological privileging of lived experience in his work is raised. Williams is evasive in his response, but argues that there is a need to give a name to a sphere of material activity not accounted for during the "phase of rabid idealism" experienced in the 1960s and 1970s (1979, 167).<sup>84</sup> This is presented in "The Analysis of Culture" (1961, 57-89). This discussion is a good deal before the late definition of "culture" advocated in *Culture*, but elements of these formulations clearly shape his mature position.

notion of “the culture of the selective tradition” (1961, 66-70). Williams stresses that it is documentary culture which provides the best point of access to structures of feeling: “what we are looking for, always, is the actual life that the whole organization is there to express. The significance of documentary culture is that, more clearly than anything else, it expresses that life to us in direct terms, when the living witnesses are silent” (1961, 65). This level of culture becomes privileged through the following logic:

One can say with confidence [...] that nobody really knows the nineteenth-century novel; nobody has read [...] all its examples [...]. Equally [...] no nineteenth-century reader would have read all the novels [...]. But everyone living in the period would have had something which [...] no later individual can wholly recover: that sense of the life within which the novels were written, and which we now approach through our selection. Theoretically, a period is recorded; in practice, this record is absorbed into a selective tradition; and both are different from the culture as lived. (1961, 66-7)

These three levels of culture are designed to account for and circumnavigate the *inevitable* hegemonies of the selective tradition. The level of lived experience is presented not as a valorization of a lost organic community but as a base level: documentary culture indicates the residue of this lived experience from which the selective tradition, in turn, is constructed. Williams argued that the best way of attempting to determine the structure of feeling of a particular period is not through the products of the selective tradition but through a study of the breadth of its documentary culture. Importantly, he considered that *all* possible forms of objectivated culture should be considered in such a study.<sup>85</sup> Documentary culture is deployed in the attempt to establish something of the expressed social character of the period, but also the “omissions and consequences” and the subsequent tensions and contradictions in a society (1961, 80). Williams uses the term structure of feeling almost interchangeably with the notion of the “lived culture” of a period, which is most accessible (although never completely so) through its “documentary culture”. The structure of feeling came to occupy a central place in Williams’s early cultural analysis:

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<sup>85</sup> Williams develops a democratized approach to culture *not* through a reversing of the privilege of ‘high’ and ‘low’ cultures but by admitting *all* types of document to analysis on an equal status. Crucially this is different to Adorno’s criteria for an emancipatory ideology critique: because Adorno conceives of a correlation between structural coherence and the goals of his emancipatory critique he would necessarily dismiss those examples of work which he considered to be poorly conceived.

Art reflects its society and works a social character through to its reality in experience. But art also creates, by new perceptions and responses, elements which the society, as such, is not able to realize. If we compare art with its society, we find a series of real relationships showing its deep and central connexions with the rest of the general life. [...] We find [...] in certain characteristic forms and devices, evidence of the deadlocks and unsolved problems of the society: often admitted to the consciousness for the first time in this way. (1961, 86)<sup>86</sup>

It is this approach which is carried through to *Modern Tragedy*, where a dominant structure of feeling is identified as precisely such a series of contemporary 'deadlocks' and their implications in terms of the limits placed on social action by a lack of the social recognition of possible alternatives. Here Williams is reconstructing a structure of feeling in which the deadlocks of liberal tragedy are (as Paul Jones argues) presented as the "characterization of this entrapment within a form of public *inaction* that indeed 'enacts a world'. Its pervasiveness so operates hegemonically and its socio-cultural reproduction require formations that practise such withdrawal from, at least, Bloomsbury-like consciousness" (Jones, 2004, 189). The significance of the Bloomsbury dissidence is that it constituted for Williams an articulation of the potential positive limits of bourgeois dissident consciousness, offering an alternative to the tragic liberal self, "a conscience that facilitated public engagement, so redeeming part of the liberal promise".<sup>87</sup>

In discussing the topos of tragic refusal in the contemporary period, Williams describes the development of a tragic and broken liberalism in the face of the collapse of the potential of bourgeois dissidence. He identifies an increasingly dominant pattern of experience characterized by "liberal inaction", or "tragic conformism", which is evident in cultural forms, ideologies, commentaries, criticisms, and so on. Further, Williams saw in the work of certain intellectuals (such as Marshall McLuhan) a form of intellectual conformism which worked along

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<sup>86</sup> Williams's work resists easy periodization: this is indeed an 'early' approach to analysis, and it shows in the formulation of some of the arguments derived more clearly from his Leavisite training than his later rapprochement with Marxism. However, the concerns of this body of work clearly carry through to his 'late' project, evidenced by the republication of the entire chapter 'Britain in the 1960s' (from *The Long Revolution*) in *Towards 2000*, and the republication of the Afterword to *Modern Tragedy* in *The Politics of Modernism: Against the New Conformists*.

<sup>87</sup> The "Bloomsbury fraction" is discussed by Williams in his formational analyses, particularly in *Culture* (1981, 79-81), and more extensively in *Problems in Materialism and Culture* (1980, 148-170).



the same lines: the attempt to justify and legitimate the worldview of just such a broken liberalism.<sup>88</sup> Williams did recognize the possibility of challenging this tragic subjectivity, particularly championing the potential of certain new social movements (dubbed the “resources of hope”, 1983, 243-269) such as the civil rights movements and some manifestations of feminism, and he developed a revived conception of utopianism in order to maintain the potential for his normative educated and participatory democracy. These two modal characteristics – tragic conformism and utopian prospect – become central to Williams’s dominant structure of feeling. It is on these points that I subsequently draw out the proximity between the range of practice around Pärt and the terms of the contemporary structure of feeling.

In terms of this research project, the range of sources gathered in order to reconstruct the field positions also acts as a survey of documentary culture described in this section. In the few explicit examples offered of the reconstruction of a structure of feeling, Williams argues that this range of documentary culture must be located within economic and technical changes in cultural institutions of the period, and that these in turn must be located in the general organization.<sup>89</sup> The structure of feeling is then deployed as the attempt to establish links across this range of analysis. I have considered that the characterisation of the challenges made to autonomous practice (discussed in chapter 4) act at this most general level of analysis, and have attempted to offer some understanding of the organization of a contemporary cultural institution in the study of ECM in the next chapter.

I consider there to be some proximity between Bourdieu’s and Williams’s treatment of the documentary evidence produced by a particular culture at a particular time, with the proviso that each theorist advances an emphasis on either objectification or experience. I have perhaps placed greater emphasis on Bourdieu’s methodology in the discussions of the

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<sup>88</sup> These senses of conformism inform the subtitle of the posthumous *The Politics of Modernism: Against the New Conformists*. If Williams had lived a further decade, then it would almost certainly have been on these grounds that he would have engaged with some of the theories of post-modernism.

<sup>89</sup> The most extensive example in its general reach is the *prospective* analysis of “Britain in the 1960s” (1961, 319-385), although the reconstruction of the structure of feeling of the 1840s in England is more detailed in terms of its treatment of documentary culture (1961, 70-73).



rhetorical character of Pärt and tintinnabulation, and exercised a greater elucidation of the terms of Williams's critical sociology in the discussion of the ECM institution/formation in the following chapter. I note the relationships between these two bodies of theoretical work wherever possible, and the ways in which they have shaped my research on Arvo Pärt and ECM, using their treatments of the themes of the refusal and the wager as the major points where these relations become visible. The conclusion, 'ECM's *Tabula rasa*: Toward an Autonomous Market Position?' will reflect more fully on this combination of theoretical schemes.

### **Tintinnabulation – Moves within the Triad**

This discussion introduces the substance of the musical components of the tintinnabulation. Section 2 of this chapter considers in more depth why this compositional approach should be considered 'rhetorical' rather than simply the development of an individual musical language. To signpost this argument: tintinnabulation is an approach to musical materials which positions itself within the contemporary field of musical production and tries to articulate something which has been lacking in the music of the Western avant-garde in the mid to late twentieth century. It constitutes an approach to composition which explicitly recognizes the make-up of the field of production and deliberately attempts to establish a new field position.

Much has been made of Pärt's self-imposed 'period of silence' following the composition of Symphony No. 3 (1971), broken in 1976 by the emergence of *Für Alina*.<sup>90</sup> This small work for solo piano articulates the stylistic evolution Pärt developed in his period of withdrawal: "[Für

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<sup>90</sup> The examples of this are numerous. Many discussions of Pärt's music make the biographical moment of this period of silence an organizing principle, a dividing line. On one side lies the Soviet avant-garde serialist material, discarded and outdated, and on the other the new style of tintinnabulation. The sleeve notes to ECM's *Tabula rasa* (1984) present this story in Pärt's own words, but it can be found earlier in Bradshaw's "introductory report", *Arvo Paart*. Thereafter it enters the bloodstream of the commentary on Pärt, and becomes a stake in the field to which later agents respond. For example, Peter Quinn formulates arguments which reject this narrative split, and goes on to trace the continuities between the old avant-garde material and the tintinnabulation compositions (2000).

Alina] was the first piece that was on a new plateau. It was here that I discovered the triad series, which I made my simple, little guiding rule” (Pärt, 1984).<sup>91</sup>

1976 saw an efflorescence of small pieces which explore the possibilities of this “guiding rule”: *Für Alina*, *Modus* (later revised in 1983 and renamed *Sarah was Ninety Years Old*, and revised again in 1990 for the 1991 ECM New Series recording which appears on the *Miserere* disc), *Trivium*, *Pari Intervallo*, *An den Wassern zu Babel sassen wir und weinten*, and *Wenn Bach Bienen gezüchtet hätte*. Pärt’s exploration of the possibilities of tintinnabulation continued into 1977 with another prolific haul: *Arbos*, *Cantate Domino*, *Fratres*, *Missa Sillabica*, *Cantus in memoriam benjamin britten*, *Summa*, and *Tabula rasa*. 1978 saw the production of *Spiegel im Spiegel*. These works, produced over a relatively short period, constitute the body of instrumental works still significant to Pärt’s subsequent popularity.

This output can be understood as the testing and expressing of the emergent compositional principles which Pärt had researched and developed from 1974 to 1976. *Tabula rasa* is arguably the most extensive and rigorous exploration of these principles in instrumental form, and as such is an appropriate object of study in relation to this period of Pärt’s output and also to the wider organization of the field and its changing *illusio* and *nomos* (discussed on 192 and 198). I will argue, using Bourdieu’s terms, that these principles emerge from the contemporary organization of the field of possibles, come to constitute a central stake in the eventual position-taking in the field of musical production, and become vital to the various legitimative rhetorics and debates which proliferate through the 1980s and beyond. These issues will be tackled below, but some effort should first be made to consider the tintinnabuli approach to composition itself.

Paul Hillier suggests terminology to discuss the musical procedures of Pärt’s music. Central here is the relationship between two voices: the “M-voice”, the “modal” or “melody” voice, usually moves stepwise along the diatonic scale, and the “T-voice”, the “tintinnabuli” voice, articulates a triadic figuration (1997, 86-97). The M-voice is variable among these tintinnabuli

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<sup>91</sup> From the CD inlay for ECM’s *Tabula rasa*.

compositions. Hillier argues that it can range from the most basic scalar pattern moving by step to “varieties of reiterated pitches or variations on the scale pattern with small interval leaps and melodic turns” (1997, 95). In general, he notes four patterns of M-voice, all comprising ascending or descending scales moving to or from a central pitch. This central pitch is often the tonic of the tintinnabulation triad, but it may also be one of the other pitches of this triad, or (more rarely) a pitch distant from this triad altogether. The T-voice is derived from triadic pitches and can be placed in one of two positions in relation to the M-voice: fixed above or below, or alternating above and below. It can operate at either “first position”, which designates the triadic pitch nearest to the M-voice, or “second position” which indicates the triadic pitch next but one in the triad. Hillier points out that these practices of constructing T and M-voices, which together constitute the notion of tintinnabuli composition, should not be considered rules but “guiding principles from which ‘rules’ can be deduced from piece to piece” (1997, 93). In order to present *Tabula rasa* as the outcome of Pärt’s early exploration of these tintinnabuli ideas I will briefly discuss *Für Alina*, *Spiegel im Spiegel*, and *Cantus*.

Ex. 1 (all musical examples are located at the end of the thesis) shows the first seven bars of *Für Alina*. Here, following the sustained low octave Bs, the left hand articulates the tintinnabuli voice drawn from the pitches of the B minor triad and the right hand iterates a melody voice. The T-voice operates what Hillier describes as a “first position, inferior” relationship with the M-voice, articulating the pitch of the B minor triad closest (first position), but below (inferior), to the M-voice (1997, 93-94).<sup>92</sup> The M-voice is atypical of the compositions to follow, as it is not strictly determined by the developed tintinnabuli procedure; while the additive nature of the length of the phrases and the generally stepwise movement of the voice is evident, there is no strict pattern or procedural relationship with the tonal centre.

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<sup>92</sup> The ‘second’ or ‘third’ positions in the T-voice refer to the middle or most distant pitch of the triad, ‘superior’ indicates a T-voice operating above the M-voice, and ‘alternating’ one which switches between superior and inferior positions. This gives the range of options available to Pärt in the design of the T-voice.



Such a rigorously determined M-voice is found in *Spiegel im Spiegel* (1978). Ex. 2 shows the opening few bars of this piece, in which the governing procedure for the structure is established. Here the M-voice is additive (as in *Für Alina*) and organized in pairs: either ascending or descending to the M-voice pitch-centre (A) or rising or falling from it. The first cycle of the M-voice is shown in bars 4 to 11 in which the violin rises from G to A and then falls from B flat to A. The next paired cycle, bars 12 to 21, makes use of the same M-voice pattern, extending the pitch range by one step. Bars 22 to 33 show the other two M-voice patterns, extended again by the addition of another pitch. This process of expanding exploration continues until, in the last paired cycle of the piece, the M-voice reaches through nine steps.<sup>93</sup> These four types of M-voice (ascending or descending to the pitch centre, or rising or falling from it) are identified by Hillier in general terms as the four basic “modes” available to Pärt in the construction of the melody voice in the tintinnabuli compositions (1997, 95-96). The treatment of these modes varies from piece to piece with some displaying much greater subtlety and range than *Spiegel im Spiegel* (especially *Passio* with its use of multiple M-voices, each with different tonal centres).

How these guiding principles of the T and M-voice are organized within a larger structure is also variable. In the large choral works the construction of the M-voice, T-voice patterns, rhythmic values, instrumentation, and so on, are all derived in some form from the text being set. *Passio* (1982) is the paradigmatic example, but *Te Deum* (1984, 1986, 1993), *Stabat Mater* (1985) and *Miserere* (1989), and some of the purely instrumental works such as *Orient and Occident* (1999), are organized by an underlying text.<sup>94</sup> This is in a quite literal sense; for

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<sup>93</sup> This discussion is intended to demonstrate the construction of an M-voice, but the relationship between the violin and piano is also strictly governed. The triadic figuration of the piano’s right hand fulfills a multiple function: the upper pitch follows the journey of the violin’s M-voice (an octave higher), with the lower pitch mirroring these developments a sixth below. The middle pitch articulates a T-pitch operating a first position, inferior, relationship with the M-voice of the triadic figuration. The left hand of the piano articulates T-pitches, systematically articulating low octave Fs and more distant T-pitches both above and below the violin and the triadic figuration.

<sup>94</sup> For an extended discussion of the structural principles underlying Pärt’s *Passio Domini Nostri Jesu Christi Secundum Johannem*, Paul Hillier’s chapter in *Arvo Pärt is admirably clear* (1997, 122 – 139). I also recommend Wilfred Mellers’s *Arvo Pärt, God and Gospel: Passio Domini Nostri Jesu Christi Secundum Johannem* for a discussion of how this music sits within the tradition of passion writing, and for a revealing comparison with the work of Schütz (1995).



example, the punctuation as it appears in the score will often determine rhythmic values. The end of a phrase may be marked by a comma, full stop, a colon, or a question mark; these will determine (through a set of pre-compositional decisions) the length of the pause that follows and the significance of the articulation of the word in the next phrase. Similarly, the M-voices will often be derived from the text's syllabic structure. This procedure is most rigorously applied in *Missa Sillabica* (1977) but is evident in all of the subsequent large textured works.

Beyond the exploration of the T and the M-voice, the use of a mensuration canon is a fairly common organizational principle in the instrumental works. *Cantus in memory of benjamin britten* exemplifies this, with a string orchestra working down the descending form of the A natural minor scale (equivalent to the Aeolian mode) at five different speeds (Ex. 3). Each part articulates a dotted rhythm (in the first violins, the fastest voice, through a minim-crotchet figuration, in the second violins a semibreve-minim, and so on), with the next voice entering after this rhythm has been stated once.<sup>95</sup> With each repetition the M-voice reaches down a step further, returning to the high A before descending again; the T-voice is determined by this M-voice, operating a first position inferior relationship to it. The first violins complete the process first and are instructed to hold their low C until the rest of the voices join them to articulate an A minor chord. Throughout this process a bell is systematically used, sounding three times followed by a rest, until the violas reach their end point at figure 14 (an M-voice without T-voice accompaniment, marked "sole").

*Tabula rasa* can be considered the most extensive elaboration of these early procedural explorations; extensive because of the musical forces it deploys (orchestrated for two solo violins, string orchestra, and prepared piano), its duration (twenty-five minutes), and because it rigorously explores the possibilities of the M and the T-voice over two differently cast but complementary movements. It can also be considered summative because it presents the

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<sup>95</sup> It is important to also recognize the non-coincidence between rhythm and melody, which is crucial to the impact of tintinnabulation works. This aspect of the music is often overlooked in analyses of the tintinnabuli procedures. As Alastair Borthwick argues in his review of Hillier's book, "the linear explanation of the T-voice, and its vertical pairing with the M-voice, does not account for the many superpositions of voice-pairs or Pärt's treatment of consonance and dissonance" (309).

emergent position-taking of the early tintinnabuli principles without introducing any new ideas. The tintinnabuli procedures underlying both *Ludus* and *Silentium* are of elongation. Each of the eight cycles in *Ludus* introduces a new pair of diatonic pitches to the M-voice, expanding in both directions away from the tonal centre, while the period of silence in the second part of each cycle is progressively shortened until it is overwhelmed by a cadenza battling with pitches alien to the A minor diatonic scale.

Ex. 4 joins *Ludus* at the start of the sixth cycle, where the process is established and relatively extended. Here the string orchestra articulates paired T and M-voices centred on A minor: the first violins are divided with one half articulating the M-voice rising from A by five steps, falling back to the tonal centre and then dropping below it by five steps, before climbing back to A. The other half sounds a T-voice in alternating first position around this M-voice. The second violins iterate the same M-voice an octave lower, starting two beats later, with the violas providing the T-voice also in alternating first position. The cellos and basses also enter two beats apart, articulating the same M-voice at a lower pitch, but without the accompanying T-voice. In this example the basses begin to articulate repeated and pointed A's which continue for seven bars underneath the solo violins, until the above process is reversed to lead in to the cycle's period of silence.

The solo violins articulate the M and T voices through a quaver pattern in this example (moving through triplets and semi-quavers over the course of each cycle) with occasional semi-quaver grace notes. Following the upbeat in the bar before figure P, the first solo violin articulates an M-voice with the first note of each quaver pair, and a T-voice in alternating first position with the second note. The M-voice follows the same pattern identified in the string orchestra, climbing five pitches before falling back to the tonal centre and then dropping down five pitches before climbing back up to A. The second solo violin articulates the M-voice, with the second note of each quaver pair and the T-voice operating in alternating second position with the first. The M-voice follows that of the first solo violin half a beat behind, so that the two solo voices sound a paired M and T pitch.

Ex. 5 provides an illustration of the processes at work in the second half of the cycles in *Ludus*, played out between the solo voice(s) and prepared piano. Here, again, the M-voice is gradually extended by the solo violin, now accompanied, with some minor variations, by a T-voice in the prepared piano. The bar of silence, marked with a general pause, decreases with each repetition until the cadenza overwhelms it in the eighth cycle. Ex. 6 shows the opening of *Silentium*. This movement follows the same basic gradual extension of the range of the M-voice found in *Ludus*, here articulated in triple time, setting the tonal base at D Minor. The pattern of the M-voice is extended through cycles which explore the range in both directions. This is played out in a mensuration canon between three voices. The fastest is in the bass register with the cellos articulating the M-voice and the violas playing an accompanying T-voice operating at second position superior. The T-voice is not rhythmically identical with the M-voice here, resting on the first and fourth beats (see Ex. 6). As the movement progresses, the basses step in to help whenever either the T or the M-voice moves beyond the range of either the cellos or violas (see Ex. 7). The medium speed voice is found in the first and second violins, with the first violins taking the M-voice and the second violins the T-voice, operating at second position inferior and moving twice as slowly as the cellos and violas. The two solo violins operate the slowest articulation, with the M-voice moving twice as slowly again. While the T-voice operates at crotchet pace (rather than slowing the rhythm down as in the difference between the violas and the second violins), it follows the same principles; here resting on the first crotchet beat of the first bar, and then the third beat of the second bar, coinciding with the stepwise movements in the M-voice. It articulates an alternating T-voice stepping with the movements of the M-voice.

The cycles are measured against the slowest voices and are accented by the prepared piano, which plays a rising six note D Minor upbeat to the first beat of each new cycle. The cycles come in pairs (eight in total, although the latter of the eighth pair is extended to conclude the process): the M-voice rises and falls (first cycle) and then falls and rises (second cycle). The next pair of cycles is extended, by two bars as the next pitches in the scale are



reached. Ex. 7 shows the beginning of the first pair of the sixth cycle in which this process has become extended, with the first solo voice given the option of deploying artificial harmonics in the T-voice, and the basses and cellos swapping the T and M-voices to cope with the range of movement. The fastest voice finishes after 117 bars with a low C in the basses. From this point, the medium paced voice is passed down through the sections, violins to violas (with cellos taking the T-voice), to cellos (with basses playing the T-voice), with the basses bringing it to a close in bar 136 with a low D. The slowest voice continues to descend and is taken over by the lower strings of the orchestra; first the violas take the M-voice with the cellos articulating the T-voice pattern. The cellos then take the M-voice with the basses playing the T-voice, before the basses lead the melody down to a bottom E, hovering over the resolution to D in bar 164.

Alongside this discussion of the strictly musical tintinnabuli principles, a tendency to attribute a particular inflection to the two voices (M and T) should be noted, seemingly closely linked to Pärt's religious beliefs. For example, Hillier recounts the following discussion with Pärt:

Pärt described to me his view that the M-voice always signifies the subjective world, the daily egoistic life of sin and suffering; the T-voice, meanwhile, is the objective realm of forgiveness. The M-voice may appear to wander, but is always held firmly by the T-voice. This can be likened to the eternal dualism of body and spirit, earth and heaven; but the two voices are in reality one voice, a twofold single entity. This can neatly though enigmatically be represented by the following equation:

$$| + | = |$$

The intensity with which Pärt represented these ideas to me should be allowed to colour the [...] discussion of tintinnabuli 'technique'. In particular, he felt strongly that this equation expresses the kernel of the style, and is fundamental to the music's operation, and that it both precedes and dominates the actual process that underwrites each individual tintinnabuli composition. (1997, 96-7)

The personal importance attached to these two voices is further evidenced in *24 Preludes for a fugue*, in which Pärt discusses *Für Alina* with a group of students:



Listen to this voice [Pärt plays the M-voice opening phrases of *Für Alina*]. Quite neutral. [Pärt plays the T-voice]. Also neutral. [Plays both together]. A bit more serious, or complicated.

[...] [Pärt plays on a little] Like two people whose paths seem to cross, and then they don't. [plays on further].

[...] It's not the tune that matters so much here. It's the combination [Pärt links his fingers] with this triad. It makes such a heart-rending union. The soul yearns to sing it endlessly. Listen [...]. (Supin, 2002)<sup>96</sup>

The construction of the T and M voices demonstrates a rigorous approach to musical procedure. However, the above comments suggest an urge to distance the generative principles of these procedures from the organization of the autonomous pole of the field. Instead of attributing meaning to a relationship with the complex development of autonomous and individualized musical structures, the emphasis is placed on an essentialist sense of modern subjectivity: an “ur-subjectivity”, as Alastair Williams puts it (1997, 129). Further, Pärt argues that tintinnabulation is not just the *representation* of a religious belief or the dramatic solution to a period of searching, but is founded on a “mathematically secure basis” and as such is a “phenomenon of nature”. In an interview with Geoff Smith, Nora Pärt helps to clarify this point:

N.P. [T]here has been a growing number of texts on Arvo's music but very little of it is musicologically founded. In effect, almost nothing. This deficit in musicological methodology is always smoothed over by biographical or personal information which cannot necessarily be linked to Arvo's music directly. [...] Yet the meaning of the music is purely musical. Arvo is predominantly concerned with musical forms and structure.

A.P. The information coming from me is encoded in ‘mathematical rules’ [...]

N.P. [...] which do not require translation back into a verbal language. (Smith, 1999, 21)

It is the procedural terms of tintinnabulation, the rigorous deployment of the T and M voice, which constitute these “mathematical rules”. The attempt to ground this musical procedure

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<sup>96</sup> Film directed by Dorian Supin following Pärt over a five-year period.

in the privileged universal terms of mathematics is a further example of a complex attempt to distance Pärt's productive compositional practice from the contemporary organization – the social struggle – of the musical field. This strategy is irretrievably intertwined with the attempt to establish a position within the field of production. Further, it is only available as a strategy via the historically received structure of a field in which the topos of refusal is a central principle. What the above extract offers is a generalized, but absolute, commitment to the terms of autonomy described by Bourdieu; it articulates the insufficiency of biographical information for explanation (an opposition between art and the social being the strong implication), and insists on the “purely musical”, the overriding concern with form and structure. These are characteristics it would be difficult to imagine as distinct from the development of autonomy in the Western field, and yet the ultimate grounding for autonomy sought by Pärt for the position-taking of tintinnabulation is not perceived in the terms of a socially instituted and maintained mechanism, but rather a mathematically secure rule.<sup>97</sup>

This observation should not be taken too far. Almost all arts practices can only operate with credibility by means of a certain conditioned blindness to the social rules of the game (the *illusio*): to become aware of this logic (this *sense of the game*) so essential to practice is to risk “cynical mystification” or “a conscious trickery” (Bourdieu, 1996, 230). However, the readiness to attribute generative power to ‘the laws of nature’ over the social organization of the field becomes a strong but only dimly acknowledged theme in the rhetorical devices around Pärt and his music.

Martin Supper provides an extreme example of this attempt to ground tintinnabulation on a mathematical basis when he references Pärt in a discussion of computer music. He notes the tendency to attribute the use of algorithmic techniques solely to computer aided composition,

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<sup>97</sup> It is worth emphasizing that this idea of an underlying “natural” system is one of the key ways in which tintinnabulation can be distanced from other systematic musics. For example, Reich's process music is not concerned with articulating a mathematically encoded expression of the world, but with releasing the individual subjectivity through a “liberating and impersonal kind of ritual”: “focusing in on the musical process makes possible that shift of attention away from *he* and *she* and *you* and *me* outward toward it” (2002, 36). Pärt's tintinnabuli system, with its focus on a law of nature rather than the individual, doesn't place the same emphasis on the individual finding liberation by means of a musical process (discoverable in many British experimentalists and early American minimalists).

and introduces Pärt's music as a counter-argument: "Arvo Pärt does not use a computer and calls those of his pieces in which a pattern is extended, shortened, or otherwise permuted according to an algorithm 'computer music'" (48).

The theoretical explorations of my research require the examination of broader contexts; there is therefore a tension between this project and the stated intentions of the composer. Bourdieu's reflections are useful here:

Commenting to the art students at Nîmes, he [Bourdieu] said: 'you want there to be something in art which is not reducible to social categorisation' [...] concluding that if his analysis is sad for art, 'it is not sociology that is sad but the world. (Grenfell, 2004, 105)<sup>98</sup>

In such a scheme the development of tintinnabulation cannot be considered a 'law of nature', rooted on a universal basis with essentialist implications for contemporary subjectivity (although this interpretation becomes an element of the position-taking and the subsequent legitimizing rhetorics), but are emergent from a very particular field in a particular period. They are a constitutive part of a clearly identifiable position-taking within the field of musical production, and are shaped by the pressures and limits acting on the field of possible solutions available to Pärt in his search for a resolution of his creative crisis in the 1970s.

### **The 'Emergence' of Arvo Pärt – Moves within a field**

Bourdieu and Williams are both concerned to identify the broad context of particular practices, to discover something of the pressures and limits acting on human endeavour, and perhaps most centrally to utilize *historicized* readings. While the above discussions of the tintinnabulation are revealing, and could be used to discuss the individual components of Pärt's compositions from 1976 onwards, some consideration should be offered as to how the tintinnabuli compositions function in terms of the musical field.<sup>99</sup> Crucial here is not to

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<sup>98</sup> This comes from 'Penser l'Art à l'Ecole', *Actes Sud/Ecole Supérieure des Beaux-Arts de Nîmes*, June 13-55, translated to English by Grenfell.

<sup>99</sup> Such discussions of tintinnabulation can be found in Hillier's comprehensive deployment of technical vocabulary to discuss the processes at play in individual pieces. See, for example, his early article "Magister Ludi", which briefly surveys the processes of tintinnabuli at work in *Missa sillabica*, *Tabula rasa*,



question how Arvo Pärt and his approach to composition came to be what they are, and so risk what Bourdieu has described as “the retrospective illusion of a reconstructed coherence” (1996, 215). The task is rather to examine how Pärt came to occupy, and even produce, positions available within the contemporary organization of the Western musical field of production. This section describes the pressures and limits active in this field of musical production in the late 1970s and the 1980s, utilizing a body of documentary evidence and thereby enabling a discussion of the extent to which Pärt’s practice offers a particularly coherent realization of the possibilities inscribed in its logic.

Five key points will be examined in this discussion of the field. Firstly, Pärt’s *emergence* into the Western musical field, rather than his direct constitution by it, is noted and various contemporary Western perceptions of the Soviet musical field are observed, along with their implications. Secondly, perceptions of an opposition at the autonomous pole of the Western field between “avant-garde” and “experimental” traditions are considered.<sup>100</sup> Thirdly, the changing status of early music in the field is approached, particularly focusing on the developing relationship between contemporary composers and early music practices at this time. The fourth and fifth points are less substantially covered here and are combined in one section; these concern the proximity between Pärt’s early activity in the Western field and a body of highly consecrated rear-garde classical practices and repertoire, and the recognition that this period witnessed both a forceful process of consolidation in the music industry and an attenuation of technologies for the processing of music for this industry. This last point informs the discussions of ECM’s practices in chapter 6.

### **The Importance of the Soviet Field**

Arvo Pärt emerged into the field of Western music, subsequently engaging with it and gradually taking a prominent position. This emergence can be thought through in field terms;

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and *Stabat Mater* (1989, 135-137). Further, his *Arvo Pärt* also offers a discussion of the early tintinnabuli works in these terms (1997, 98-118) and some more detailed examination of the larger works, such as *Passio* (1997, 122-139). Various other commentators also offer explanations of the music in these terms; see, for example, Peter Quinn’s discussion of *Credo* (2000).

<sup>100</sup> I acknowledge that such general usages of these terms are problematic: I will define them more clearly below, as well as indicating how they are used in terms of field activity.



the divide between the Soviet states and Western capitalist countries kept the contemporary structures and stakes of the Western musical field of production somewhat subterranean in the experiences of the range of Soviet composers (although not completely absent, as will be discussed). Susan Bradshaw presents this sense of emergence:

His first visit outside the Eastern block (to London in 1979) was clearly something of a shattering experience: having assumed himself to be an isolated voice, crying in the musical wilderness of his own choosing, he was suddenly brought face to face with more composers than he had ever known existed, and the wilderness turned out to be an already cultivated garden. (1983, 25)

This acts as an excellent indicator of Pärt's *habitus*. Most centrally, the appearance of an agent in a field which has not directly constituted their *habitus* problematizes the possibility of a clear ontological complicity between the two, with implications for both the agent and the structures in the field.<sup>101</sup> The degree of shock Bradshaw describes is not just that of the social unfamiliarity which might be expected from a dramatic social-geographical movement, but explicitly involves a reaction to the differently constituted Western field of musical production. It is this latter area which is of central interest for this study; rather than focusing on the differences between the Soviet and the Western social fields (which must be recognized as determining), the primary concern is with how this field activity shapes Pärt's position-taking.<sup>102</sup> Pärt quickly establishes lasting connections with various important musical institutions and agents in the Western musical field which to a degree temper this shock and facilitate the traversing of this new terrain. Universal Edition, ECM, Paul Hillier and the Hilliard Ensemble, Paul Griffiths, and Susan Bradshaw all tell a story of their own involvement in Pärt's 'emergence'.

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<sup>101</sup> A disjunction between field and *habitus* is also experienced by those agents who are more directly shaped by the field. Bourdieu develops a raft of theoretical devices which allow him to interrogate the effects of varying degrees of closeness between *habitus* and field: the closer the terms, the more likely it is that the agent will have an instinctive feel for the logics of practice dominant in the field (*conatus*); the more distant they stand, the more likely it is that the agent will feel various forms of social discomfort (theorized by Bourdieu as double-binds, *hysteresis*, *méconnaissance* and so on). Perhaps the clearest example of this is to be found in generational changes; as the configurations of capital in the field change, so the potential increases for an agent's dispositions no longer to conform to demands of the field, leaving the agent suffering an acute form of social dislocation.

<sup>102</sup> 'Social field' is here used in the technical sense of the broadest field which accommodates the field of power and the field of cultural production.

Also central here are contemporary perceptions of the divide between 'East' and 'West'; between the 'Soviet communist' and 'Western capitalist' musical fields in the late 1970s and early 1980s.<sup>103</sup> There is a good deal of source material which indicates this divide to be a serious stake at this time. This works in both directions; while the story of the composer working under Soviet oppression, catching occasional glimpses of the progressive developments of the Western avant-garde, is fairly well established, the interest taken in Soviet developments by Western audiences should not be underestimated.<sup>104</sup> For example, Michael John White notes that this was well served by the Almeida Festival throughout the 1980s:

When you look at a world map and see how much of it is Soviet territory, you realise what an assumption it is to talk about Russian music as though it reflected a single culture. [...] We know about Denisov, Schnittke, Gubaidulina and the younger Firsova, [...]. Extending the focus to the Baltic States, we know, too, about Arvo Pärt. [...] it has been left to the Almeida Festival to trawl the Russias more thoroughly [...]. All three [Mansuryan, Zograbyan, and Karayev] are [...] old enough to have passed through the rather earnest experimentation in Western modernism that many Soviet composers made in the 1960s, when a temporary cultural thaw revealed what had happened since the second Viennese school. (1989, 23)

While this usefully expresses the level and scope of interest in Soviet works at this time, it is also interesting to note the presence of a music festival which explicitly cultivated a position in the field by exploring this repertoire. Commentary also indicates that the Almeida festival fulfilled an important function in introducing the work of Pärt to a UK audience. For example, Andrew Clements notes:

[T]he opening days of the festival are dominated by the music of [...] Arvo Pärt [...] who is known here essentially for one work [...]. Of Pärt's subsequent development we have heard very little indeed. Pärt has acquired something of a reputation as a kind of minimalist [...] because of his ability to extract the maximum amount of musical mileage out of the minimum of material.

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<sup>103</sup> This argument is an attempt to establish the contemporary perceptions of activity in the respective fields of *musical production*, rather than attempting to objectify the generalized social fields of the Soviet East and Capitalist West and all the complex relations between their fields of power and production. To be truly rigorous it might be necessary to undertake such a study, but some complexities immediately present themselves. Most centrally, the Soviet social field is socially and politically disparate, while the impact of the structure of the Soviet musical field is perceived to be more coherent over a broader area (see David Fanning's arguments below). This observation should not be carried too far; Michael John White reminds us below that the Soviet musical field accounts for a wide range of practice.

<sup>104</sup> Pärt himself recalls the disbelief of "critics and older professors" at his disregard for the Western avant-garde techniques which they had fought so hard for the right to employ (Mccarthy, 1989, 132).



[...] *Tabula rasa* set up a wholly unexpected set of correspondences. Its affectionate reworkings of baroque figurations - almost like fragments of Vivaldi's *Four Seasons* cut up and pasted over a gently lapping chordal background - suggested works as far removed as Vaughan Williams' *Tallis Fantasia* and Tippett's *Corelli Fantasia* as spiritual heirs. But Pärt's intention is different from either composer: *Tabula Rasa* [...] suggests the work of a very distinctive creative voice, almost impossible to classify, who seems to have appeared without obvious historical progenitors. (1987, 15)

What is particularly interesting here, and is evident in many of the early reviews, is the variety of attempts to draw correspondences between Pärt's emergent position-taking and other consecrated sections of the Western field.<sup>105</sup> More specifically, there is often an attempt to ally Pärt on more than one front: here to the minimalists contemporaneously emerging from *within* the Western field, but also to consecrated figures from within the classical canon (especially Vivaldi, in this early stage of reception<sup>106</sup>).<sup>107</sup> It is this type of strategy which begins the process whereby the position-taking of Pärt in the Western field becomes recognized, legitimized, and ultimately consecrated (discussed more fully below). As a brief aside, it can be noted that alongside these strategies of legitimation, those of denigration begin to be instituted. Richard Morrison provides a particularly clear example of this early dissatisfaction, again drawing on a particular understanding of the Western field to express his response to Pärt's music:

[T]he succession of short pieces heard since [*Passio*] has raised doubts about whether Pärt has either the range or the technical expertise to sustain an international reputation. [...] *Spiegel im Spiegel* was a violin and piano work of such staggering banality - a half-speed imitation of the Bach/Gounod *Ave Maria*

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<sup>105</sup> This is a clear example of the manoeuvring occurring within the field, as agents attempt to explain and incorporate the appearance of this mode of cultural production.

<sup>106</sup> This is evident in commentaries such as Andrew Clements's above, Susan Bradshaw's identification of echoes of the "Italian Baroque string concerto" in Pärt's instrumental style (1983, 26), Paul Griffiths's suggestion of a general parallel between Pärt's style and "the slow movement of the *Winter* concerto from Vivaldi's *Seasons*" (a comparison, incidentally, of which Pärt approves) (1986), and Malcolm Hayes's description of the "Vivaldi-like regular rhythmic patterns" of *Tabula rasa* (1986), among many further casual references. We should also note that one of the earliest concert tours of Pärt's music in the West (in 1981) programmed Pärt's *Concerto for Violin and Cello* alongside Bach's *Suite no. 1 in C* and Vivaldi's *The Four Seasons*, performed by Gidon Kremer and Karine Georgian with Philip Ledger and the English Chamber Orchestra (sourced from a concert advert in *The Times*, April 4, 1981).

<sup>107</sup> The allegiance with minimalism is frequently made, leading perhaps to the proliferation of the various alternative minimalist labels in the late 1980s; 'faith minimalism' and 'holy minimalism' being the most prominent. It is significant that minimalism is often implicitly framed in generalized terms as an emergent and oppositional position (in Williams's terminology) to the modernist avant-garde (also nebulously defined), which is perceived as the dominant autonomous musical force (discussed below).

without the jokes - that it must have been embarrassing to both players involved.  
(1986, June 11)

Clements's description, above, of Pärt's "very distinctive voice" which "seems to have appeared without obvious historical progenitors" is indicative of Pärt's early field position. This position can be defined by Pärt's struggle to find an adequate mode of musical expression; the resolution to his search – tintinnabulation – is necessarily derived from the field of possible actions available to both his avant-garde position within the Soviet field and select glimpses of the Western avant-garde. This engenders some complex relationships with the established positions of the Western field of musical production. There are some general commonalities between these two fields which allow these relationships to be established. At the risk of reduction, it can be noted that a good deal of the received musical devices available in both fields derive their general terms from the legacy of the drive to autonomy (which is not to say that this legacy has been equally treated in both fields in the twentieth century), and that there is also some limited reception in the Soviet field for the practices of the Western avant-garde.<sup>108</sup>

The complexities of these field connections, especially the reception of Western avant-garde practices in the Soviet musical field, are evident in the case of Pärt. His early position-takings relate to an avant-garde position within the Soviet field, and his early output (from *Nekrolog* in 1960 – to *Symphony No. 3* in 1971) makes use of various techniques recognizable from the Western field.<sup>109</sup> *Nekrolog* was the first Estonian piece to make use of a serial procedure, and this, Hillier notes, earned Pärt a sharp rebuke from Khrennikov in the 1962 All-Union Congress of Composers (1997, 35-6). The musical process here organizes the opposition of two differently characterized bodies of material – a process carried through to *Credo* (1968) and *Lamentate* (2003) – rather than exploring the requirements of a note row *per se*. *Perpetuum Mobile* (1963) and the *Symphony No. 1 "Polyphonic"* (1963) make more rigorous

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<sup>108</sup> Bourdieu is clear to point out that the mechanisms of change in the field are not teleological and are susceptible to developments in the field of power such as a dramatic change in political organization.

<sup>109</sup> Pärt's early place in the Soviet field is identified by Gerald Abraham who offers one of the earliest published references to Pärt, noting in passing that the foremost positions of the contemporary Soviet avant-garde are occupied by Pärt, Schnittke, Edison and Denisov (494).



use of serial techniques to organize musical structure. This approach is further explored in *Musica Sillabica* (1964), and *Solfeggio* (1964).

*Collage sur B-A-C-H* (1964) makes use of serial techniques, quotation and collage (playing on the B-A-C-H motif and also quoting directly from Bach's Sixth English Suite) and reintroduces the device of opposed blocks of musical material by pitting tonal sections against atonal passages. Merike Vaitmaa notes that this approach of balancing opposing bodies of material is one of the key characteristics of this early work, observing that "the most striking differences between his [Pärt's] earlier and later works are most effectively clarified by the depiction of opposite poles: conflict – balance; chromatic – diatonic; dynamism repose" (1989).<sup>110</sup> This use of tone row, collage, and opposed blocks of material is further explored in *Symphony No. 2* (1966) and the concerto for cello and orchestra *Pro et Contra* (1966), before finding its most programmatic instance in *Credo* (1968) in which Pärt makes extensive use of Bach's "Prelude in C Major" from the *Well-Tempered Clavier*, with atonal passages derived from serial processes deployed as an opposing force.<sup>111</sup>

David Fanning draws an explicit connection between Pärt's early repertoire and the structure of the Soviet field from which it emerged:

[T]he works recorded by BIS predate [Pärt's] emigration, and they show the preoccupations of Soviet music in the 1960s with an almost exaggerated clarity. A restful D major chord followed by an almighty blast of terror from the full orchestra [...], polar oppositions of this sort have been a source of endless fascination to the Russians. For some they come with the trappings of Ivesian transcendentalism or Mahlerian irony; for Pärt they point ultimately in the direction of a new spirituality. (1989, 29)

Interestingly, here Fanning doesn't subscribe to the idea (still current in many cases) that Pärt's stylistic break in the mid-1970s was a complete rejection of these early works, instead finding some compelling continuity between the serial and collage works and the tintinabuli

<sup>110</sup> Vaitmaa's comment comes in the sleeve notes to the BIS CD (BIS-CD-434), which introduced the first recordings of this material to the market.

<sup>111</sup> See Peter Quinn for a discussion of this piece and its relationship to Pärt's tintinnabuli compositions (2000). His review of *Lamentate* takes these connections across Pärt's work a stage further by arguing convincingly for a close relationship with *Credo* (2006).

compositions, but he does go on to note the importance of the Soviet and the Western fields in the development of these musical works.<sup>112</sup> Fanning argues that the works before Pärt's period of silence reflect the "preoccupations of Soviet music", and while tintinnabulation was developed in Soviet Estonia it was in the West that it achieved its success. It is significant that this CD of the early orchestral works took so long to follow on from the proliferation of recordings of the popular tintinnabuli compositions produced for the Western market, and then only emerged at the insistence of the conductor Neeme Järvi rather than Pärt himself. While there is some early awareness of Pärt's serial and collage works, the first evidence of widespread attention being paid to this repertoire followed a performance at the 1989 Proms of the Symphony No. 3 (1971), often regarded as a transition piece rather than strictly in the serial/collage period.<sup>113</sup>

The reactions to this concert are interesting. For example, Max Harrison moves to emphasise the continuities between the two phases of Pärt's output (in much the same way as Vaitmaa, Fanning and Hillier):

Divergences between Pärt's early and late music should not be exaggerated; however, his older pieces, while less ascetic, have a strikingly well controlled precision of detail, and the three movements of Symphony No 3 contain the beginnings of his latter-day output. For example, there is a lot of near-repetition and some exceptionally stark orchestration. (1989, August 18)

Hilary Finch identifies in the symphony a transition phase, explicitly noting a "point of no return" to the early serial/collage experimentations:

[The third symphony] is a work which both takes stock, and marks a point of no return. No return, that is, to the dense and atonal fabric of the first two symphonies: here are the rawest of raw materials, the bare intervals and speech inflections of music's deepest roots. (1989)

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<sup>112</sup> Peter Quinn has also done much in more recent times to advance a continuity between the serial and collage works and the tintinnabuli compositions (2000, 2006).

<sup>113</sup> Evidence of the early awareness of Pärt's serial and collage works is found in circulation of the score of *Credo* (1968) in the 1980s (reviewed by Malcolm Barry (1984), and William Wells (1986)). Further, *Collage sur B-A-C-H* (1964) was performed in the UK in 1982 (again under the baton of Neeme Järvi) alongside Brahms and Shostakovich symphonies (Cross, 1982). The positioning of the Symphony No. 3 is evidenced in Vaitmaa (1989), who includes *Credo* with the Symphony No. 3 in the "transfer period", and Hillier's "Intimations of Tintinnabuli" in which he argues that this symphony speaks forward to Pärt's stylistic revisions (1997, 74-77).

It is also revealing to return to Andrew Clements and Michael John White four years on. The former notes:

The symphony [...] was the last work before Pärt's seven-year creative silence to be broken by the sequence of works that has made his reputation as the human face of minimalism. The symphony gives a few hints of that later direction - the hankering after archaic harmonies, an ability to fasten upon deeply resonant sonorities, a tendency for melodies to rotate on their own axis. (1989, 19)

The latter provides a more extended review, using the opportunity to take the long view of the music of Pärt, Górecki and Tavener:

[These] composers [...] are the tomb robbers of the twentieth century. They trowel the past, take its most cherishable artefacts and convert them into modern currency [...]; most take from their immediate predecessors, while Pärt and co ignore at least the last 400 years and take only from antiquities. [...]. It is an affront to the way we read music history, as a conveniently straight line pressing resolutely forward, and to the basic principles of modernism. (1989, 11)

Interestingly, in these latter extracts there is no explicit reference to the determining influence of the Western or the Soviet fields, as there is with Fanning. What is evident here, is the explicit placing of Pärt in the Western musical field, even if in a negative sense as a challenge to "the way we read music history" – a critical process of taking musical stock. This is a practice prevalent in early discussions of Pärt; it is most clearly apparent in the attempt to establish ways of explaining the emergence of this music in relation to different areas of the Western field.<sup>114</sup> This process is enabled by a shared musical heritage and cross-proliferation between the Soviet and Western fields. Further, following the opportunity to examine Pärt's earlier serialist and collage output, critics then develop explicit articulations of one of the

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<sup>114</sup> Perhaps the most forceful attempts at legitimation along these lines are to be found in Hillier's later book length study *Arvo Pärt* (1997). Here an "alternative tradition" – a *musique pauvre* "that may be traced back via Cage to Satie" (viii) – is identified in the history of Western classical music. Hillier argues that Pärt's music "taps into" this, and the "minimalism" label, and Pärt's relationship to it, is problematized but retained as a stake. Hillier's most difficult move here, is the deployment of the work of ethnomusicologist Alan Merriam to argue that the context which provides the 'totality' ("a theory of what music is, what it does, and how it is coordinated with the total environment, both natural and cultural, in which man moves") for the production of Pärt's music is not the field of Western classical music at all but Pärt's own religious convictions (2-3). I find this to be problematic; even if the terms of this argument are accepted, Pärt's music clearly connects to the "total environment" through the machinery of the field of Western classical music. For example, Pärt's liturgical music is written for performance in the terms we are accustomed to as listeners to Western classical music, not as embedded elements of the church service.



fundamental oppositions recurrent in the legitimation of this music and the establishment of a position in the Western field: that between tintinnabulation and the modernist avant-garde.

### **An ‘Avant-garde’ and ‘Experimental’ opposition?**

These observations begin to suggest complexities which have a bearing on the organization of the Western field of musical production in this period. The documentary sources of the period reveal perceptions of the autonomous pole of musical production in the contemporaneous field. Pärt’s early output overtly explores various Western avant-garde compositional developments within the constraints of the Soviet field, but Arnold Whittall also traces the determining presence of these compositional approaches in the later tintinnabuli works, configuring these as a “modernist inheritance”:

Eastern Europe connects these three composers: Kurtág [...] Denisov [...] Pärt[...]. All three reveal responses to various phases of the modernist inheritance – atonality, indeterminacy, minimalism – which reflect either the relative cultural liberalism of their accepted Eastern regimes or the glorious permissiveness of the West. (1982, 377)

Bearing in mind that, again, what is important here is the recorded perceptions of the field, rather than the perceived veracity of the argument, this article is useful for starting to sketch the stakes and positions within this field. Whittall goes on to articulate one of the key issues at stake here; the reaction of Pärt to this ‘inheritance’:

[M]any composers in recent years [have reacted] against fragmentation, aleatoricism, expressionism and even atonality. Few Europeans, however, have done so as strongly as Arvo Pärt. *Fratres* [...] employs a formula which Pärt has made very much his own and which relates both to the American minimalists and also to the European neo-tonalists – such a statement does not imply any direct influence, of course. (1982, 378)

These considerations are revealing regarding Whittall’s perception of the make-up of the field of musical production. A strong section of the field is identified as occupied by an avant-garde engaged in an ongoing process of formal specialization, leading to the production of a particular set of modernist musical techniques which Whittall describes as working through “atonality, indeterminacy, minimalism”. Significantly, Whittall casts Pärt in opposition to the



older avant-garde position, with their homologous position-takings of “fragmentation, aleatoricism, expressionism and even atonality”, in the process allying him to an artistically younger section of the field – the “American minimalists” and the “European neo-tonalists”.<sup>115</sup>

This perception of Pärt is shared by Susan Bradshaw:

Ever since he began so passionately to espouse the musical language of an earlier age, his prime consideration has been that of clarity, or ‘simplifying things for myself’. He seems, in other words, to be trying to avoid any hint of complication for complication’s sake; eschewing musical verbosity above all, he believes that anything that has no properly audible (as opposed to merely textual or cerebral) purpose has no place in his work. (1983, 25)

The rejection of the consecrated modernist avant-garde as described by Whittall is more implicit here, framed as a generalized personal desire to avoid overly complex musical means, but Bradshaw’s conclusions point towards the eventual adoption by Pärt of a singular position distinct from the established concerns of the Western musical field:

[O]n the current evidence, Pärt has a wholly original, refreshing untarnished outlook on the musical world of the late 20<sup>th</sup> century. He fits in no obvious pigeon-hole, and while his work has featured recently in a festival of ‘minimalist’ music, he would seem to be attempting to derive the maximum expressive truth from means that are minimal by virtue of inner necessity rather than calculated design. (1983, 28)

Here again is the view that Pärt has emerged *into* the field of late 20<sup>th</sup> century music, and that his music is in some way a reflection on it, or an attempt to move on from it. These ideas can perhaps be underlined by a candid later discussion between Geoff Smith and Arvo Pärt:

G.S. [Errki-Sven Tüür] felt that [*Tabula rasa*] was the first piece he had heard that wasn’t concerned with language, style, the past or the future, but that was about ‘soul’. How did you manage to rise above what you called the ‘children’s games’?

A.P. Ah[...] well[...], I did once speak of a ‘sand pit game’ referring to a kind of composition commonly associated with the Darmstadt-School. I wouldn’t even know if I myself have risen above those ‘children’s games’ yet. It is difficult to tell. But at the time it was an attempt at – and a conscious decision for – a correction.

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<sup>115</sup> ‘Oppositional’ is used here in the Williamsian sense of formational analysis. The ‘minimalists’ and ‘neo-tonalists’ are heard as wanting to offer something alternative to a dominant avant-garde.

G.S. Are those 'children's games' inherent in art for art's sake?

A.P. The artistic reflection of ideas, style, history etc. is indeed a form of game. Art, however, cannot be separated from it. Yet I did not want to create art. I wanted to free and distance myself from making artificial art. Rather I wanted to combine two different issues; namely, art and life, art and being. (Smith, 1999, 19)

The musical complexities of a consecrated modernist avant-garde are cast as an active and dominant force within the autonomous field. Pärt's own retrospective admission of a "conscious decision for [...] a correction" is significant. This statement covers a complex oppositional field positioning which is closely linked to the stylistic developments of tintinnabulation (discussed below).

This position-taking is made on multiple fronts and in relation to various areas of the field. While the above extract deals with a perceived legacy of modernist complexity, Paul Hillier draws an association between tintinnabulation and another body of work frequently alluded to in these early discussions of Pärt:

This approach [the complete adherence in tintinnabulation to a compositional scheme] is obliquely reminiscent of John Cage's removal of personal choice (and therefore taste) from the job of composition, so the composer's task is to 'ask the right questions'. Pärt does apply personal taste of course and the end results are very different, but the obliteration of the ego is a philosophical or spiritual goal shared by both composers. (1989, 135)

This statement, which occurs in Hillier's *Magister ludi*, is one of the most explicit references to Cage and the experimental tradition in the early sources. Whittall alludes to the relationship in the above statement, with his inclusion of aleatoricism in his roll call of modernist techniques and also with his reference to "European neo-tonalists". Bradshaw also mentions the "Cageian do-it-yourself ideas" found in Pärt's Symphony No. 2 (1983, 26). The presence of an experimental tradition in these sources is perhaps more enigmatic than the more clearly told story of the rejection of the "Darmstadt-School" modernist avant-garde. However, this body of work represents another vital area of the field active at this time,

articulated earlier in the 1970s through Michael Nyman's *Experimental Music: Cage and Beyond*.<sup>116</sup>

Nyman's chapter "Minimal music, determinacy and the new tonality" identifies both American "minimalism" and a British "experimental" tendency as attempts to establish forms of practice determined by an oppositional relationship with the consecrated avant-garde (1974, 139-171). He notes of the practices of American minimalism:

The origins of this minimal process music lie in serialism. La Monte Young [...] noticed Webern's tendency to repeat pitches at the same octave positions throughout a section of a movement, and saw that while on the surface level this was 'constant variation' it could also be heard as 'stasis', because it uses the same form throughout the length of the piece [...] the same information repeated over and over again. (1974, 139)

Later Nyman discusses the relationship between these American developments and British musics:

The music of Reich, Riley, Glass and Young is symbolic of the move away from 'abstraction', discontinuity and non-harmoniousness that took place in the second half of the sixties. [...] Around 1969 and 70 a 'cult of the beautiful' was beginning to develop. But unlike the Americans, in whose music one can find parallels with a number of non-western ethnic music [...], English composers have tended to use as their source material the music of Western classical composers. And as regards method, while the Americans have evolved highly controlled systems, English composers have tended to adopt less restricted processes. (1974, 157)

Nyman's position explicitly exemplifies a general tendency in the contemporary sources of this period to equate minimalism and experimental practices in distinction to the consecrated avant-garde. While the association between Pärt and minimalist practices are now familiar, reinforced by the 'holy minimalism' and 'faith minimalism' tags which appeared in the mid to late 1980s, attempts to establish links to a Cageian experimental tradition have not entered so strongly into general circulation.<sup>117</sup> Whatever the merits of attempts to draw connections between Pärt and this area of field activity, they direct attention to the experimental tradition as a stake at play. Brian Eno, in the forward to Nyman's book, notes:

<sup>116</sup> This work itself constitutes a survey of, and a particular position-taking, within the field.

<sup>117</sup> See footnote 101 on 154 for an important distinction between Pärt's music and the practices of the early minimalists and experimentalists.



Many of the most interesting experimental composers and performers in England [...] earned a crust teaching art students. [...] I organized several 'musical events' [...] some of which included rather big names in the new music field. I recall one music student attending, once. Whereas the avant-garde stuff – Stockhausen, Boulez and the other serialist Europeans – could still be seen as a proper site for 'real' musical skills, and was therefore being co-opted into the academy. (1974, ix)

My intention here is not to offer a detailed critique of the 'avant-garde', the 'minimalist', or the 'experimental' approaches (although the nature and stakes of this opposition deserve extended commentary in terms of field analysis). Rather, it is to identify these areas of the 1970s field as engaged in a struggle for the legitimate definition of practice, each attempting in their own way to critique the underlying *illusio* of the field, and each with their own *nomos* (these terms are discussed below).<sup>118</sup> Also crucial here is the view that the avant-garde was being "co-opted into the academy". This, Bourdieu argues, is central to the avant-garde process of change and as such would happen as a matter of course. Experimental composers, on the other hand, self-consciously attempted to operate outside of these bounded areas of practice (*nomos*) and thus put this process under strain.

I contend that the structure of the field of musical production in the late 1970s is organized at the autonomous pole around this opposition; with the avant-garde composers orientated towards the 'artistically old' and 'charismatically consecrated' pole, and the experimental composers orientated towards the 'artistically young' pole. However, while the avant-garde composers graduated towards positions of heightened consecration, the experimental groupings *did not* move to take their position as may be expected in an avant-garde model of change: a younger autonomous group displacing an older, which in turn moves into a position of consecration or oblivion depending on its capital. Instead, some experimental composers,

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<sup>118</sup> After a fashion, Cornelius Cardew's contemporaneous *Stockhausen Serves Imperialism* (Prévost, 2006, 149-227) highlights this division and opposition, although I hesitate to bring it in because of the potential entanglements between Cardew's polemics on Marxist theories of production and music and Williams's thought. Williams's theories of culture and social formalism (developed in the same period) would clash at almost every point with Cardew's convictions. For example, Williams questioned the immediate revolutionary potential of socialism (reworked to a *long* revolution) or the postulation of a high and low culture (see "Culture is Ordinary"). He also refused the easy identification of a generalized working class culture (see, for example, his discussion in "The Development of a Common Culture", 1958, 332-338), let alone accepting the attribution of that culture musically to folk tunes and mining songs (Prévost, 2006, 242-243). However, there are other points of connection, beyond Cardew's polemics, which would make for interesting further exploration.



often allied with the American minimalists, move to occupy a more central area within the autonomous field of production. It is significant, then, that Eno writes the preface to Nyman's book, considering the subsequent position he fashions in the centre of the field musical production. See Figure 1, p 1, for a schematic field diagram of this discussion.

Crucially for my purposes, the choice of Pärt as a case study is that his field positioning – which spans the heteronomous/autonomous opposition, and questions the avant-garde logic of change – posits a challenge to the theoretical models of Bourdieu and Williams. The organization of the 1970s and early 1980s musical field identified here is one of the key factors in the successful development of a position-taking which attempts to forge market relations, working beyond the terms of the autonomous mechanisms identified by Bourdieu and Williams but also drawing rhetorically on their legacy for legitimacy.<sup>119</sup>

To cement the different areas of the field identified in the above, it is instructive to consider Jamie McCarthy's student interview with Pärt, conducted in 1986 and published in 1989. Here McCarthy asks Pärt's opinion on each of these areas of musical activity within the field. While Pärt's answers are significant, I am most concerned here with McCarthy's questions; his is only the second major interview with Pärt by an agent from the UK, and clearly represents an attempt to establish the pressures and limits within the terms of the Western musical field.<sup>120</sup> McCarthy first probes the status of contemporary Western music in the development of Pärt's style:

J.M. Which composers do you consider to have influenced your early works?

A.P. Very few.

J.M. For example, *Perpetuum Mobile* is dedicated to Luigi Nono.

A.P. Yes, that was a spontaneous reaction to a visit he made to Estonia. It was the first meeting that we had ever had with a major contemporary composer from the West. That was an important experience for us.

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<sup>119</sup> This is a shift in the whole structure of the field which has many determinations (one of which must be seen as the increasing dominance of a voracious global market economy) and many outcomes: clearly Pärt is not alone in developing strategies to navigate this complex social terrain.

<sup>120</sup> The first being a short one page interview with Paul Griffiths of the Times (a regular commentator on Pärt, later closely involved with ECM), also conducted in 1986.

J.M. What contemporary Western music had you heard in Estonia?

A.P. We had heard some works by Boulez and Webern and some by Nono – that's about all. (130)

McCarthy then explores the influence of the Western musical field more closely, questioning Pärt on the presence of the modernist musical apparatus in Soviet Estonia:

J.M. Do you think that your music written in the 60s was particularly influenced by Western composers?

A.P. Yes, it was influenced by such things as twelve tone, serial and aleatoric music; all that came to us from the West. [...] it's very possible that I was influenced by Cage, but it didn't come from his music, but from things that were, perhaps, completely unknown to me. I may have heard a word, or seen a face or a picture, or something by someone connected with Cage. (130)

Once it is established that these influences are present and form a stake in the field, McCarthy asks Pärt specifically about the techniques of high modernism, particularly serialism and aleatoric procedures:

J.M. How do you feel about people who still compose with serial techniques?

A.P. I don't think about them at all; I'm not interested in such things at the moment [...].

J.M. Do you now feel that all serial or aleatory music has no soul in it?

A.P. It does have spirit, but within limits; it gravitates in a particular direction. [...] One must know what is behind a movement – what it holds within it. It's one picture, one spectrum – one thing. (130-131)

McCarthy then takes up the question of tintinnabulation as a determining procedural system, comparing it to serialism. It is interesting to note that Hillier follows the same line of argument in "Magister ludi" to draw parallels between Pärt and Cage, but carried to a different extreme:

J.M. [T]hese works [the early tintinnabuli compositions] are based on well thought-out principles. For example *Cantus* is based almost entirely on a system.

A.P. [...] when one drinks the occasional glass of wine then its fine. It's the same with systems – they shouldn't be too complex. It's better when they're under control. Everyone who writes serial music thinks that the more complex the structure, the stronger and better it is. But that's not right: it's the other way round. [...] Underneath all this complexity there is only a lack of wisdom and no truth.

J.M. So in your music the structures are not important in themselves – they are simply a means of expressing something. The sound is the most important thing.

A.P. Yes. You asked me which serialist composers I was interested in: in fact they don't interest me at all. What does interest me is how they will all come out of this situation. [...] This children's game will soon come to an end. (131-132)

Pärt's response to questions regarding the 'minimalist' aspects of the field is short and pointed:

J.M. Some people have referred to your music as a minimal. How do you feel about that?

A.P. I don't know. Am I really minimalist? It's not something that concerns me. (132)

In summary, McCarthy's interview establishes the importance of Pärt's emergence from a Soviet field which caught glimpses of the development of the "modernist inheritance" to a Western field of musical production in which these position-takings were inscribed into the logic of the field. It recognizes the presence of serialism and aleatoricism as consecrated position-takings, and the presence of minimalism as an alternative position-taking. I will argue below that this field organization is important in constructing the field of possibles. That is, it constitutes the potentialities of compositional production from which Pärt develops tintinnabulation. Before moving to this, the central importance of early music in this position-taking must be considered.

### **The Place of Early Music**

It becomes part of the story that Pärt's stylistic revisions come after a period of studying "early music". Paul Griffiths gives the study of Renaissance polyphony a central role:



[A]t first [...] there were tuneful cantatas for the authorities, and serial pieces for himself. But then in 1968 he wrote *Credo*, whose vigorous choral chanting of belief in Jesus Christ was much less acceptable to the authorities than any amount of serialism. After that came a prolonged study of Renaissance polyphony, followed by an even longer silence, preparing for the breakthrough into utter simplicity, into a music of rhythmic calm and radiant triadic harmonies. (1986)

Bradshaw also notes the “discovery of plainsong” in the development of Pärt’s stylistic development (1983, 25), while Mellers observes that in

medieval plainsong and organum, Pärt found musics which were, of their nature, in the Western sense non-harmonic. Such monody and heterophony imply a different notion of what music is “about” and “for”. (Pärt, 1987)

Hillier emphasises the narrative place of Pärt’s study of such music, noting that “[...]after some years of studying early music [...] he discovered the reductive, tonal style which he calls ‘tintinnabuli’, and which enabled him to compose fluently once again” (1997, xi).<sup>121</sup> These connections also come through in reviews and other written commentaries throughout the 1980s, such as Richard Morrison’s description of a performance of *Passio* as an

act of artistic self-denial which barely acknowledges the Latin text’s dramatic possibilities or the 20th century’s musical developments, less still those of the 19th or 18th. One is reminded most of the unaccompanied, plainsong-inflected Passions of the 17th-century composer Heinrich Schütz. (June 11, 1986)

Fanning offers a slightly different view, commenting that for a composer in the post-Stalinist Soviet Union, “serialism and pre-classical idioms were both symbols of liberation, both having previously been proscribed as formalist aberrations” (1989, 29). This is also recognized by Paul Griffiths, in a review of music by Sofia Gubaidulina:

[T]here are legacies from Soviet cultural history that may not be at all apparent to the outside listener. [...] the Stalinist ban on musical ‘formalism’ covered not only most modern music but also the Baroque. So when Gubaidulina alludes to Bach,

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<sup>121</sup> Hillier’s reflections are probably still the most extensive discussion of Pärt’s relationship with early music, including a chapter dedicated to the subject as a prelude to his discussion of the processes of tintinnabulation (1997, 77-85). Here Hillier undertakes an admirable survey of the influence of early music on Pärt, noting his early study of Palestrina, his examination of the early Notre Dame School and Machaut, and his survey of Renaissance composition. From this point, Pärt’s self-education extended to Ockeghem, Obrecht, Josquin, back to Palestrina and then Victoria. Hillier underlines Pärt’s assertion that it is the “spirit of early music that interested him, far more than the technical procedures by which it was put together”, and that consequently tintinnabulation is much more than a reworking of the musical techniques he had studied (1997, 78).



as she does in *Offertorium*, or when Schnittke gives the title 'concerto grosso' to a whole series of works, a political-cultural statement is being made. (June 24, 1989)

These observations help to problematize a dominant contemporary perception in the Western field that the exploration of early music is an easily framed rejection of modernist radicalism. For example, Michael John White observes that a use of past musics is “an affront to the way we read music history, as a conveniently straight line pressing resolutely forward, and to the basic principles of modernism [...]” (White, August 21, 1989). While the use of early music in composition does call into question a linear trajectory in musical history, a questioning by no means reserved for emergent Soviet composers, the *radical position-taking* of Pärt is a more complex issue. These questions will be dealt with more closely below, with a discussion of the rhetorical character of the position-taking of tintinnabulation.

The above perceptions of the contemporaneous field indicate that it is necessary to account for the presence of early music as an important part of the field activity which facilitates the success of Pärt's emergent practice. If the position-takings with regard to the avant-garde / experimental opposition are centrally concerned with the approach to musical language and considerations of procedural manipulation, the case of early music is more ambiguous. Importantly, rather than a position-taking made in opposition to other areas of the field, this is one of mutual support between quite diverse field positions, such as specialist early music performers, some British experimental composers, a selection of post-Soviet composers, and the practices of ECM. This is cast in terms of a surprising symmetry in approaches to musical structure, musicking, sonority, and timbre. Such correspondences are articulated by Barry Guy's description of his involvement with ECM:

My life became a heady mix of early music performance, contemporary composition and improvised music. Somehow the disparate genres made sense to me in terms of sonority, structure and, crucially, creative experimentation and searching. (Lake and Griffiths, 79)

Guy observes here a willingness for experimental composers and early music performers to collaborate, particularly facilitated by ECM as institution and finding affinities in composition and performance practice. Gavin Bryars notes:

There is a good deal of resemblance between working in experimental music in the 1960s and 1970s – as I did – and working with early music performers. Trying to decode a Fluxus score by George Brecht, and early work of LaMonte Young, a prose piece by Christian Wolff or, say, Cornelius Cardew's Schooltime Compositions forces the performer to employ considerable invention and imagination in the face of quite flimsy and, on occasions, willfully misleading notational evidence. This is not unlike the situation in which the most adventurous performers in the early music world find themselves time after time. (Lake and Griffiths, 73)

Trio Mediæval articulate this process from the other direction:

The lack of historical information about medieval vocal sound has given us the opportunity to use our own imagination to create a sound we like and that fits our twenty-first-century voices. (Lake and Griffiths, 75)

A complex of positions emerges in the Western field which not only exhibits musical correspondences but also establishes a body of performers, producers, and commentators able to recognize and value new music such as Pärt's. A key factor in Pärt's ability to adopt a position in the field was the legitimizing work of Paul Hillier and the Hilliard Ensemble, who in turn not only occupied a strong position within the field of early music performance and interpretation but also developed strong links with Manfred Eicher and ECM. Paul Griffiths expresses these correspondences:

We live in an age of musical specialization [...]. But, happily, there are some who will look over the wall at other plots, including the Hilliard Ensemble [...]. 'Then I [Hillier] got hold of some [of Pärt's] scores, and it seemed like the sort of thing we could do: sacred music, often for quite small forces'. (Griffiths, April 1, 1988)

Elsewhere, Hillier discusses the performance demands of Pärt's tintinnabuli compositions, explicitly linking the demands of the choral works to the trained skills of early music performers:

Pärt's music presents certain problems in performance which belie the simplicity of the notes. [...] it is not early music per se which provides the answers, but

rather the fact that a particular kind of choral instrument is best suited to Pärt's music [...]. That instrument is one in which the voices use minimal vibrato and project the music with great clarity and focus, but without loss of expressive colour, phrasing, and dynamic variety. (Pärt, 1999, 7)<sup>122</sup>

These observations reinforce the notion of symmetry between the requirements of Pärt's music and the contemporaneous establishment of the modern performance practices of early music in the Western field, indicating an essential aspect of the material social history which enabled this emergent music to be recognized, valued and produced. Alongside this key point is the implication of a correspondence of timbre and sonority between these positions. The sensual impact of Pärt's music becomes a vital aspect of its wide popularity, and I contend that it this early music position-taking which is central to the legitimation of these aural parameters.

To make this argument it is necessary to note wider field developments which facilitate the general legitimacy of drawing on earlier music, and then to relate this to the enthusiasm with which this phenomenon is received. Griffiths provides a field articulation which observes an increased general acceptance of "looking backwards" in the 1980s:

Perhaps [...] unequalled since the Thirties is this so prevalent historicism in composition, which may result in the post-Shostakovich tragedies and ironies of Alfred Schnittke or in the [...] brushes with tonality and tradition marking the recent music of Gyorgy Ligeti, to leave unmentioned the host of Mahlerian symphonies [...] that have turned up in the United States and Germany particularly. And minimalism [...] can be seen as a route to the past, a re-achievement of a medieval sureness and grace in the music of Arvo Pärt [...], or a return to infantile repetition elsewhere [...]. If composers are nearly all going backwards these days, some of them at least are going forwards at the same time. (December 23, 1989)

The tendency towards these "prevalent historicisms" in composition is viewed as central in the activity at the autonomous pole of the field of production in the late 1970s and 1980s. Without this general movement, the legitimizing strategies around Pärt's music would have found it much more difficult to succeed. Looking for the social determinations for such historicisms is a more difficult task. Bourdieu might have read this reflection on the past as a

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<sup>122</sup> This extract is taken from Hillier's "Observations on the performance of Arvo Pärt's choral music" which introduces Universal Edition's set of complete choral scores. Hillier's chapter "Performance Practice" is also interesting in this regard (1997, 199-207).



symptom of the perceived contemporary deadlocks of the formal specializations of the consecrated avant-garde, seeing stylistic allusion and borrowing as an avenue of reinvigoration; an attenuation of the process he had identified for the circulation of the available symbolic capital within the field of production. For Bourdieu, the contemporary pressures of the market and the developing cultural industries are central in these deadlocks. Williams might have worked to critique the material social implications of this expression of musical values alternative to the received dominant consecrated tradition.

Bruce Horner uses Williams's work to argue that

music as a material social practice [...] enable[s] us to pursue how a "taste" for the "modernist" values of speed, precision, repetition, standardization, virtuosity, accuracy, literalism, impersonality, and professionalization [...] might serve the interests of technocracy. (179-180)

However, what emerged from Pärt's period of self-imposed silence was an attempt to express values perceived to be occluded by the dominant avant-garde: instead of the modernist values identified by Horner, he transparently articulates a structure of feeling that values beauty, silence, simplicity, reflection, solace, and so on. While I will argue below that the processes of tintinnabulation are derived from the space of possibles inscribed in the field of production, the sensual impact of this music also constitutes an important part of the rhetoric. In establishing precisely how to treat this aural rhetoric, it is useful to note that Williams articulates his reworked terms of hegemony (residual, dominant, emergent) in his discussion of tradition as cultural organization. In many ways, Pärt's exploration of early music parallels one of Williams's favourite techniques: working through the received material of the dominant selective tradition and then attempting to revivify practice by drawing on the excluded, secondary, or residual elements of tradition, in the process demonstrating what the dominant selection process has excluded.<sup>123</sup>

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<sup>123</sup> Remember here White's observation that Pärt's music "is an affront to the way we read music history, as a conveniently straight line pressing resolutely forward, and to the basic principles of modernism". Such a "conveniently straight line" is precisely the mechanism of the dominant selective tradition Williams identifies, but he would not see such a recognition as a challenge to modernism;



David Clarke describes the sonorous impact of Pärt's music as "giving voice on modernism's behalf to a song that it itself may not sing" (1993, 684). That the fruits of such a process made a "connection" with the contemporary social field is evidenced by the widespread success and popularity of Pärt's music. How such a phenomenon can be assessed is another question. The next two sections will attempt to argue that this issue became incorporated into the strategies and rhetorics around the struggle for the legitimation of Pärt's position-taking, and speak directly to the tragic/utopian structure of feeling which Williams identified as dominant in just this period.

In summary, early music can be identified as a significant stake in the field activity at the time of Pärt's position-taking, providing the important material point of the emergence of groups of trained performers, receptive critics and commentators. The aural qualities of Pärt's music can also be considered a significant position-taking with relation to early music – a treatment of sonority and timbre beyond the procedural determinations of tintinnabulation. The music's popular appeal has some proximity to a widely felt structure of feeling with implications for the development of rhetorics and strategies of legitimation. These latter points will be dealt with more fully later in this chapter.

### **The Rear-Garde and Questions of Technology**

This section is briefer than the central explorations of field activity already tackled. It combines two subjects: a discussion of Pärt's relationship with the consecrated areas of the field, and a signposting of the importance of technological developments. While questions of industry and technology are more appropriately a central part of the ECM discussion, I want to maintain in this survey of the field the connection between the field of production and developments in technology and industry which are vital determining factors at the time of Pärt's emergence.

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indeed, his main counter to what he perceived to be the debilitating aspects of post-modernism was to rework the selective tradition of modernism in order to identify a *plurality* of modernisms, some of which he saw as still active and offering the potential of working around the deadlocks of high modernism.

Pärt's first exposure in the UK is in concerts or broadcasts showcasing consecrated Russian or Soviet music, programmed alongside some of the most consecrated of the Western musical field's rear-garde. His work received key performances by conductors and performers with high consecration in the field, taking place in venues and events with high status in the field. For example, in 1982 Rudolf Barshai, recently emigrated from Russia, presented *Cantus* alongside Shostakovich and Mozart at the Festival Hall. Also in 1982, Neeme Järvi with the CBSO programmed *Collage sur B-A-C-H* alongside Brahms's Symphony No. 1 and Shostakovich's Symphony No. 4. Pärt's music was also presented alongside Russian repertoire already consecrated in the Western field: in 1979 the BBC Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Gennadi Rozhdestvensky at the Albert Hall, programmed *Cantus* alongside Rimsky-Korsakov's *Russian Easter Festival Overture*, Rachmaninov's Piano Concerto No 1 and Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring*. On 30 July 1980 BBC Radio 3 broadcast a programme entitled 'Russian Winds', including music by Grechaninov, Pärt and Stravinsky.

The alliances drawn between Pärt and the rear-garde can be attributed to a fascination in parts of the Western musical field with Soviet composers, performers, and conductors. Also, the 'official' Soviet line, as described in the accounts of Griffiths and Fanning, corresponds in part to this perceived consecrated area of the Western field. Although for different reasons, it seems that the Soviet marginalisation of the musical formalism of serialism and the rejection of 'early music' privileges a body of productive musical practices which are (very roughly) equivalent to the consecrated rear-garde of Western 'classical' music. In some senses Pärt gained a certain capital and status residually present because of the field within which his dispositions and trajectory are generated. This is not to make an argument that the content of the music of Pärt is itself closely related to this rear-garde – this would be difficult to sustain – but rather that it enters the field of Western classical music predisposed to being acknowledged by other members of the field as carrying many of the trappings of status and consecration. Figure 2 (I) offers a basic illustration of the structure of the Western field's avant-garde, consecrated avant-garde, and consecrated rear-garde.

These observations may seem slightly tangential, but it is important to recognize the early presence of Pärt in the most consecrated area of the Western musical field. This is highly unusual for an emergent contemporary composer and took place before the development of the various relationships between Pärt, the ECM formation/institution, and performers such as The Hilliard Ensemble, Tõnu Kaljuste, Dennis Russell Davies, Gidon Kremer, and Keith Jarrett. Throughout his career Pärt has managed to maintain a relationship with the institutions of legitimation in the consecrated areas of the field of production, despite his successes towards the heteronomous pole of production.<sup>124</sup> In more recent times Pärt has received various indicators of status, including major attention from the Royal Academy of Music's 14<sup>th</sup> International Composer Festival in 2000. Phil Johnson previewed the festival for *The Independent*, noting that it "is further proof that Pärt is now among a great tradition" (2000, 17).

Pärt's seventieth birthday in 2005 excited further attempts to usher him in to the fold of a consecrated "great tradition". George Hall's review is a good example:

Arvo Pärt turned 70 this year, and it's been nearly three decades since the first works of his distinctively mature style began to attract widespread attention under the derogatory label "holy minimalism". Placing them at the centre of a programme otherwise devoted to Mozart and Stravinsky, Vladimir Jurowski made a strong case for their inclusion in classical music's long-standing tradition of spiritual exploration. (36)

It is striking that the very earliest exposure of Pärt's music in the Western field was alongside very similar repertoire to this much later instance, with a similarly positive response. Nothing has changed radically in Pärt's productive practices in these three decades (and anyway, Hall is here reviewing a performance of Pärt's *Cantus*: the same piece which was first performed in the UK alongside the same repertoire).<sup>125</sup> What has changed radically is the organization of the

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<sup>124</sup> While Pärt undoubtedly has had some success in terms of record sales, he is hardly a major figure in the most heteronomous pole of industrial musical production. However, Bourdieu's reflections on the structures of the field of art would make even the hint of commercial success a problematic factor in autonomous legitimacy and consecration.

<sup>125</sup> The processes of tintinnabulation have of course developed, and are even pushed to surprising places in some of the later choral works. However, in their fundamentals they remain much as in the output of 1976. The most obvious development is that after the early output of predominantly instrumental



field and the relative positions and position-takings within it. At the risk of getting ahead of the argument, this includes Pärt's own position-taking and the rhetorics of legitimation which helped secure it; the legacies of these social struggles now exist in the field as narrative stakes. The above extract evidences struggles in the service of a great *selective* tradition (which no longer has the grounds to be considered dominant, even if it still residually holds many of the trappings of privilege). The attempted hegemonic processes here are not aimed at the incorporation of dissidence in terms of an avant-garde, but rather form an attempt to recognize a serious music which has flirted with commercial success.

Developments in technology and the music industry must be a vital part of any reading of the musical field in this period. Scrutinizing this field reveals a process of industry consolidation, resulting in the market dominance of a few companies, and an increase in the technologies of recording, particularly the advent of digital products such as the CD and, later, downloadable music files. These developments provoke tensions (not all of them negative) in the autonomous sections of the field of musical production, especially if we accept the descriptions offered by Williams and Bourdieu of this mode of cultural production as residually determined by pre-capitalist social organization. My reflections on both the notions of 'technology' (which consider Williams's work on communications technologies) and a 'music industry' (defined as a particular contemporary configuration of the relations of production) are presented in an appendix. These factors have been important in the changing pressures and limits exerted on practice in recent times, and any attempt to discuss contemporary musical production must try to account for them. I am particularly keen to emphasise these developments as material and social; to highlight the interrelatedness of the social production of technologies, the organization of the production and distribution of musical products, the treatments of cultural production and cultural form, and the relation of these to the general social processes.

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works, Pärt focused on producing almost exclusively choral pieces. However, the recent *Lamentate* (2005) has more in common with *Credo* (1968) than with the intervening tintinnabulation works.



## Summary Conclusions

The first section of this chapter explored the stakes – the pressures and limits – at play in the Western field of musical production at the time of Pärt's recognition and legitimation, drawing methodologically on Bourdieu's scientific tools of objectification. Pärt emerged into a Western field organized at the autonomous pole around a generalized opposition between avant-garde and experimental forces. This opposition structured the field of possibles from which tintinnabulation was developed. This speaks forward to the discussions of rhetoric in the second section of this chapter. The development of early music forces in the field provided a body of agents able to recognize, value, and reproduce Pärt's work, and allowed the nature of this work as a position-taking in terms of its sensual impact. The final section noted the complex relationship between Pärt's practice and the consecrated rear-garde of the field, and the importance of considering the pressures and limits of developing technologies and industry consolidation. While this last point speaks most clearly to the discussion of ECM in chapter 6, the more general methodological point is that all of these field observations are inadequate as explanations in their own terms, and require further work in terms of the detail of institutional and formational activity. The next section will explore the extent to which the tintinabuli compositions operate a rhetorical character, along with the development of complementary rhetorics.

## 2.5.2 Section 2 – The Rhetorics of a Position-Taking

### Towards a Stylistic Strategy

Pärt's musical position-taking necessarily responds to the Western field of musical production on two fronts: firstly in terms of its approach to musical materials, and secondly in terms of the space between various positions in the field of production. I shall now consider the implications of relationships between these two points. Both Bourdieu and Williams argue that it is as necessary to talk of formal characteristics in any attempt to discern a position-taking and field position as it is to discuss the range of activity of particular agents and producers (themselves occupying field positions). Perhaps most importantly, they argue that there are relationships between these activities. The discussions below test whether the early tintinnabuli compositions can be seen as a stylistic position-taking with a related position at the heart of the field of production. Some consideration is then offered of the activities in the field which aim to legitimate this emergent field position, and broader developments in the field which facilitate these complementary strategies are also noted. These arguments will provide the means to consider the *illusio* of the field of production. A discussion of the place of Williams's dominant structure of feeling will highlight the importance of institutional factors in the establishment of the field position and position-taking of Pärt, and will set up a discussion of ECM in the following chapter.

Arvo Pärt's discussion of tintinnabulation as a "conscious decision for [...] a correction" of the excesses of modernism speaks to Bourdieu's notions in *The Rules of Art*:

Each position-taking (thematic, stylistic and so on) is defined (objectively and sometimes intentionally) in relation to the universe of position-takings and in relation to the problematic as a space of possibles indicated or suggested there. It receives its distinctive value from the negative relationship which unites it to the coexisting position-takings to which it is objectively referred and which determine it by circumscribing it. It follows, for example, that the meaning and value of a position-taking (artistic genre, particular work and so on) change automatically, even while the adopted stance remains identical, when the universe of substitutable options simultaneously offered to producers and consumers is changed. (1996, 233)

Pärt seems to refute Bourdieu's reflections on the field of production when he argues:

The artistic reflection of ideas, style, history, etc. is [...] a form of game. Art, however, cannot be separated from it. Yet, I did not want to create art. I wanted to free and distance myself from making artificial art. Rather I wanted to combine two different issues; namely, art and life, art and being. This approach comes from a completely different perspective and has a different starting point. It doesn't need to start from art. (Smith, G. 19)

Bourdieu would agree that the functioning of the field is a form of game with very real consequences for those taking part.<sup>126</sup> However, neither he nor Williams would admit the separation of the “artistic reflection of ideas, style, history” from the other relationships in the field, insisting on the importance of the complexity of this interrelation. Here, stylistic developments do not belong in a reified social construction such as a history of ideas, but are material social elements of the field of musical production – a field which Pärt makes extensive use of for the formal content and the modes of production and distribution of his practice, despite his disavowal of “art”.

It would be difficult to deny that the dominant story of the musical pre-history to Pärt's stylistic crisis (the period of silence in the 1970s) is, in the field of Western classical art music, one of formal specialization. This is a narrative which describes the systematic erosion, through the mechanisms of the sustained modernist dissection of musical meaning, of the tonal system (and related fundamental mechanisms such as metre and rhythm) and notions of musical development. It is this questioning of received musical structures that leads to the range of possible options available to Pärt's position-taking with the tintinnabulation compositions. Further, as the discussion of early music showed, an important aspect of Pärt's solution to his creative crisis is a position-taking in terms of timbre and sonority. This disregards the received dominant modernist aesthetic.

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<sup>126</sup> The concept of *illusio* is often discussed in terms of a belief in the rules of the game, which appear to be determining, in many instances, of the particular logics of practice inscribed in the fields (for example, the *illusio* is “the collective adhesion to the game that is both the cause and effect of the existence of the game” Bourdieu, 1996, 167).



These observations are taken up by David Clarke, who attempts to account for Pärt's relationship with musical modernism and early music, in the process also describing the tintinnabuli processes as "rhetorical":

In order to circumnavigate modernism's critical agenda Pärt has to convince us of the validity – the contemporary meaningfulness and truthfulness – of the musical materials he has re-mortgaged from the past. Accordingly, the tintinnabuli style is more than just a set of musical features: it amounts to a *rhetoric*, a contradictory strategy which seeks on the one hand to meet modernism on its own terms, and on the other to deny modernism's own denial of certain aesthetic possibilities. (1993, 682)

Clarke advances a notion of rhetoric here which is able to take into account Pärt's relationship with both the dominant autonomous area of the field and with early music, and lends some force to the notion of tintinnabulation as the development of a critical position operating from within clearly defined musical processes to legitimate the use of retrieved musical materials. Clarke goes further, linking Pärt to the dominant modernist tradition by arguing that these processes are remarkably close to the impulses found in composers operating in the contemporary dominant autonomous area of the field (as seen in Pärt's interview with McCarthy and Hillier's linkage of Pärt and Cage in *Magister ludi*), serving to "defamiliarise the well known domain of the diatonic" (1993, 682). This point is further underlined in his discussion of the *Dies Irae* from Pärt's *Miserere*:

[T]he superimposed tempos [...] create a complex fabric in which the all-too familiar descending natural minor scale is re-contextualized. The emergent texture is a web of numerous cross-connections that throw up many unpredictable harmonic configurations. A homophonic passage [...] demonstrates still more clearly the way Pärt wrests tonal harmony from its traditional functional basis. [The] independent linear elements generate quite striking sonorities which have nothing to do with functional triadic harmony, demonstrating instead a state of emancipated diatonic dissonance. Freed from triadic confinement, the vertical dimension aspires to the wider-ranging intervallic possibilities of free atonal music. [...]. (1993, 682)

Useful as this is, it is necessary to expand and extend this notion of rhetoric if it is to account fully for the field activities of this stylistic strategy. Tintinnabulation is a gamble in terms of the field of production: a musical position-taking defined by the pressures and limits of the field of possibles and clearly positioned in relation to the other forces in the field.



However, considering the ambiguities of Pärt's emergence into this field of production, it is somewhat unclear where the homologous field position for this position-taking lies.

Tintinnabulation continues to fulfil some of the roles of an autonomous avant-garde in terms of the functioning of the field. It is oppositional to a consecrated avant-garde, attempting, implicitly, to relegate to the past a whole series of productive practice, and in this sense it speaks to the instituted process of change in the field as Bourdieu describes it. As may be expected from an emergent heterodox strategy, it constitutes something of a challenge to the established organization of the field (its *doxa*) in terms of its *illusio* (the belief in certain kinds of meaning or truth in the field) and *nomos* (the bounded areas of practice). In the process, it achieves a comparatively broad legitimation and a general resonance with a dominant contemporary structure of feeling (discussed in more detail below). In doing so it comes to operate outside of the autonomous sphere of practice, achieving broad popular and market success anathema to this mode of production, while rhetorically advocating the gains of autonomous practice. It therefore constitutes a challenge to the autonomous mechanism of change Bourdieu identifies in the field of production.

Any discussion of the *rhetoric* of tintinnabulation must be understood as the musical aspect of an attempt to define not just an opposition to the contemporary dominant modernist stylistic position-takings, but as the attempt to stake a new position in a rapidly changing field. This attempt is aided by a number of emergent written rhetorics, a broad audience receptive to the work, and, crucially, by the development of an institution capable of offering a position of some symmetry in the market place.<sup>127</sup>

It is this multifaceted struggle that characterises the attempt to establish a position in the field, drawing rhetorically, and over a number of different levels, on the legacies of the refusal and the wager theorized by Williams and Bourdieu, but also moving away from some of the terms of autonomous practice so defined. The rhetoric of tintinnabulation is the insistence on

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<sup>127</sup> Clarke also notes the proliferation of rhetorics around the tintinnabuli processes. However, he reads these as the attempt to sustain these musical processes when they fail (1993, 683), rather than the attempt to establish a new position in the field of production.

the transcendent value of the autonomous musical utterance (and the *practices* of such musical autonomy) in the service of individual emancipation, while denying the logics of practice which the autonomous position-taking inscribed in the field; denying, that is, the “games”, or the “rules”, of “art” in a refusal of the social struggle of the field of production.

### **The Rhetorics of Complementary Position-Takings**

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, the stylistic position-taking of tintinnabulation and Pärt’s concomitant infant field position, find some complementary written and verbal rhetorical strategies. These are produced by both Pärt himself but also by various agents able, through their position in the field, to capitalize on the opportunities of this emergent position. These rhetorics become the ground on which the legitimation of this new position is contested and ultimately secured. This process is described by Bourdieu as follows:

[T]he stakes of the struggle among the dominants and the pretenders, between orthodoxy and heresy, and the very content of the strategies they can put into effect to advance their interests, depend on the space of position-takings already brought about, and this, functioning as a problematic, tends to define the space of possible position-takings, and thus to shape the search for solutions and, consequently the evolution of production. And on the other hand, however great the autonomy of the field, the chances of success of strategies of conservation and subversion always depend in part on the reinforcement that one or another camp can find in external forces (for example, in new clientele). (1996, 234)

There were a good many such reinforcements in the Western field for Pärt’s early position. These are found initially in the quick support of the institutions of Universal Edition and ECM; the presence of a body of early music performers searching for new music; a number of receptive critics and journalists occupying positions from which they were inclined and able to advocate this new music; and, eventually, a relatively wide audience receptive to the terms of the tintinnabuli position-taking.

As Bourdieu’s argument would suggest, there are symmetries between the multiple networks of legitimizing rhetorics, the stakes of the position-taking, and the emergent field position discussed at the close of the section above. Pärt himself, in the sleeve notes to ECM’s

*Tabula rasa*, describes tintinnabulation in terms which have since become well used sound-bites:

Tintinnabulation is an area I sometimes wander into when I am searching for answers – in my life, my music, my work. In my dark hours, I have the certain feeling that everything outside this one thing has no meaning. The complex [...] only confuses me, and I must search for unity. [...] This one note, or a silent beat, or a moment of silence, comfort me. (Pärt, 1984)

The themes here of refusal, withdrawal, solace, comfort, and simplicity become recurrent themes in the legitimation of this music. This refusal is reworked as renunciation, often used rhetorically or implicitly to emphasize the tragedy of the contemporary world.<sup>128</sup> The wager is also apparent as a theme in the above extract, reworked as a search for salvation. This latter is reinforced in Pärt's comment that serialist composers "don't interest me at all. What does interest me is how they will all come out of this situation. It is only an episode in a person's life. This children's game will soon come to an end" (McCarthy, 132).

These themes become evident in the wider commentary. For example, in an interview designed to introduce listeners to Arvo Pärt, Paul Griffiths offers a commentary on Pärt's rejection of "avant-garde activity" and an explanation for the resulting stylistic position-taking:

P.G. After [...] a prolonged study of Renaissance polyphony, followed by an even longer silence, preparing for the breakthrough into utter simplicity, into a music of rhythmic calm and radiant triadic harmonies. Was this, I wondered, something he had been looking for during the earlier period of avant-garde activity?

A.P. [...] One day I realized that I possessed a great many things in my music, but I did not possess the most important thing. And so I set about eliminating everything that was extraneous.

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<sup>128</sup> It should be noted that this is a renunciation made in an *artistic* field, and only finds articulation because of the conditions of autonomous practice enabled by the institution of the original modernist refusal.



P.G. [...] Not surprisingly, Pärt sees a great deal of contemporary music as acting on the periphery, not searching for the centre. (June 10, 1986).<sup>129</sup>

Again, the field stakes of the tintinnabuli position-taking are clearly defined, reproduced by Griffiths as a complementary written position-taking. These legitimating rhetorics should not be thought of as the simple support or denigration of Pärt's music, but rather the support of the *rhetorical thrust of the tintinnabuli position-taking*. Even before Hillier met Pärt, he mirrors this thrust in a letter to the editor of *The Musical Times* protesting against Wilfred Mellers's reading of Wim Merten's *American Minimal Music*:

One of the significant aspects of minimalist music is that it teaches us not mindlessness [...] but mindfulness. [...] The possibility looms that our Classical-Romantic music was a large detour mirroring the trend of our industrial and colonizing society [...]. To the extent that this is so, as I believe, then our 'discovery' of non-Western art and music is not an exotic piece of tourism, but shows the more civilized members of our society trying to rejoin the remainder of mankind. (1984, 428)<sup>130</sup>

Many of these themes emerge time and again in commentary on Pärt. In particular, the reference to the Classical-Romantic tradition as a mirror of modernity, informed, consciously or otherwise, by Adorno's legacy, is very important and is picked up on and espoused by ECM and others. Quite often there seems to be, in a critical or utopian spirit, a conflation between a refusal of the terms of the 'culture industry' and modernization – in ECM's case this is quite explicitly thought through in Adornian terms – and a refusal of this body of repertoire. Alongside this theme there is also a linked appeal to a pre-modern (or non-Western) realm of feeling: above, this is represented in terms of nature, and non-Western music and its exploration. In the case of Pärt, this tendency gives rise to a whole range of discussion and phraseology which assesses, describes, and eulogizes (*legitimizes*) tintinnabulation in terms which would be rejected by a modernist critical musicology.<sup>131</sup>

<sup>129</sup> This is a significant statement, as the phrase recurs as the keystone of Manfred Eicher's acceptance speech for the "Kultureller Ehrenpreis" prize of the Cultural Commission of the City Council of Munich in 2005, in which he described ECM's values and approach to music.

<sup>130</sup> The implications of the wider field developments here will be discussed below.

<sup>131</sup> And also perhaps by a more traditional approach to musical materials, which ironically might respond more positively to Pärt's own call to discuss his music in purely 'mathematical' or 'purely musical' terms.



While there are many instances of this framing of Pärt, with a good range already indicated, a good example is to be found with the release of ECM New Series's *Arbos* (1987) which contains two essays in its sleeve notes. In the first, Peter Hamm argues:

Whoever, along with Theodor W. Adorno, counts only the advancement of musical material as a sign of worth will most likely dismiss Arvo Pärt's music as retrogressive. But what makes this music appear united with things past, what gives it an archaic effect, is nothing but its knowledge of a timeless truth. (Pärt, 1987)

In the second, Wilfred Mellers notes:

Although it may seem that the religious, perhaps mystical, nature of Pärt's experience must render it remote from many [...] people in an age of unfaith, one recognizes that his innocence [...] is a quality that anyone may vicariously share in. For Pärt's music to work its magic one needs only to be [...] "of good will". (Pärt, 1987)<sup>132</sup>

Both Hamm and Mellers articulate an ambivalent rejection of the critical agenda of modernism, dissident but also belonging (if only negatively) and in this sense paralleling my discussion of the rhetoric of the *tintinnabuli* position-taking. This rhetorical thrust finds slightly different articulation and expression in the commentaries on Pärt. It is on these grounds (at least in part) that the legitimation of Pärt's position in the field is fought throughout the 1980s, with the rhetorics of diverse position-takings across various media, launched from various positions within the field of musical production, becoming established in the 1990s and beyond.

Restrictions of space mean that it is not possible to discuss every such instance, but if the above is considered representative of attempts to legitimate the rhetorical thrust of *tintinnabuli*, then Robin Holloway's review of the state of 'new music' at the end of the 1980s is a clear example of a strategy aimed, in general terms, at its denigration:

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<sup>132</sup> Despite the disagreement between Hillier and Mellers, Mellers was a very active advocate of Pärt. He was of an older generation than many of Pärt's other commentators, and occupied a different position in the field. Rather than arguing for a break with the modernist narrative as Hillier does, he attempted to reframe the traditions of modernism (in an almost Williamsian reworking of the dominant selective tradition) to find a frame able to accommodate the *tintinnabuli* position-taking (see especially Mellers, 1989).

How to ensure a sympathetic reception for a new piece of music? Ideally the subject should combine Ecology [...] with Protest [...]. It should climax with an ecumenical prayer [...] for intergalactic peace. The musical material should include at least three of the following: Jewish cantillation, Catholic plainsong, Tibetan chanting, Aboriginal drumming, whalesong. [...] When inspiration fails, fill the gaps with ritual gong-strokes, prolonged and amplified to the threshold of pain.

[...] the present mood is sombre and apocalyptic. [...] A spiritual void needs to be satisfied, so what is offered as serious and sacrosanct must be as good as it pretends. [...] The worth of individual pieces is, obviously, very various; consistent is the appeal to piety, ensuring that the elevated theme produces a warm-hearted response. These composers are not coldly exploiting their audiences' kindness; they are all equally the victims of the going ideology. (35)

The hostile reaction to New Ageism in the wonderfully vitriolic first paragraph is perhaps one of the recurrent strategies made against the emergent position. This is often tied to worries about escapism or disengagement; Tom Sutcliffe comments, “moving from Steve Reich to Arvo Pärt is like exchanging a magic carpet for a catacomb: Reich is music of change, Pärt is stasis. [...] It is probably better not to listen too closely, if one meditates one may drift off into another world altogether” (1995, 8). David Clarke also muses on the “perilously fine line Pärt treads between simplicity and vacuity” (1993, 683). Overall, once Pärt's position in the field is established, a number of dismissals of his work emerge on different grounds. These are often in relation to his popularity or commercial success, as Anna Picard's review of the ECM New Series release of *Orient & Occident* demonstrates:

Arvo Pärt's homophony represents the high-end of a lucrative market in middle-brow modernism; flattering the listener by sounding intellectual while requiring little actual engagement. [...] behind the “still waters run deep” carapace is a pappy collage of reconstituted Fauré. (14)

The above examples describe position-takings made in response to Pärt's own emergent position-taking. The quality and content of these moves depend to a large degree on the position the agent occupies in the field; they either defend a position such as the modernist prospect, defend a particular version of the selective tradition, respond to particular pressures,

stakes, and occurrences in the field such as the exigencies of journalism, or attempt to legitimate a particular perception of a new position.<sup>133</sup>

### The Wider Field

The rhetoric of these position-takings emerges in a decade of change in the field of Western classical music; Pärt *et al* do not simply develop deliberate strategies which then secure success within a static space. As Bourdieu urges, position-takings such as artistic works and commentaries should be considered for analytical purposes as “a ‘system’ of oppositions” (1996, 232). These strategies are not the result of conscious collusion between agents, but are both a product of, and a stake in, the permanent struggle which is the field of production. The thesis of a homologous relationship between positions and position-takings is not treated by Bourdieu as one of mechanical determination, but is mediated by his proposal of a space of available options. This is a space orientated by the contemporary configuration of the field, with positions identifiable as potential routes for artistic action: things to be done, music to be written, reviews to create, critical essays to be composed, adversaries to argue with, allies to ally with, established positions to be overtaken, and so on. If *Distinction* works to demonstrate that the taste of consumers is determined to a large extent by the configuration of what is available, so Bourdieu’s work on cultural production attempts to show that the creative act is determined by the state of the space of possible production. These debates are not somehow exterior to, or removed from, ‘the music itself’ or even the field of musical activity. The chosen position-takings of compositional decisions are deeply determined by the configuration of the field of production, which in turn determines the space of possibles, and the composer’s position within it.

One of the difficulties of this research has been the scope of dealing with a musical field entering a period of fragmentation in the early 1980s, with a proliferation of positions and strategies impacting upon the field of struggle. The documentary analysis of this period shows a

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<sup>133</sup> This is of course dependent on the agent’s *habitus*, which in turn shapes the dispositions which gravitate them to one position or another.



great deal of contemporary adjustment occurring. Most clearly, and as is suggested by a process of fragmentation, the field itself shifts away from the *determining dominance* of the modernist critical programmes, and it is this gradual and insidious weakening which enables both the positions and the legitimizing strategies of the position-takings of Pärt and his collaborators to succeed. This is not to argue a 'demise of modernism', itself one of the rhetorical strategies of the day (a position-taking determined by newly available positions in the field), since areas of the field continue to espouse a commitment to the values 'modernism' represents, but rather a weakening of its hegemonic power. This is inextricably linked to multiple position-takings which constitute challenges to the received organization of the autonomous pole of production, predicated on a logic of avant-garde change inherited from the struggles of the initial autonomous position-taking. As should by now be clear, the case of Pärt and ECM constitutes a particularly interesting example of this tendency.

This state of the field is summarized in a contemporaneous account by Paul Griffiths which reflects on its structures at the end of the 1980s, in the process constructing many of the major stakes and positions of these shifts. Griffiths's opening gambit points to the incursion of a commercial principle to a world fiercely defensive of its autonomous principles. He describes the developing impact of the recording industry, technology, and the increasing importance of early music:

It was the decade when we [...] all learned what commercial sponsorship meant. When Simon Rattle and the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra went on and on providing a glorious contrary to a stagnant orchestral world. When 'early music' began to mean natural horns, gut strings and zooming tempos in Beethoven. When the major recording stars included Wilhelm Furtwangler, Tito Schipa and Clara Haskil. When the South Bank turned into a theme park. When we learned to follow opera plots from the autocue, having given up hope of doing so from the stage. (December 23, 1989)

Griffiths articulates a generalized "turn to the past" in the face of a hopeless present, finding its articulation in the "vitality of the period-style movement", the increasing popularity of "historic



recordings”, and the increasing interest in “forgotten masters”.<sup>134</sup> He is keen not to place the cause of this at the door of contemporary composers, in terms of a failure to engage a contemporary audience, noting the creative fertility of the new music of the decade. Instead, he argues that this tendency must be “more deeply ingrained in our cultural condition than simply to be explained as a reaction against the work of living composers”, noting that the hold of the modernist avant-garde “adventure” over emergent autonomous composers has itself weakened, with composers “turning to, or being engulfed by, modes of form and feeling borrowed from another era”.

Alongside this, he also registers the strength of forward-looking areas of the field, particularly citing Brian Ferneyhough’s *Carceri d’invenzione* cycle alongside the music of Dusapin and Lindberg as examples of “continuing modernist vitality”. The central difference between this modernism and that of the 1950s and 1960s is, he argues, that “composers have become more isolated, and probably no longer think in terms of reinventing the art of music”. However, this work, alongside that of Kurtág and Birtwistle, is seen as demonstrating that the “possibilities of pristine newness remain” (December 23, 1989). In this context it is worth revisiting the extract from Griffiths cited above:

Perhaps [...] unequalled since the Thirties is this so prevalent historicism in composition, which may result in the post-Shostakovich tragedies and ironies of Alfred Schnittke or in the tantalizing, witty and sometimes disturbing brushes with tonality and tradition marking the recent music of Gyorgy Ligeti, to leave unmentioned the host of Mahlerian symphonies and the like that have turned up in the United States and Germany particularly. And minimalism, too, can be seen as a route to the past, a re-achievement of a medieval sureness and grace in the music of Arvo Pärt (or indeed that of Messiaen), or a return to infantile repetition elsewhere [...]. If composers are nearly all going backwards these days, some of them at least are going forwards at the same time. (December 23, 1989)

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<sup>134</sup> This “hopeless present” is clearly meant as a reference to the political situation of the 1980s (and probably more specifically to Thatcherism). This generalized situation is tackled in Williams’s *Towards 2000* as a challenge on multiple levels – the political, economic, and the cultural – and in this sense constitutes a major determination in the formulation of his critical sociology of culture and his emancipatory critique, organized around the notions of tragedy and utopia in his dominant structure of feeling. Not insignificantly, his drive to establish the utopian aspects of his thought occurs in the 1980s (1980, 1983, 1989) explicitly as an attempt to combat a deepening and debilitating pessimism.

What this field account demonstrates is a perceived fragmentation of the autonomous pole of musical production into a number of quite clearly delineated areas, each with concomitant strategies for legitimating their definitions of practice. The rhetoric of the position-takings of tintinnabulation, the concomitant attempt to establish a position in the field of production, and the various position-takings and positions of its commentaries and commentators can be understood in this light.

One of Bourdieu's key theoretical terms is useful here: the *nomos* describes the struggle for legitimation of the definition of productive practice within artistic fields. These internal struggles inevitably take the form of conflicts over definition, with each position trying to impose the boundaries of the field most favourable to its interests. A central stake in artistic rivalries is the attempt to establish a monopoly of artistic legitimacy. This is the power to consecrate – to state with authority – who is authorized to call him or herself an artist, and who has the authority to say who else is deserving of being called an artist. Struggles over the *nomos* are most often to be found between the heteronomous and autonomous poles of production, but this period of the Western musical field leads to some terse rivalries amongst very close autonomous positions.

There are numerous examples of this in the preceding discussions, but Holloway's contention that "the good composer expresses what he feels and makes what he is making, from an essentially musical motivation, by essentially musical means" is precisely an attempt to define what is "good" and exclude what is "bad", thus defining the most desirable terms of practice (35). He draws on the received organization of the field as support for his argument, striving to make it appear common sense that musical value is to be found in musical form and excluding the "extra-musical", which he sees in instances of "New Age" music as constituting a kind of "emotional blackmail". Similarly, Hamm's assertion that the music of Pärt is "good" because it is able to assert a "knowledge of a timeless truth" – an attitude unacceptable to those trained in the methods of critical analysis espoused by Adorno – is another attempt to stake out the *nomos*, this time justifying the terms of Pärt's music and by implication Hamm's

own position-taking (Pärt, 1987).<sup>135</sup> Hamm doesn't draw on the history of the field for support (although the statement is of course structured by it), but attempts to relegate it to a lesser status, arguing for a *more legitimate frame of reference*.

This latter point has some symmetry with Hillier's argument that the recourse to non-Western music – a rejection of the received musical logics of the field of Western music – is the result of “more civilized members of our society trying to rejoin the remainder of humanity”. The development of tintinnabulation can also be understood as the desire to develop a frame of reference beyond the modernist program. These generalized dissatisfactions with modernism are therefore made via musical works, practices, and commentary. The clashes over the boundaries of legitimate practice and the conditions of participation must not be considered a discussion abstracted from the business of musical works.

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<sup>135</sup> The *content* and veracity of these arguments is not to be the sole focus of debate. This content is of course important, as it indicates which of the perceived sociocultural structures and their valuing bases are targeted by the agent, but misunderstandings, misreadings, unconsidered rejections can be as revealing of the structure of the field as a critique carried through in the most consecrated of traditions.

### 2.5.3 Section 3 – The Tintinnabuli Position-Taking, the *Illusio*, and the Dominant Structure of Feeling

#### Belief: Consideration of the *Illusio*

The above arguments lead me to consider Bourdieu's notion of *belief* and the central role it operates in determining the logics of practice operating in the field. I will offer a brief summary of this, before discussing how the changing structure of the field can be considered a shift in the dominant form of belief in the field of musical production, and how the rhetorics around the emergent position-takings and positions of Pärt can be considered to be aimed at these shifts in belief.

The struggle over the definition of legitimate cultural production, the *nomos*, creates and perpetuates what Bourdieu describes as “a continual reproduction of belief in the game, interest in the game and its stakes” (1996, 227). He terms this notion of belief the *illusio*, and gives it a central role in his field theory:

The smooth running of all social mechanisms, whether in the literary field or in the field of power, depends on the existence of the *illusio*, the interest, the investment, in both economic and psychological senses. (1993. 159)

The nature of an *illusio* is produced within the practices of each field; not just those of cultural production, but also, as is indicated above, the field of power and the broader social field. Further, agents within the field realise the *illusio* by investing in its stakes, its pressures and limits. In turn their relationship with the *illusio* orientates them among the different positions available within the field – the relationship is both structured and structuring – and shapes the particular form of practice which will be deployed as a position-taking. This complex relationship is described by Bourdieu as follows:

[I]t is just as true that a certain form of adherence to the game, of belief in the game and the value of its stakes, which makes the game worth the trouble of playing is the basis of the functioning of the game, and that the *collusion* of agents in the *illusio* is the root of the competition which pits them against each other, and which makes the game itself. In short, the *illusio* is the condition for the functioning of a game of which it is also, at least partially, the product. (1996, 228)



Bourdieu goes further in *The Rules of Art*, arguing that it is precisely the relationship between the agent's *habitus* and the field. The nature of an artist's involvement in the *illusio* of a particular field is determined by the relationship between these two notions, which are in turn two "historically placed institutions inhabited by the same fundamental law" (1996, 230). The field structures the dispositions of an agent's *habitus*, which in turn responds to the field of possibles inscribed in the field by the relative distribution of the positions available within it. It is in this relationship that the available strategies for negotiating artistic production are discovered as legitimate logics of practice. In this way, production is structured by the positioned response of the artist to the pressures and limits operating in the field, colluding in and perpetuating the "rules of the game": the *illusio*.

### **Towards an Understanding of the Contemporary *Illusio***

The ultimate source of value and meaning of a work of art is to be found in the complex social struggle that is the field of cultural production, which produces a "universe of belief" (the *illusio*), encompassing all agents with interested stakes in the available logics of practice. In modern times, a belief in the creative power of the artist has come to be a major constitutive aspect of the field, produced as fetish. The status of a work of art in Bourdieu's theory is that of an object which only comes to possess value (symbolic capital) through the functioning of the field of production. It must be recognisable, understood, and valued by agents who possess the tools to undertake such recognition, understanding, and valuing.<sup>136</sup> It is this process that produces *belief* in the value of the work. The functioning of the *illusio* rests on an agreement between the inculcated dispositions (derived through their relationship to the field) deployed by both the composer and the listener to construct the meaning and value of the piece of music.<sup>137</sup> The contemporary *perception* of the work of art is derived from the same

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<sup>136</sup> These tools are provided by the dispositions of the *habitus* derived, in turn, through a complex relationship with the field (the *illusio*).

<sup>137</sup> It would be Bourdieu's argument that a musical event cannot become endowed with value (symbolic capital) until it is apprehended by a listener possessing the disposition and competences which it tacitly requires. It is actually the ear of this listener (or perhaps more accurately their particular dispositions and the social forces which have produced them) which constitute the work. The organization of the field therefore governs both consumption and production.

configuration of the field which governs the *production* of the artistic position-taking, and both are closely linked to the *illusio*:

[T]he categories engaged in the perception and appreciation of the work of art are doubly linked to historical context: associated with a social universe which is situated and dated, they are also the object of usages which are themselves socially marked by the social position of their users. The majority of notions which artists and critics employ to define themselves or to define their adversaries are weapons and stakes in struggles, and a number of the categories which art historians deploy in order to treat their topic are nothing more than classificatory schemes issuing from these struggles and then more or less skilfully disguised or transfigured. (Bourdieu, 1996, 297)

The job that the concept of the *illusio* calls us to is the attempt to understand the process of the social institution of belief in the value and meaning of a particular work, style, or structure of feeling (the struggle for legitimation and consecration) operating in a particular period of the field of production.

I have assumed a certain range of this *illusio*. In order to be fully rigorous it would be necessary to account for the production of belief in the configuration of Western ‘art’ music on a macro scale, and perhaps critique the perceived social value of ‘art’ more generally. However, Bourdieu’s attempt to define the autonomous position-taking of modernism – the “‘heroic times’ of the struggle for independence when the virtues of revolt and resistance had to assert themselves” (1996, 48) – and the subsequent trials of this position-taking in the face of rising complex pressures, aims to identify and critique the character of the *illusios* of the differentiated fields of cultural production as they accommodate a newly instituted autonomous position.<sup>138</sup> Bourdieu’s discussions of *illusio* are tied in to his attempt to objectify the impact of the wager and the refusal as they become inscribed into the logics of practice of the fields of cultural production. This argument can be traced as follows: first, Bourdieu argues that the institution of perpetual revolution in the field of production, essential to the

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<sup>138</sup> This is particularly evident in Bourdieu’s attempts to apply his work to the social production of the practical schemas of artistic perception, in which he devotes considerable energy to demonstrating the development of dispositions capable of recognizing the value of the autonomous position-taking, instituted as “the pure aesthetic” (see in particular *The Historical Genesis of a Pure Aesthetic* (1993, 254-266). By way of contrast he also provides a valuable sketch of an instance of an *illusio* operating before the institution of a specifically modern autonomy (*The Quattrocento Eye* (1996, 315-321)).

modernist autonomous position-taking, removes the possibility of any securely located guarantor of the value of the dominant *illusio*. Social fields develop which are organized by a competition which pits agents against each other in a struggle to establish legitimate forms of practice with no possibility of ultimate verification. The social value of the *illusio* is found “in the network of relations of exchange through which it is both produced and circulates” (1996, 230), with producers competing for the power of consecration which is only to be gained in and through the struggle itself.

Second, Bourdieu demonstrates that his examinations of modernist artworks are inextricably related to his study of the emergence of a section of the field capable of providing itself with its own market – an autonomous mode of production able to assert the primacy of form over function as its *raison d’être*. He explains the tendency of increasing formal specialization in the modern fields of cultural production as one of a critical turning of art practices back upon the structures of the fields which produce them. He cites the formal developments in the field of musical production as an example of this *par excellence*, offering a brief discussion of René Leibowitz’s work on the Second Viennese School (*Schoenberg et son École* (1947)) in which Leibowitz identifies in Schoenberg’s musical and critical work as “the total realization of the fundamental compositional principle which, while implicit in the whole previous evolution of polyphony, becomes explicit for the first time in Schoenberg’s work: it is the principle of ‘perpetual development’.” Bourdieu comments: “How can we not recognize here a logic which has already found its exemplary expression in the case of mathematics? This is the logic which [...] leads the mathematician to work ceaselessly on the outcome of the work of previous mathematicians, objectivising the operations which were already present in their work, though in an implicit state.” (1996, 241-242).

There is some parallel here with Rose Subotnik’s attempt to identify the operation of a dominant “Schoenbergian Paradigm” (as the outer reaches of a musical Romanticism) in the development of twentieth century music (1991, 271-283), and her discussion of individualized autonomous musical structures:



For almost 200 years, Western art music has tried to secure a social guarantee of its own existence, precisely as if it were as “self-evident” a structure as science. Basing its own case on the realization of its own internal laws, Western art music has tried to project the necessity of that realization by defining itself, in its individual manifestations, with an ever-increasing degree of precision. (1991, 167)<sup>139</sup>

Bourdieu argues that with the drive to formal specialization, and the lack of an ultimate guarantor of the currency of the *illusio*, the organization of the field comes to occupy an increasingly important position:

The [...] reason for the reflexive and critical return of art upon itself is the fact that the closing of the field of production creates the conditions for a circularity and an almost perfect reversibility of the relations of production and consumption. In becoming the principal object of the position-takings and contentions among producers, stylistic principles are embodied in more and more rigorous and accomplished manners in works of art at the same time as they are asserted, always more explicitly and systematically, in the confrontation between the producer and the critical judgements brought to bear on the work, or in confronting the works of other producers and in the theoretical discourse produced by and for that encounter. (1996, 300)

This leads to a third point: for Bourdieu, the field of production is the key analytical tool for understanding both the production and the consumption of cultural goods. His study of the formal specialization of modernist art is also the study of the development of the pure aesthetic disposition which is capable of privileging such works.<sup>140</sup> Both Williams and Bourdieu would argue that schemas of perception and appreciation are the product of history. The development of an attention to musical form (captured by the notion of “structural listening”) can be described as the capacity to apprehend the modernist work as it demands to be apprehended – in itself, for itself, as form and not as function – and this is inseparable from the appearance of producers motivated by a pure productive intention.<sup>141</sup> In turn, this pure

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<sup>139</sup> Subotnik defines her “Schoenbergian Paradigm” in the essay *The Challenge of Contemporary Music* (1991, 265-294) which was composed between 1986 and 1987. The essay constitutes a clear position-taking within the musicological field, mirroring some of the same shifts described in the broader musical field at this time.

<sup>140</sup> Alongside Part III of *The Rules of Art*, “To Understand Understanding” (1996, 285-330), the essays entitled “The Pure Gaze: Essays on Art” in *The Field of Cultural Production*, and in particular “The Historical Genesis of a Pure Aesthetic” (1993, 254-266) should be noted.

<sup>141</sup> The notion of “structural listening” was advanced by Subotnik in *The Challenge of Contemporary Music* (1991, 277-283), given extensive critique in her *Towards a Deconstruction of Structural Listening: A Critique of Schoenberg, Adorno, and Stravinsky* (1996, 148-176), and explored further in the collection of essays *Beyond Structural Listening? Postmodern Modes of Hearing* (Dell’Antonio, 2004).



production cannot be separated from the emergence of an autonomous artistic field capable of asserting its own goals in the face of external demands, but also the corresponding appearance of a population made up of those willing and able to apply to the works the appreciatory tools they call for:

The invention of the pure gaze is brought about in the very movement of the field towards autonomy. In effect [...] the assertion of the autonomy of the principles of production and evaluation of the work of art is inseparable from the assertion of the autonomy of the producer, that is, of the field of production. The pure gaze [...] is the result of a process of [especially formal] purification. (Bourdieu, 1996, 299)<sup>142</sup>

Bourdieu advances a complex relationship between the *illusio* established by the autonomous position-taking, the pressures and limits acting on formal innovations, and modes of understanding and appreciation. This relationship involves any institution or agent working in the field. Questions of value and meaning, just like those of aesthetic judgement, can only find solutions in a social history of the field and an understanding of the constitution of the particular dispositions which the field's *nomos* calls for.

Briefly, the organization of the networks of institutions and agents established in the field to serve the drive to autonomy came to constitute the mechanisms by which legitimate definitions and directions for production were established as the “institutionalization of anomie” (the dominant *nomos*).<sup>143</sup> Again, there is some proximity between these arguments and Subotnik's identification of a Schoenbergian paradigm operating in contemporary music. While it would be unacceptable to attribute any ultimate veracity to the practices engendered by this paradigm, Subotnik's arguments effectively attempt to designate this tradition, itself a consecrated logic of practice and network of position-takings operating within a series of

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<sup>142</sup> Further, this attention is associated with very particular conditions of training (not always formalized, and often bolstered by the long inculcation of particular values offered by an inheritance of high symbolic capital): a form of training which arguably presupposes a distance from the constraints and urgencies of necessity.

<sup>143</sup> There is more than a passing resemblance between these arguments and Williams's discussions of the operations of hegemony in the selective tradition. Williams immediately moves on to consider this alongside the key categories of artistic institutions and formations (1977, 115-120).

particular field configurations, as dominating the *nomos* and therefore the *illusio* of autonomous musical production throughout the twentieth century, and weakening in the 1980s.<sup>144</sup>

Bourdieu contends that there has been an increasing and complex challenge to this original heroic position-taking, and his interpretation of contemporary art at the time of his writings on culture in the latter part of the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries describe a fragmentation of the belief operating in the field.<sup>145</sup> Michael Grenfell puts Bourdieu's position here particularly clearly:

For Bourdieu, art no longer acted in a 'heroic way' in the modern world. [...] As previous artistic generations are superseded, a new avant-garde is required to assert exclusivity. Symbolic value had simply been redefined. [...] For the art producer, this realization might lead to art which points towards the content of the arbitrary itself: art as ruse or play, where manipulation of the art field and those within it are taken into the 'production' and 'presentation' of the art work. [...] Bourdieu argued that this position itself is a reflection of social position, since no such ambiguity is tolerated in popular culture where form is synonymous with function. (104)

These observations are particularly valuable as they link together the notion of a threatened avant-garde mechanism of change, changing patterns of belief, and subsequent shifts in the logics of practice and position-takings operating in the field. There is some equivalence between these arguments and Subotnik's description of the weakening of the Schoenbergian paradigm, discoverable as an increasing tension between the various positions at the autonomous pole of production. This is expressed in the proliferation of the rhetorics of alternative position-takings in the period, some of which I have defined above.

To be explicit, the fragmentation at the pole of autonomous musical production is closely linked to the crisis of the particular autonomous *illusio* identified by Bourdieu's treatment of the wager and the refusal. In the broadening range of options engendered by this crisis, the position-takings of Pärt *et al* are examples of an attempt to stake out a position in this shifting

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<sup>144</sup> Subotnik herself does not attempt to do so; explicitly arguing that contemporary music has attempted ideologically to adopt the culturally privileged paradigm of science to ratify its dominance (1991, 265-271).

<sup>145</sup> It should not be forgotten that, for Bourdieu, the main challenge to autonomy arises from the increasing global market and the equivalent politics of neo-liberalism.

social terrain, operating a relationship with the most generalized values of autonomy instituted in the field of production and the specific *illusio* and *nomos* of the weakening avant-garde mechanism. My focus provides an examination of a particularly well-defined ensemble of agents and institutions who participate in the production of the value of a particular sort of production which draws on the legacy of autonomy while attempting to legitimate a position outside of the terms of the avant-garde (despite, in the case of Pärt, having close initial ties to this pole).<sup>146</sup> It is this that creates an ambiguous relationship with the two theorizations of the topos of tragic refusal found in Bourdieu and Williams (discussed in more detail below).

The rhetorics described above are attempts to articulate dissatisfaction with aspects of the *perceived dominant illusio* of the field, interpreted as the critical projects of modernism in various strategies (musical, philosophical, critical), the content of which become organized by the particular understandings of the contemporary field configuration. This should not be carried too far: this is not a complete overturning of the dominant *illusion*, which would result in something incomprehensible. Tintinnabulation is an attempt to revise the contemporaneous logics of practice available in the autonomous section of the field: an attempt which must utilize a whole range of legitimizing strategies in order to be successful.

### ***Illusio* and the Rhetorics of Tintinnabulation**

The character and content of these strategies are determined by the received character of the dominant *illusio* and the *nomos*. The weakening of the modernist *illusio* allows a position-taking which rhetorically draws on the most generalized aspects of autonomy available in the field while also rejecting the avant-garde mechanisms identified by Bourdieu and Williams. This ultimately ambiguous position is perhaps most evident in the processes of tintinnabulation, which operate a position-taking in relation to avant-garde practices available in the field, but it is also to be found in the timbre and sonority of early music. These ambiguities orientate this position-taking towards the centre of the field of production (but with strong suggestions

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<sup>146</sup> The importance of a complementary institutional position-taking is an essential part of the success of this process, and will be explored in more depth in the next chapter.



towards autonomous practice), accessible to a broad number of people, and perceived to have a general contemporary relevance. Below, I indicate some of the defining characteristics of these shifts in the *illusio*, which will lead to some consideration of the dominant structure of feeling in the next section.

The quickly established and wide ranging popularity of Pärt is one of the fascinating aspects of this story, and variously themed explanations for this appeal become incorporated into the rhetorics at play in the legitimation processes described above. This constitutes a range of combative activity which can essentially be understood as the struggle over the *illusio* of a particular section of the field. This violence ranges over the social confusion of the status implications of a popular autonomous utterance, but also goes to the heart of musical structure and even certain acts of timbre (with the complicity of the field and the habitus this range might be expected). There are a number of points to be considered here. First, there is a receptive rhetoric which parallels the ambiguity at the heart of the tintinnabulation. In his reworking of the legacy of modernist complexity, Pärt produces music which requires a lower cache of symbolic capital for appropriation, and as such is available to a broader proportion of listeners: he has “re-opened the channels of communication”, as David Clarke puts it (1993, 680). Second, the music emerges from the autonomous pole of the field, retaining the status of ‘the new’ while at the same time managing to make links to the more traditional practices of the rear-garde, and as such it retains something of the status residually bestowed on this form of production.

There are many examples which articulate one or other aspect of this complex field positioning. The composer and percussionist James Wood offers an explicit view of the appeal resulting from Pärt’s repositioning with the dominant avant-garde tradition:

The interesting thing in the last fifteen or twenty years is the enormous popularity that we’ve seen for music by the Góreckis, the Taveners, the Arvo Pärts, and I think this has come about as a kind of sigh of relief. It shows that there is a kind of desperate frustration among people who want to listen to music and want to hear new music, and they have aspirations of their own about what new music is, and



they hear consonance, they hear some harmonic sense out of the kind of darkness of post-serial music. (Oliver, 133)

From a present perspective, it is perhaps surprising to be reminded of the overwhelming significance of post-serial avant-garde practices in the field at that time. The persistence of this perception in relation to Pärt's music is perhaps due to the predication of many of its strategies of legitimation on precisely this rhetoric; once the position-taking is securely made, the rhetoric becomes inscribed in the logic of the field as an available (and explanatory) strategy.

Mike Seabrook (reviewing for *Tempo*) provides another example in which the popular appeal of Pärt and others is ascribed to this same field structure:

The one unifying thread [of a CD dedicated to Estonian composers, including Pärt] is that it is all highly accessible [...]. It's as if the great schism between the creative artist [...] and the general, lay musical public that has torn the rest of Europe apart, had never happened. [...] in Britain and elsewhere, most 20<sup>th</sup>-century composers have written as they pleased and the music public have ignored them in droves; in Estonia [...] composers have wished to be heard, so they have written music that doesn't hurt to listen to, and makes some kind of sense when one does listen. (58)

What is useful here is not the truth content of Seabrook's argument, but its advocacy of subtle status considerations which are closely linked to the rhetoric of tintinnabulation. While Pärt's music is often heard as a rejection of modernist complexities (evidenced with Wood and Seabrook), it is also often understood as in some way making use of a *critical process* (not often, in its reception, linked to a residual modernist legacy) which in some way elevates the value of the music – difficult to identify or pin down, but present nonetheless. The following explicit articulation by Ivan Hewett (writing for *The Times*) captures this:

What attracts people to his work is the primal simplicity of the music, its calm luminous certainties. But there are things about Pärt that set him apart from the other so-called "holy minimalists". [...] underneath the bright, innocent surface there are intricate processes at work. [...] The iron mechanism is what gives the music its peculiar innocence, and saves it from sounding like one of Tavener's kitschy recreations of some imagined "primal" mystical music. (2003, 21)

There are also examples in which this same observation is made but in terms less clearly informed by familiarity with the tintinnabuli procedures:

Put premieres [by Górecki and Pärt] in the intimate cavern of the Union Chapel at dusk on a grey day and you have the definitive event of a certain contemporary aesthetic – backward-looking, even escapist, yet still trying to make a whole out of past and present and imbued with once inadmissible feelings of hope and faith. Baldly described, [*The Berlin Mass*] will appear naïve and restrictive, as ever: anybody could imitate the Pärt sound. But try predicting what will follow at any given moment, and you soon discover the resourcefulness and freedom that give the music its strength. (Maycock, 1990, 11)

Present here are references to an outmoded area of the field which has been relegated to a past position, and the development of a 'contemporary aesthetic' as a move in an alternative, but related, direction. The musical processes of tintinnabulation are not as well understood as by Hewett, but there is the same sense of a "resourcefulness" which is somehow understood to be *redeeming*.<sup>147</sup>

A more aggressive extension of this relationship to a social strategy of distinction is to be found in the following comments by the journalist Hugh Canning:

The cult which has grown up around [...] Arvo Pärt is one of the most extraordinary developments of popular taste in the rarefied, and often ghettoized, field of contemporary art-music. Often [...] bracketed with [...] minimalists such as Philip Glass and Steve Reich, Pärt's austere spiritual works [...] stand in relation to their vacuous musical doodle-patterns as Benjamin Britten's masterly *War Requiem* does to the diluted, pseudo-religious tosh of Andrew Lloyd Webber's mass for the dead.

This extract exhibits an explicit incorporation of the phenomenon of Pärt's wide popular appeal (implicitly recognizing the danger that, Bourdieu would argue, popularity poses for an autonomous practice) with a defensive strategy establishing relationships with aspects of the field capable of asserting a consecrated value at the expense of other types of production – that is, struggles over the definition of the *nomos* and the *illusio*. The reasons for Canning's distinctions are again unclear, but the suggestion of a type of production that is "austere" and "spiritual", in the face of the "vacuous", leads to consideration of another stake in the *illusio* of

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<sup>147</sup> Hewett's discussion appears to be informed by Hillier's *Arvo Pärt*, which he reviewed in *Screams Inside a Circle of Fifths* (1997).

this music. Tim Ashley (reviewing ECM's *Litany* for *The Guardian*) puts this most concisely when he notes that "Pärt's appeal is understandable, a combination of approachability and spiritual certainty" (12).

The comparatively lowered level of symbolic capital required to participate in the *illusio* offered by this music (its "approachability") in contrast to music which stresses formal complexity is paralleled by a powerful rhetoric which also has a wide appeal. The resulting positions, somewhere between autonomy and heteronomy, are highly complex aspects of this musical practice, and are the product of the formal innovations of Pärt, the accompanying rhetorics, the aural qualities of tintinnabulation beyond the formal, Pärt's religious convictions and the rhetorics which extrapolate from them, and various residual and contemporary stakes in the field. The role of early music in this argument is vital here: the symmetry between Pärt's compositional practice and early music is more than one of inspiration, also traceable in terms of musical structure and, perhaps more importantly, sonority and timbre.

While the issue of Pärt's proximity to early music leads to disputes over the nature and role of tradition in contemporary composition, the *sensual impact* of this music is also vital. Raymond Monelle's review of the UK premiere of *Miserere* provides useful comments:

When we listen to medieval or renaissance polyphony we hear a music that is serene, timeless. Yet when written, it was also struggling forward towards tonality, direction and cadential tension, which would be realized in the era of Classicism. That is a tale that has now been told: there is no longer any need for the discovery of motivated journeyings within the level calm of polyphonic singing and the Estonian Arvo Pärt gives us the old serenity neat, as it were. (11)

This associating of a response to certain aural qualities of Pärt's music with an experience associated rhetorically with "serenity", "solace", "peace", "stillness", and "silence" is a common phenomenon (and it must be noted that the terms of the theory used in this thesis would require that these responses should be regarded as *materially conditioned*, rather than transcendent). There is a parallel here with the rhetorical recourse to totalities which are usually deemed apart from modernism (the realms of the "spiritual", the "religious", or the



“mystical”, in particular).<sup>148</sup> Examples of written rhetoric which attempt to record experiences of this type are widely available but a few can be noted here by way of elucidation. Monelle goes on, “Pärt is a true original, his music possessing an enormous force that seems to derive from no obvious musical devices apart from stillness and simplicity” (11), while Bret Johnson, in his review of the ECM release of *Miserere*, notes, “the music of Arvo Pärt is noted for its mysticism and religious fervour [...]. The music is charged with almost mesmeric emotional power and yet, at its heart, is simple devotion and wonder” (49). Similarly, Jonathan Cross notes, with reference to *Beatus Petronius* and *Statuit ei Dominus*, “Pärt manages successfully to bring past and present together here without the one contradicting the other: indeed, his music has a rare contemplative, prayerful quality that seems to be genuinely timeless (in both senses of the word)” (343).

Qualities such as those identified in these reviews are very often heard as having a very general contemporary resonance. This claim itself becomes a central part of the rhetoric and the debate surrounding both Pärt and ECM. Wilfred Mellers provides a clear example of this in a review of ECM's *Te Deum*:

Our trinity of godly minimalists [...] cannot have anticipated the ‘fabulous’ popular success that would overtake them [...]. Presumably their fame must mean that although we [...] cannot for the most part embrace their Christian faith, we recognise its potential solace the more the criminal imbecilities of the world – for which we are in part responsible – induce dismay or despair. (1993, 714)

David Clarke also recognises (in a more critical vein) the appeal of this music in the face of a highly modernized, late capitalist society:

Its call to ‘an inner quietness’ could be seen as a corollary of its denial of the dynamics of musical development and its associated dissolution of linear temporality. [...] It affords us the opportunity to cease crunching the unremitting influx of signs to which we as creatures of the late 20<sup>th</sup> century have become accustomed, and to attend instead to the passing of time itself. [...] All of this suggests a music inclined towards the phenomenological rather than the semiotic, and it is perhaps little wonder that its promotional texts repeatedly stress the ideas of silence, breathing, and beauty. (1993, 683)

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<sup>148</sup> As is discussed above and particularly exemplified through Hillier's use of Merriam to argue for an “alternative totality” for the discussion of Pärt (Hillier, 1997).



Overall, the presence of the field structure is evident in the rhetorics of legitimation around the position-taking of Arvo Pärt, especially in attempts to legitimate the approachability of this utterance perceived to have emerged from an autonomous pole recognized for its complexities. Williams's "structure of feeling" is particularly useful for these considerations; consequently the following section will consider the relationship between these legitimizing strategies and the dominant tragic/utopian structure of feeling identified by Williams in *Modern Tragedy*.

### The Tragic Structure of Feeling

The above has used Bourdieu's theoretical model, elaborated in response to the inscription of the topos of refusal in the laws of the field of cultural production, to establish the configuration of the space of positions and position-takings in this period and the rhetorics of Pärt *et al* as strategies and stakes at work in the legitimation and consecration of this emergent position. It should be clear that there is great deal of symmetry in theme and strategy across a whole range of productive practices (including reception, composition, commentary, and criticism). With this multifaceted perception of Pärt's music as somehow articulating a range of responses to the *illusio* of the organization of this modern model of cultural production, it is useful to consider Williams's notion of a structure of feeling as an organizing principle. This concept was elaborated in chapter 4, where the tragic/utopian dominant structure of feeling was discussed as Williams's response to the notions of the wager and the refusal in Goldmann, and as a methodological principle. The following draws this together with the above discussions of Pärt.

Pärt emerged into, and Manfred Eicher (the founder of ECM) lived through, the period which shaped Williams's understanding of this dominant structure of feeling. Published in 1966, *Modern Tragedy* is its first articulation, informed by a reading of Goldmann, whom Williams met in Cambridge in 1970.<sup>149</sup> The analysis of "Britain in the 1960s" (first published in *The Long*

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<sup>149</sup> Williams gave a series of lectures following this visit since published as "Literature and Sociology: In Memory of Lucien Goldmann" (1980, 11-30).

*Revolution* in 1961), working across the fields of economic organization, political organization, 'class', and culture, enables this discussion by providing consideration of the broader economic and technical changes in cultural and political institutions. Further, *Modern Tragedy* was republished in 1979 with a new Afterword, which not only reiterated the terms of the dominant structure of feeling but strengthened Williams's opposition to an increasingly prevalent intellectual conformism to its terms.

These considerations are carried in to Williams's later work. *Towards 2000*, published in 1983, reproduces the entire chapter "Britain in the 1960s", revisiting its terms and updating its arguments, and *The Politics of Modernism: Against the New Conformists*, published in 1989 (posthumously, but to an order planned by Williams), republishes the Afterword of the second edition of *Modern Tragedy* as a key element of the analysis of avant-garde formations (which in itself is a continuation of the late critical sociology presented in *Culture*). In spite of some seemingly archaic articulations in the discussions of structures of feeling in *The Long Revolution*, it is difficult to dismiss this material as somehow outmoded by Williams's later work. The terms remain active throughout the development of his thought up to his death, and parallels (temporally) the musical developments discussed above. I want to advance the argument that the dispositions of Eicher's *habitus* were formed at a time when this dominant structure of feeling was also emergent; he was working within the period when its terms were dominant and, I will argue, attempted defensively to transform ECM's specific articulation of its terms into something resembling an ideology. Ultimately this became the criterion for the establishment of a market position.

It is impossible to argue that Arvo Pärt is in a similar way *shaped* by this structure of feeling, as he emerges into it in the late 1970s rather than inculcating its dispositions by participation in the lived culture of Europe in the 1960s. However, there appear to be some correspondences between his work, the ideologies of ECM, and the broader structure of feeling which enables the perceived "general contemporary relevance" of his rhetorics. This is a complex position to unpack, and will be discussed following the examination of ECM, but there is a general

preponderance of rhetorics in the legitimation of Pärt's emergent position which stress either some form of withdrawal (or "inwardness", "reflection", and so on), utopian prospect, or a combination of the two.

The identification of these concerns as central to the rhetorics of the period (either in favour or in opposition) is relatively easy. There are many examples of the music being described explicitly as circumnavigating the deadlocks of a musical tradition unable to articulate anything relevant to the lives of a broad audience, and so offering some reconstitution of the social values of contemporary music. How the success of this attempt to resolve the problems of a tragic modern subjectivity is assessed is a more complex task. There is a tension between two dominant trends in the rhetorics of interpretation and criticism; between the articulation of a general "sigh of relief" after "the kind of darkness of post-serial music" (after James Wood, above), and the perception that, rather than offering release from the problematics of contemporary subjectivity, this music submits to its terms in a complicitous act of conformism. Here, the service of refuge or comfort in the face of the difficulties of modern society is offered as commodity. This tension is well expressed in Alastair Williams's discussion of Pärt's music:

In its expressive simplicity, it is easy to see how this music fulfils a need unaddressed by high modernism and appears to push past the veil of simulacra that informs much contemporary experience, but such music can only be historically located and it forms part of the search for tradition that has accompanied the crisis of modernization. In the absence of a clear sense of what constitutes modern subjectivity, Pärt evokes a form of ur-subjectivity that seeks ritualistic grounding; the solace this repertoire induces raises questions, however, given that most listeners do not share the orthodox spiritual outlook of its composer. [...] At best such experiences unlock inner nature, at worst they warm up and spiritualize reified social relations. (1997, 129).

My argument is that this 'tragic conformism' is most clearly met when the conditions of struggle which engender Pärt's music are rhetorically refused. This is of the order of Monelle's comment above that the elements of struggle in Renaissance polyphony, as it works "towards tonality, direction and cadential tension", are jettisoned and "Pärt gives the old serenity neat, as it were" (11). As this tendency becomes more widespread, there is a proliferation of such



rhetorical terms as “solace”, “serenity”, and “peace”, directly and uncritically associated with the experience of Pärt’s music. This is in some tension with commentaries which insist that this music comes to us through its own difficult struggle of emergence, legitimation and consecration within the social organization of the autonomous pole of the Western musical field in the 1970s and 1980s.

There is a connection here to Williams’s and Bourdieu’s different treatments of the topos of refusal. The process of struggle is precisely what Bourdieu’s inscription of the refusal into the structure of the field theorizes, articulated in terms of the struggle of practice between the opposed autonomous and heteronomous principles. The rejection of this mechanism, which I would argue is a further (secondary) symptom of the avant-garde mechanism of change, coming under pressure as it faces the fragmentation and pluralism of a post-modernism fed by the new pressures and limits of a heteronomous globalized market economy, is also (perhaps tangentially) a seemingly unknowing rejection of the values of autonomy inscribed in the field by the initial “heroic” refusal. In such a situation, only the adopted *rhetorics* of autonomy (transformed in many cases from “refusal” to “withdrawal”) can hope to keep the heteronomous principle in check. Such a position must also surrender the possible positive values of dissidence and opposition present in Williams’s attempt to oppose the dominant structure of feeling, constituting a conformism to the dominant tragic subjectivity as a complicitous act of solace. In this situation, only the rhetorical adherence to transformed utopian prospects (variously reworked – as themes of personal salvation, for instance) can hope to keep the conformism from becoming clearly apparent.

The broad field shifts and challenges to the dominant *illusio* and *nomos* allow for a position-taking which draws rhetorically on the values of autonomous production in opposition to the demands of an increasing heteronomous principle. The position-taking becomes ambiguous when it also rejects the autonomous avant-garde mechanism of change, which was shown to be determining in its own formation, necessarily orientating it towards the centre of the field of production. The rhetorics of Pärt, and the commentators who stake a position on his



position-taking, also occupy a similarly ambiguous relationship, either attempting to mount a redemptive sortie on tragic modern subjectivity or lapsing into conformism to its terms. The reflections of Bourdieu and Williams are useful tools in the identification of the pressures and limits acting on the topos of refusal in a particularly well-situated musical example, indicating a variable range of available practice across a range of activity. In order to develop these considerations it is necessary to examine in more detail some of the practices of the institution/formation ECM.

## 2.6 CHAPTER 6 – Relations of Production: The ECM

### Institution/Formation

My contact with ECM is beyond categorization: it is a natural supplement to my composing. Manfred Eicher's record producing is an art in itself. [...] What I call a piece of art made by Manfred is actually a rich and sensitive complex of hearing, thinking, feeling, taste and artistic skill: a whole philosophy. [...] I count Manfred Eicher and his team among my co-authors, my blessings.

Arvo Pärt on Manfred Eicher and ECM (Lake and Griffiths, 381)

### Introduction – Intimations of an Industry

Chapter 4 noted Williams's understanding of the changing social relations between cultural producers and socio-cultural institutions and Bourdieu's description of the challenges facing the autonomous pole of production in the face of late capitalism and post-modernism. For both, the rising dominant forces which come to affect radically the conditions of autonomous practice are developments within the market and the industrial apparatus which service it. These arguments should not be simplified: autonomous production has, of course, long been related to the market, and a form of industry has grown up to service its needs. Industry activities are closely linked to which cultural products are produced, what is received and perceived (and how), and in their most extensive heteronomous form have traditionally been anathema to autonomous practices and products. In this context, much of the status of autonomous production derives exactly from being perceived as autonomous; participating in the profits available in the heteronomous market is to risk losing the symbolic capital available in the autonomous sphere. However, the relationship between autonomous practice and industry is far from straightforward, and accounts for the complexities of Williams's attempts to trace the relationships between general and cultural production and Bourdieu's notion of an "economic world reversed".

Williams and Bourdieu identify the situation which has unfolded in the field of artistic production during late capitalism in Western societies as novel and without precedent. Both recognise that the schemes of autonomous production are inherited from an earlier epoch,

subject to a different social organization. The contemporary tensions in production stem in part from the clash between these differently organized principles. Williams's theory predicts and opposes, and Bourdieu's late works explicitly fight against, the intrusion of a heteronomous commercial logic at every stage of the production and circulation of cultural goods. Although it is not a straightforward opposition, both see potential in the hard-won values of independence in cultural and intellectual production for the provision of an autonomous position able to articulate dissent with respect to these developments.<sup>150</sup>

This is not an undisputable position: what Bourdieu described as the politics of neo-liberalism (most extensively in *The Weight of the World: Social Suffering in Contemporary Society* (1999)) and Williams labelled "Plan X" (1983, 243-248) are tendencies in contemporary society to stake a position in favour of the logic of the market, demonstrating that such a logic brings clear social benefit. For example, from this position technological development, economic innovation, and so on, are argued to increase the quantity and the quality of goods on offer providing greater customer choice and satisfaction. Williams, in particular, relates these political positions to his theoretical work, finding a parallel with the tragic conformism of his dominant structure of feeling:

There is now a very important intellectual tendency, with some real bases in political power, which is as closely concerned with thinking and planning the future as any reforming or progressive group. [...] what is chosen, intellectually and politically, is a new hard line on the future: a new politics of strategic advantage. (1983, 243)

In terms of cultural production, this position is closely linked to the technological determinism Williams fought in Marshall McLuhan. Most centrally, he argued that such technological determinism refused the specificity of the goods, circulated by the new technologies and economically embedded communications institutions, with cultural products becoming understood as commodities subject to the laws of profit.

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<sup>150</sup> In Bourdieu, who may not be so readily linked to emancipatory values as the socialist Williams, this position is most clearly expressed in his discussion of Zola's intervention in the Dreyfus affair (with *J'accuse*) in terms of the deployment of the status of autonomy (as independent from religious, political and economic power) founded on the autonomy of the field of literary production (1996, 340).

Much of the crisis in the field of production in the late 1970s and 1980s, and the crises in the *illusio* and the *nomos* discussed in the previous chapter, are derived from an attenuation of these complex tensions between modes of production, technologies and industrial institutions. While that chapter discussed a musical position-taking in this changing environment, some discussion must be offered of the institutional practices which enable these musical strategies to gain wide-spread distribution, appreciation and, ultimately, consecration. One of the interesting aspects of this study is that its object is not an institution organized as may be expected with relation to autonomous practice, but one embedded in the heteronomous music industry: the record label Editions of Contemporary Music, or ECM.<sup>151</sup> One of the central themes in the stories of both Pärt and ECM is their interaction with the heteronomous market from a principled autonomous position.

Attempting a full-scale macro analysis of such a multi-faceted entity as the music industry, which dominates the circulation of music in Western societies, is beyond the scope of this research project. However, some initial observations must be made in relation to the present study. Both Pärt and ECM emerge (in their respective fields) in the late 1960s and begin to establish themselves over the course of the 1970s and 1980s. In the same period there are massive technological developments and a complex process of industry consolidation in the Western fields which result, in the present time, with Warner Music Group, EMI, Sony BMG, and Universal Music Group dominating the majority of the music market. Nonesuch, EMI Classics,<sup>152</sup> Virgin Classics, RCA Victor Red Seal Records,<sup>153</sup> Sony Classical,<sup>154</sup> Arte Nova Classics, Decca Records (including Phillips),<sup>155</sup> Deutsche Grammophon,<sup>156</sup> amongst others,

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<sup>151</sup> This is distinct from, for example, Georgina Born's excellent *Rationalizing Culture*, which perhaps runs parallel to these arguments but uses Bourdieu's theory to critique the efficacy of Boulez's attempt to institutionalize the musical avant-garde with the organization of IRCAM.

<sup>152</sup> The formation of EMI Classics was designed to bring together classical recordings released under various labels and thus avoid copyright problems. Labels include: Angel, Seraphim, Odeon, HMV, Columbia (later sold to Sony BMG), amongst others.

<sup>153</sup> The Red Seal Label was begun in 1902 by Gramophone Records. It has gone through a variety of incarnations up to its merger with Sony BMG Masterworks. Its main output derives from its vast back catalogue of recordings invested with high cultural capital, but old enough for strategies of conversion to be put in to operation without threatening this capital.

<sup>154</sup> This label is the result of the merger of the product lines of Sony Classical and BMG Classics. As with RCA, its output derives from a back catalogue extending into the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>155</sup> Decca was established in 1929 in the UK, and later sold to Universal. Again, it has a large back catalogue of consecrated "masterpieces".



were subsumed under these labels. Such movements are richly suggestive of the market domination Bourdieu feared would threaten the possibilities of autonomous production.

ECM, co-founded in 1969 by Manfred Eicher and Karl Egger in Munich, is associated with major labels in various territories for the purposes of distribution. It has avoided the heavy patronage that other smaller “independent” labels have relied on.<sup>157</sup> There are, of course, many innovative and creative independent classical labels operating today (Harmonia Mundi, Hyperion, Avie Records, Naxos, and others). However, having independent status does not equate to servicing autonomous practice: one of the fascinating aspects of ECM is that it operates a *rhetoric of autonomous production* even while participating strongly within the market. It articulates an ethos which self-consciously aims to reinforce the values of autonomous production.

This chapter is divided into three sections. Section 1 combines my reading of Williams’s and Bourdieu’s theoretical elaboration of the place of institutions and formations in the contemporary field of production, broaching the extent to which ECM can be discussed as both a market institution and an artistic formation. Section 2 examines the range of productive practice operated by the label and the different ways in which they rhetorically advance the values of autonomy. Section 3 examines the range of music ECM engages with. The chapter concludes with a summary of the rhetorical position of the label, leading to conclusions which include discussion of the net effect of the position-takings of Arvo Pärt and ECM.

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<sup>156</sup> Established in 1898. After various sales of the company and its iconography DG was eventually sold to Universal in 1998. It also operates a huge back catalogue of consecrated recordings.

<sup>157</sup> The term “independent” in the context of music labels has come to accrue a complex set of meanings. I am using the term to indicate institutional activity which is outside of the domain of the organized market dominance in the contemporary music industry; I am not attempting (for example) to offer a general reading of the social function of indie record labels in sub-cultures.

### 2.6.1 ECM as Formation and Institution

#### Consideration of ECM as “Institution”

The core team which constitutes ECM operates a socio-cultural *institutional relationship*; it organizes what Williams described as “post-artisanal” distributive work and intermediary productive work for selected artists who retain their independence (1981, 45-46). Fundamentally, and however else it defines itself, this set of practices and relationships must be concerned with a market. A project is conceived, developed, produced, and prepared for distribution as a product to a market of consumers upon which this productive activity relies. Many aspects of the ‘crisis’ in the methods of musical production – the perceived threat to the autonomy of productive practice – can be framed as a shift from the dominant variable systems of instituted *patronage* to an increasingly dominant *market* instituted system of relations. ECM rhetorically positions itself upon this point of debate, striving to maintain the promise of autonomy but fundamentally resting it upon a secure market base, rather than a realized disinterested position. This ‘crisis’ should not be too prescriptive; there has been a long period of overlap between patronal and market institutional relations in the arts and this is particularly true in the case of music, with commission still playing a central role in much production of new work. It is impossible, for example, to speak of a singular model of productive institution when talking generally of *Tabula rasa*. This work maintains different levels of institutional relationship depending upon the type of engagement examined. Commissioned by Gidon Kremer, the original production of the work was dependent upon a form of patronage, but in terms of the production of sheet music by Universal Edition and the ECM New Series CD, distributive and productive post-artisanal relations become instituted.

While patronal and market relations can be distinguished in the contemporary production of music, I want to focus here on ECM's position with regard to the latter situation. The activities of institutions engaged in cultural production servicing a market must (though to a variable degree) involve conceiving of the musical composition as a commodity, and of the composer as a form of commodity producer (however else these relationships may be self-

defined). While fundamentally this involves producing for monetary exchange, Williams (particularly in *Culture*) argues that the social relations of artists involved in commodity production remain highly variable. The institution ECM offers a form of relationship which can be characterized, in Williams's terms, as "productive post-artisanal". Here "further productive labour" (recording, post-production, packaging, and so on) is required to prepare the work for mechanical reproduction and distribution to the market (1981, 45-47). In the course of categorizing of these relationships, Williams argues that it is in this situation that "capitalist social relations begin to be instituted" (1981, 45). In ECM this sense of "further intermediary labour" is well understood and actively (and rhetorically) engaged with as an opportunity for further *creative collaboration*, rather than being understood as the start of market dominance (this is discussed below). Through these emphases, ECM actively resists the later stages of the relationships engendered by market institutions (the limits to which market pressures push) which attempt to make of the cultural producer a "market" or "corporate professional" (1981, 47-48).

Both Williams and Bourdieu insist that this notion of production for the market is problematized. Williams explicitly notes the difficulties which arise in the conflation of *cultural* production and practices in the *general* productive order:

[H]ere there is at once a difficulty, in that the general productive order, throughout the centuries of the development of capitalism, has been predominantly defined by the market, and 'cultural production', as we have seen, has been increasingly assimilated to its terms, yet any full identity between cultural production and general production has been to an important extent resisted ([...]). Thus it would be true to say that the sources of these modern difficulties is indeed the market economy, but on the other hand, on the evidence of the attempts at distinctions, it would not be true – it would in fact be seriously reductive – to say that the general market order has transformed all cultural production into a market-commodity type. (1981, 50)



Williams argues that in cultural production some earlier forms of patronal relations are residually present from earlier, more “culturally integrated”, societies.<sup>158</sup> Many of the later forms of institutional relations are interventions either within or against normal market forces:

We are then faced, not for the first time in the analysis of societies economically based on capitalist modes of production, with certain significant asymmetries between the social relations of the dominant productive mode and other relations within the general social and cultural order. (1981, 50)<sup>159</sup>

This notion of a key asymmetry between the contemporary dominant capitalist methods of general production and modes of cultural production, derived in part from earlier societal models, is useful for thinking through the problems faced by autonomous musical production in late capitalism. Williams acknowledges that such asymmetries offer the potential of articulating (and servicing, in the case of institutions) alternative kinds of social relations.<sup>160</sup> He also warns against carrying this too far, demonstrating that a good deal of the social relations of cultural production have become dictated by the terms of the market. This leads Williams to draw a distinction between “commercial” and “other” forms of the same artistic practice, noting that

while we should never pretend that the distinctions [between commercial and other forms of practice] are adequate, in their usually rather complacent conventional forms, it would be quite wrong to disregard the actual or attempted social relations, of an alternative kind, which the attempts at differentiation, and the initiatives and marginal institutions corresponding to them, undoubtedly represent. (1981, 51)<sup>161</sup>

Bourdieu’s elaboration of two economic logics dividing the field of cultural production is important here. As we have seen, his notion of the field is as a site of an antagonistic co-existence of two modes of production and circulation (poles on a variable range), obeying

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<sup>158</sup> That is, societies in which cultural production was more closely linked to general production. This leads to Williams’s characterization of “instituted Artists” as the earliest categorization of institutional relationships.

<sup>159</sup> These reflections clearly speak to Williams’s discussions of the organization of artistic *formations*, and his categorization of their external relationships as specializing, alternative or oppositional to the dominant hegemony.

<sup>160</sup> This is important to Williams’s emancipatory critique: the “resources of hope” are precisely artistic formations or institutions which are able to articulate a genuine alternative subjectivity to that which is produced by the dominant hegemony.

<sup>161</sup> The terms of this argument correspond to Bourdieu’s theorising of the problematic relationship between the two poles of cultural production (autonomous and heteronomous) in his notion of the “economic world reversed” (discussed above).



inverse logics. The 'anti-economic' economy of autonomous art is based on the denegation of the economy, of short-term economic profit, and is unable to acknowledge any demand except that which it can generate itself (and even then only in the long term). Here the specific necessities of production, being the product of an autonomous history, are privileged. Such a productive logic is orientated to the accumulation of symbolic capital functioning as a credit capable of assuring economic profits in the long term. On the other hand, producers at the pole of heteronomous production, the 'culture industries', practise an economic logic making the trade in cultural goods equivalent to any other trade occurring in the general sphere. Here, priority is conferred on distribution and immediate and temporary success, and emphasis is placed on adjusting to the pre-existing demand of an identified and targeted audience.

The production cycle becomes a way of measuring the position an institution occupies in the field of production. The more completely a mode of cultural production is determined by the urge to fulfil pre-existing demand through the deployment of received forms, the more it is orientated towards this heteronomous pole, and vice versa.<sup>162</sup> Institutions operating at the heteronomous pole of production operate short production cycles "based on the concern to minimize risks by adjusting in advance to the identifiable demand and provided with marketing circuits and presentational devices" (Bourdieu, 1993, 97). Autonomous institutions operate long-term strategies in their production, based on their engagement with the circulation of symbolic capital: "having no market in the present, this entirely future-orientated production presupposes high-risk investments tending to build up stocks of products which may either relapse into the status of material objects [...] or rise to the status of cultural objects endowed with an economic value incommensurate with the value of the material components which go into producing them" (1993, 97).

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<sup>162</sup> Production cycles are a recurrent and central theme in Bourdieu's reflections on cultural production organized by the opposition between heteronomy and autonomy. His thoughts on these points are particularly elaborated in the essay "The Field of Cultural Production, or: The Economic World Reversed" (1993, 29-73, especially 48), in the section "The Long Run and the Short Run" from the essay "The Production of Belief: Contribution to an Economy of Symbolic Goods" (1993, 74-111, especially 97), and in "Two Modes of Ageing" from *The Rules of Art* (1996, 146-154).

It follows that value and success can be measured in the same terms. At the heteronomous pole, being successful in the market becomes an indicator and guarantor of value. Inversely, “failure [...] a condemnation without appeal: the person who has no audience has no talent” (1996, 148). At the autonomous pole, achieving successes which quickly provide remuneration is likely to become an indicator of low value, as it reduces a symbolic creation beyond value to the status of commercial exchange. Bourdieu uses the familiar anthropological example of gift exchange to articulate this point, arguing that the product of autonomous production functions like a gift “which cannot assure itself of the most precious counter-gift, ‘recognition’, unless it sees itself without return” (1996, 148). However, autonomous production is capable of converting symbolic prestige into financial reward, as Bourdieu argues when he identifies the passage of time as the mechanism which “obscures the profit promised to the most disinterested investments” (1996, 148).

Bourdieu’s position here parallels Williams’s notion of a market asymmetry. This is apparent in his argument that “the commerce in things which are essentially not commercial” is residual to a set of practices in which “a logic of pre-capitalist economy survives” (equivalent, for Bourdieu, to the economy of exchange between generations, and of the family) (1996, 148). Bourdieu describes the asymmetry in the following terms:

Practical denegations, these intrinsically double and ambiguous behaviours lend themselves to two opposite but equally false readings, which undercut their essential duality and duplicity by reducing them either to denegation, or to what is denied, either to disinterestedness or to interest. The challenge that they offer to all kinds of economism resides precisely in the fact that they can be achieved in practice – and not merely in representations – only at the price of a constant and collective repression of the properly ‘economic’ interest and of the truth of the practice that ‘economic analysis uncovers. (1996, 148)

Central here is that the laws of the functioning of the field of cultural production, and the agent’s ability to exercise some degree of mastery of the practices it demands, are essential to both the autonomous and heteronomous spheres of production. The economic enterprise of the heteronomous institution which combines business and art will not succeed (even in economic terms) if it is unable to deploy an understanding of the field of production. The reverse is also true: the artist engaged in the autonomous area of the field must recognize

both the economic pressures denied by the convictions of autonomy, but also the disinterested position of autonomous production itself. Bourdieu argues that “the entrepreneur in cultural production must activate a very improbable combination [...] of realism, which implies minimal concessions to the denied (and not disowned) ‘economic’ necessities, and of the ‘disinterested’ conviction that excludes them” (1996, 149).

Interestingly, it is on this point that Bourdieu makes his fullest reference to Beethoven, in his discussion of “heroic” modernism:

[T]he tenacity with which Beethoven [...] defended his economic interests (especially the copyright on the sales of his scores) is perfectly understandable if one knows how to see a particular form of the entrepreneurial spirit in behaviour most apt to offend the economic angelicism of the romantic representation of the artist; at the risk of remaining at the level of a whim, the revolutionary intention must secure for itself the ‘economic’ means to realize an ambition irreducible to the ‘economy’ (for example, for Beethoven, the means to employ large-scale orchestras). (1996, 149)

These tensions, between the autonomous avant-garde (as the contemporary evolution of the ‘pure’ art principle) and major commercial enterprises, are central mechanisms in the functioning of the field of cultural production as Bourdieu theorizes it, and find considerable parallel with Williams’s notion of asymmetrical market relations. There is also some proximity between Bourdieu’s insistence that both poles operate according to the same logic differently realized and Williams’s recognition that the key to understanding the whole social process is found through the complex application of the criteria of production to both cultural and general processes. It is this that leads to his duplication of the categories of the base, and hence to the production paradigm and cultural materialism.

I will argue that these tensions and market asymmetries speak to the seemingly paradoxical nature of ECM as an autonomous market institution. It is significant that a great deal is made of ECM’s explicit identification with this point of market asymmetry. As we shall see, production is defined as important ‘in and of itself’, by various definitions which specialise the creative activities of the label, and explicitly distinguished from the capitalist mode of production – the problems of which are often imagined in terms not dissimilar to the perceived model of



Adorno's culture industry thesis. The stress placed on the *collaborative* and *creative* nature of the further productive work of this post-artisanal market institution recasts the essentially capitalist operation of these functions. From the recognition of this market asymmetry, a defensive and self-conscious *rhetoric* of autonomous production is instituted, becoming one of the defining characteristics of ECM as a market institution. It is my view that these institutional considerations offer the grounds for understanding the strategies which legitimize the practices of ECM. These strategies *legitimize commercial success*, and perhaps even deliver a form of distinction to a record label developing at a time when the asymmetries between received modes of cultural production and the dominant heteronomous market are under increasing pressure.

These arguments are again drawn from analysis of documents treated as articulations of particular field positions. What is often expressed in these accounts is the *singularity* of the operations of ECM as a record label functioning within the terms of the culture industries: composers and musicians are not tied to fixed contracts which determine the content and quantity of the run, but are instead contracted by a 'handshake agreement' made on a project by project basis – this is something that is frequently commented on. That these projects are explicitly chosen or designed on artistic merit, rather than for any commercial consideration, is another common assertion: financial matters are, we are told, always subordinated to the considerations of the music. Various statements from musicians and composers associated with ECM cite these themes as key to the success of the label, articulating this as a rare dedication to the "music itself".

Nils Petter Molvær (a trumpet player and composer, with two ECM releases) is particularly explicit on this point:

If I think about the essence of the good things at ECM, the first to mention is integrity. [...] Manfred has his ideals and absolutely nothing is going to deflect him. He's not in it for the money. He's in it for something else, which includes, I think, beauty. (Lake and Griffiths, 46)



Mark Hudson, writing for *The Observer*, comes very close to some of Bourdieu's theorizations, pointing out the potential strategy for distinction that a commitment to the rhetoric of autonomy could provide:

ECM doesn't issue contracts. Relations between artist and company are conducted on trust. Eicher embarks on many projects knowing they will lose money, but nothing is ever deleted from the catalogue, no matter how low the sales. Yet ECM remains a success, a commercial prize that many majors have tried to snap up. [...] You begin to wonder if Eicher, for all his apparent disregard for commercial considerations, isn't some kind of intuitive business genius.

'Probably that kind of instinct is only available to you if you're not thinking about business. [...] I make all decisions on financial matters from a musical perspective.'  
(45)

The response from Eicher demonstrates the difficult incorporation of both heteronomous and autonomous principles in his dispositions, but also utilizes a privileging of the autonomous to legitimize the presence of the heteronomous. Paul Richardson's article for *The Independent*, written to celebrate 30 years of ECM, draws out the tensions between these two principles operative on a more general scale:

Distribution people at ECM cheerfully admit many of their releases barely reach treble figures. Since a few sell by the truckload, however – *Officium* [...] has racked up almost a million copies worldwide [...] - the risks are outweighed by the rewards. [...] As one record industry observer put it, Eicher "does what he wants and deals with the consequences later". (10)

Perhaps the most revealing statements on these points come from Rob Cowan's interview with Eicher (also in *The Independent*):

Eicher is an inveterate intellectual adventurer. [...] He laments the CD industry's poor supply of musically sensitive executives. "[...] Nowadays, we see more and more 'business' people taking charge, trying to initiate a new 'marketing language'. They imitate and fabricate what's already available: 'packaging' and 'marketing' are the key words. But that's not what it's about. We need to trust our instincts, to discover, have something to tell and say it with the force of our convictions. [...] What I'm doing is my life, and it is not a question of more artistic success, more or less money or money per se, it's a question of being independent to do what I do for as long as my team is intact and my health allows". (29)

This again presents the opposition of the autonomous and heteronomous principles – the asymmetry of market and cultural production – as the frame for defining the practices of ECM.

The identification of “business people” governing the production of cultural goods is precisely the intrusion of a commercial logic which Williams and Bourdieu fought. In this sense there is some parallel between the contemporaneous ideologies of Eicher and the radical theories of Williams and Bourdieu.<sup>163</sup> The principles of autonomy are understood to be of ultimate and determining value for the processes of ECM’s musical production. Eicher’s last statement in the above could not put the case more clearly.

### Consideration of ECM as “Formation”

ECM’s dedication to autonomous productive practice makes its definition purely as an institution operating within the culture industry problematic. While the company undoubtedly operates institutional relationships, it also exhibits forms of self-organization which are closer to the processes of cultural production. That is, it operates to some extent, in Williamsian terms, as a “formation”. Considering the breadth of music in the ECM catalogue, it would be difficult to sustain a description of a homogenized ‘ECM sound’. However, there is evidently a form of self-organization in the *selection* of music for that catalogue. This selection is made in explicitly artistic, not commercial, terms and often functions as a tacit manifesto:

“The ECM sound is more about the choice of music in the catalogue,” Eicher says. “[...] My preference is towards that which has to do with lucidity, transparency, and the movements of sound. I like to make every movement, voice and texture available, but also the pauses and the silence. It’s not only the notes, but the thought behind them, that sculpts sound. It’s the white space, the empty space between the tones, that is the inspirational source.” (Johnson, 1999, 9)

It is Eicher’s musical taste and philosophies which control this selective mechanism – this internal organization – directing and shaping the projects. Eicher’s approach to musical production is a complex of his “hearing, thinking, feeling, taste and artistic skill” (Lake and

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<sup>163</sup> In *La Sociologie est un Sport de Combat* (Carles, 2007) there is a sequence in which Bourdieu receives a letter from Jean-Luc Godard (a regular collaborator with ECM, and a participant in their rhetoric of critical anti-commercialism – see for an example the short essay “Our Music: Synopsis for a Film” (Lake and Griffiths, 2007, 5-6). Here, just before a public discussion, Godard challenges Bourdieu, asking somewhat cryptically whether they are both fighting the same fight. Bourdieu, despite his explicit clarification that poetic explanation can hit the mark as surely as his own work, is clearly at a loss regarding the details of Godard’s arguments. It is my opinion that despite Bourdieu’s discomfort in this situation, there is something of a general structure of feeling running through these projects, and that it touches that which inspired the radical theorising of Williams and Bourdieu.

Griffiths, 381). The qualities of this structure of feeling, or response to the field's *illusio*, are often articulated quite generally, but with a definite impact upon what is produced and how. Eicher elaborates on this position in an interview with Paul Griffiths, in discussing his earliest musical explorations:

I was already interested in the ballads, I was interested in the elegies, and clarity. As far back as I can remember I was searching for music that has lucidity – *clarté* in the French sense. I preferred it to the dark or the opaque. (Lake and Griffiths, 373)

Later, Eicher finds this sense of “*clarté*” in such radically different composers as Pärt and Kurtág. This, alongside the breadth of material released by ECM (often argued in terms of an overarching logic), reinforces the consideration that the internal organization of ECM is not primarily structured by a specifically musical commitment, but by something more nebulous. It is my contention that this organizing principle is a reflexive and self-conscious search by Eicher for music which will articulate a particular structure of feeling, with peculiar resonances with Williams's identification of the dominant tragic utopian structure of feeling. This works deeply to shape the ideological position-takings and market practices of ECM, as well as providing an orientation for the concomitant musical selection process.

Alongside this internal organization, it can be argued that ECM operates a complex range of related forms of external relationships. These move across what Williams describes as “alternative” and “oppositional” relationships; the former in the sense that ECM offers the provision of *alternative* productive practices which privilege the production of certain kinds or qualities of work not always provided for by existing institutions, and the latter in the (self) perception of ECM as offering alternative modes of relations held in opposition to the established institutions of the culture industries, or, perhaps more generally, to the conditions within which these exist.<sup>164</sup>

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<sup>164</sup> While there can be no clear and regular relationship between internal and external forms of relationship it is evident in Williams's arguments regarding the analysis of formations that those organized around some form of internal manifesto tend towards alternative or oppositional forms of external relationship (1981, 68-71).



Williams argues that the development of the different forms of external relationships of independent (autonomous) cultural formations since the middle of the nineteenth century (the 'specialized', 'alternative' and 'oppositional' categories) must correspond to developments within the general organization. He considers that the development of artistic formations since the onset of modernist autonomy is exemplified in a range of responses to the increased organization and specialisation of the bourgeois market and a concomitant ideal of liberalism.<sup>165</sup> "Specialized" formations (by trade, style, and so on) fulfil a role in this general organization by either organizing market relations or bringing a body or type of work to a wider audience. "Alternative" or "oppositional" groups respond to the same conditions in the general organization, but the tensions and conflicts which arise cannot be considered in purely market or liberal terms. This is a crucial point for Williams, who argues:

We have to note [...] an increasing generalization and development of the idea that the practice and values of art are neglected by, or have to be distinguished from, or are superior or hostile to the dominant values of 'modern' society. (1981, 72)

The range of this "idea" is complex, as is any attempt to establish what Williams describes as the "bases of its social history" (1981, 72). Briefly, some themes can be identified in Williams's discussions which have relevance to the rhetorical positioning of ECM. First, the sense of a crisis amongst artists moving from patronal to market institutional relations stems from this institutional analysis. Second, there is a legacy of attachment to a pre-capitalist social order (implicit in ECM's rejection of the culture industry and the refusal of the place of commercialism in artistic production) in which the values of artistic works had been "accorded privilege within a general privilege" (1981, 72). This also seems to be evident in ECM's rhetorical presentations of music as an abstract ether, or mystical absence, reminiscent of Romantic discussions of the power of absolute music but re-worked and re-positioned as an antidote to the perceived "imbecilities" of the modern world (Mellers, 1993, 714). Finally, there is a much more generalized sense of opposition, finding resonance with the rhetorics of ECM, in which what is opposed are the "practices and values of a 'commercial' and

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<sup>165</sup> It should not be overlooked that it is these two factors (liberalism and modernity) that Williams critiques in order to define his dominant contemporary structure of feeling in *Modern Tragedy*.



‘mechanical’ civilization, from which the practices and values of the arts could be distinguished” (Williams, 1981, 73).

While the character of autonomous formations, especially those which can be considered oppositional or alternative, must be closely linked to this complex social development of ideas, further links must be drawn to the general social conditions. The tie between artistic formations, cultural production and wider general production lies in Williams’s theorising of cultural reproduction, in which he deploys his notions of relative distance and degrees of solution of signifying practice. These reflections conclude that cultural autonomy is tied to the variable distance of practices (including non-specialized general practices) from each other. For Williams, autonomous cultural reproduction can be distinguished from general social reproduction by the degree of distance of its practices from generally organized social relationships. The autonomy of cultural producers is dependent upon market asymmetry: the uneven practices of internal institutional reproduction of traditionally privileged institutions and those of alternative and oppositional institutions.

The question of relevant *contemporary* formations, in this context, is difficult to draw out of Williams’s theory. The situation of ECM is, of course, beyond any discussion of internal class fractional dissidence (of which the Bloomsbury formation is Williams’s most thorough and paradigmatic formational example); the role of contemporary oppositional cultural groups develops within a far more complex set of class relations.<sup>166</sup> The discussions of avant-garde formations (in *The Politics of Modernism: Against the New Conformists*, 1989) perhaps provide the closest model for extending these arguments. Here, formations are understood in a para-national rather than a national or class-fractional sense. These groupings derive their status and autonomy from what Williams describes as the “imperial metropolitan” situation; metropolitan in the sense that these formations must often have a metropolitan base (distinguished by Williams from both urban and national capital definitions), and imperial in the sense that there is a relative cultural autonomy and a degree of internalization related to the imperial process.

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<sup>166</sup> For Williams’s analysis of the Bloomsbury formation, see *Culture* (1981, 79-81) and the more extended essay ‘The Bloomsbury Fraction’ in *Problems in Culture and Materialism* (1980, 148-170).

The shift of this type of avant-garde formation from an oppositional position to a dominant one is a tendency which is approached in the subtitle of *The Politics of Modernism: Against the New Conformists*.

A contemporary conception of the category of “formation” could be extended from Williams’s late considerations of avant-garde formations, but the application of this to the case of ECM is problematic. The ambiguity of a formation/institution such as ECM is that it presents a story very much akin to Williams’s “resources of hope” (1983, 243-269); an artistic and productive formation which attempts to maintain a clear sense of its own emergent structure of feeling in the face of a dominant late capitalist hegemony. However, the level of cultural autonomy which it achieves (and this is no small measure) and rhetorically advocates is at bottom provided not through a class-fractional dissidence or a para-national avant-garde grouping centred on the metropolises, but by the developed forces of the globalized market. This of course is no reason for dismissal; indeed the struggle and dedication of Eicher and his team provides a creative resolution to an almost impossible position, and is responsible for producing music which may never otherwise have been widely heard. It is also important to recognise that the productive practices offered by ECM provide select composers and musicians with the opportunity to achieve a certain degree of autonomous production within an increasingly voracious market. However, the above constitutes my reasons for identifying the systematic espousal of autonomous positions and ideologies in the discourses and selective mechanism of ECM (derived from the selective reception of practices of modernism, and the legacies of modernist critiques of modernity) as operating at the level of rhetoric.



## 2.6.2 The ECM Ethos and Relations of Production

### The ‘Dramaturgical Producer’

[T]he producer is a meta-artist like all good publishers or curators. [...] While the artist concentrates all his energies on creating room for the unpredictable, the producer creates room for others. He does not create the music but rather the conditions and the space for its sounds. (Rüedi, 1996, 29-30)

Manfred Eicher received a classical training at the Augsburg Conservatory and the Musikhochschule in Berlin, but in the 1960s became involved in the excitement surrounding the emergence of free jazz improvisation, and ECM (at least initially) was primarily thought of as a jazz label. In the early days of ECM he continued to be involved as a musician (playing bass), but his primary responsibilities quickly focused on problems of technical production.<sup>167</sup> Eicher’s main experience of production grew from a brief spell as a production assistant in the late 1960s with Deutsche Grammophon, where he experienced both jazz and classical production practices. Eicher initially worked to put out recordings of new, free improvised jazz, ensuring that the musical interactions could be clearly registered. He developed a reputation for creating particularly clear mixes which explicitly defined the mix of timbre and acoustics.<sup>168</sup> Steve Lake describes this practice:

Eicher achieved unusually transparent sound-mixes in which the nature of the musical interaction was newly illuminated, every nuance and timbre lovingly registered, and began, frequently, to recast the space itself. [...] The question is always, what does the music call for? In finding out, Eicher set new standards in the fine art of sculpting sound. (Lake and Griffiths, 2)

Eicher’s role as producer is acutely sensitive to the requirements of the particular qualities of the individual musicians and later, with the New Series, the particular music brought by composers. Eicher also carefully chooses the engineers contracted for particular recordings (always under his direction), and these engineers are held responsible for the aural qualities of these recordings. In its jazz recordings, ECM works with Martin Wieland at Tonstudio Bauer in

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<sup>167</sup> This is to indicate the technical specificities of the musical producer, as opposed to my more general deployment of a production paradigm.

<sup>168</sup> The development of technology is important here – ECM has employed analogue, digital, two-track, and multi-track techniques – as are the venues and the various engineers deployed.



Ludwigsburg and Jan Erik Kongshaug at a number of Oslo studios, with the projects distributed fairly evenly between them. With the institution of the New Series, Eicher drew on a number of graduates of the Detmold Academy working at Tritonus in Stuttgart, all of whom were sensitive to the Tonmeister of classical recording: Peter Laenger, Andreas Neubronner, Markus Heiland, and Stephen Schellmann, amongst others. This divide between jazz and classical Tonmeisters should not be over-emphasized. For example, while Peter Laenger seems to have featured in the production of many of Pärt's ECM CDs (including some of the studio recording for ECM New series 1275 *Tabula rasa*), Martin Wieland was solely responsible for the engineering work of *Arbos*, *An den Wassern zu Babel*, *Pari Intervallo*, *De Profundis* and *Summa* on ECM New Series 1325 *Arbos*. Between the producer and the engineers ECM developed a recording practice which is explicitly 'creative'. Laenger recalls his first experience working with Eicher recording Pärt's *Cantus in memory of benjamin britten*:

As a young recording engineer, you can't help wincing when the unknown producer starts fiddling around with the control of the viola's microphone and even changes the setting! [...] But we found a solution, and *Cantus* emerged [...] as an unmistakable and unique piece of music [...]. Uniqueness is characteristic of almost every production with Manfred. [...] This may imply experimenting with unconventional microphone positions and seating arrangements for the musicians. (Lake and Griffiths, 321)

If this emphasizes a willingness to experiment with the technicalities of the recording process, Jan Eric Kongshaug also highlights the notion of a *collaborative* approach between musician, producer and engineer as central to achieving the final mix thus dismissing the notion of an ECM sound:

ECM mixes have never really been 'complicated' mixes because you're dealing with very competent musicians who are mostly controlling the dynamics when they play. [...] At ECM sessions, it's the choice of music and the way the musicians are playing and interacting with the producer that sets the direction for the sound of a mix. (Lake and Griffiths, 323)

This demonstrates two different aspects of the producer. Alongside the engineers, Eicher is closely involved in the technical production of the recordings produced for ECM, but he is also responsible for directing the session, for choosing the projects which come to the studio, the

musicians who appear on the recording, and in some cases the precise content of what is to be recorded. Phil Johnson, writing for *The Independent*, emphasises this dual role:

[Eicher] acts as the producer for each of the label's releases, but in Eicher's case the producer's role isn't restricted to twiddling a few knobs. Instead, he's an auteur: selecting artists, casting the production, choosing the recording venue and supervising the sessions.

[...] Eicher's role in the recording process, is always [...] a sympathetic one. "I am with the musician in his solitude, and I never say this is right or wrong. I say 'Are we in the right moment?' [...] My aim is to transmit what we hear in a studio, or a church, into a manifestation for the listener, who trusts this result of musicians, sound engineer and producer." (1999, 9)

This again depicts the creation of an ECM disc as one of *collaboration* between the various productive parties: the musician, composer, sound engineer, producer, and so on. This relates to the arguments above: the productive post-artisanal work of ECM is framed as a *creative extension* of the process of cultural production rather than the start of the market incursions into the process. This producer role, occupied by Eicher, also operates as the selective mechanism for ECM. Lake identifies the central role of this producer as the "magnet" which draws in musicians from diverse traditions and projects from diverse fields. This "magnet" is located in "the critical mind" of Manfred Eicher (Lake and Griffiths, 3). Mark Hudson prompts Eicher to make a similar observation:

'I've developed the label quite intuitively. It's just unfolded like a long journey. I invite artists to join me on this journey, and I join them on theirs. So we choose artists who share a common quality or . . . capacity.' (45)

As a result of these different roles – as technical producer, organizer of recording sessions, and artistic director and selector – Eicher is often explicitly considered to operate a form of *compositional practice*. Drawing on Steve Lake again:

Emboldened by Glenn Gould's conviction that the handprint of a record producer should be perceptible on all his projects, Eicher can also identify with this remark of Kurtág's: 'I had learned something from the *Officium breve*: a structure of relationships, an apparently loose continuity of individual pieces, could equally well be composed as the music itself at a second, editorial level.'

[...] From these perspectives, then, album production, including the sequencing of pieces, is composition [...]. Making albums, with a sense of dramaturgical flow, is one of the things that the label does best [...]. These days [...] the craft of album-making is itself under attack as market initiatives, driven by pop music's mindset, focus on single-sized chunks of music, sold over the Internet. (Lake and Griffiths, 3)

To be explicit, ECM is one of the few labels servicing autonomous practice for which album production has been explicitly cast as *productive composition*. This ranges through: Eicher's "ear for what the music needs" and the processes of recording; the selective mechanism for choosing the projects themselves, with all proposals going through Eicher's "critical mind"; the sequencing of pieces and the creation of "dramaturgical flow", which perhaps best sums up the label's distinctiveness; and the presentation of the CD as a product.<sup>169</sup>

### **ECM, the Musicians, the Composers**

The dynamic relationship between musician, composer and label is particularly interesting in the case of ECM. There are no long-term contracts with the label which would dictate the margins of an artist's future recording programme. Rhetorically, there is the espousal of a creative dynamic that the project should exist, rather than a contractual dynamic with the need that the product should *sell*. There are some general points to be noted here. The positioning of productive institutions at one or other pole of production within the field has an impact on the form of the relationships established between the institution and its artists. The large heteronomous institution's concern for a short-term return on capital dictates their selection of projects to be produced. This is tied in with a set of agents and institutions, constantly maintained and periodically mobilized, involved in advertising and promotion. On the other hand, the autonomous producer is closely involved with the company's whole set of recordings, composers and musicians.<sup>170</sup> Here, strategies related to promotion are adjusted to

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<sup>169</sup> This is of course in the context of the recording practices of music connected to autonomous tendencies. It would be interesting to compare the role of Eicher to the practices of producers in other spheres of musical production, which also tend to privilege this explicitly creative role (found, for example, in remixes and so on). In theoretical terms, Williams predicted these developments when he identified tendencies which were *simultaneously* "new" social technologies and cultural form.

<sup>170</sup> The section above argues that Eicher operates just such a relationship, producing all of ECM's releases and having all projects go through his selection criteria.



the autonomous regions of the field, considering commercial successes and artistic value as an opposition and avoiding opportunist compromises.

The long-term success of the autonomous institution depends on its ability to attract composers and musicians who make the company's reputation, gaining it credit by bringing exclusive autonomous scores to its recorded catalogue. This reconnects with Bourdieu's argument that the autonomous/heteronomous divide produces an opposition between types of product within production cycles. These product types are distributed along a variable scale between "bestseller" and "classic", and in turn ground the activity of the productive institution as acting either as "a simple merchant" or an "audacious discoverer" (Bourdieu, 1996, 148-150). Such a "discoverer" can only succeed by acknowledging and participating in the laws and stakes of 'pure' production.

The place of the performer in this dynamic at ECM is also interesting. In terms of the packaged product, the sleeve notes are famously sparse, lacking biographies and eschewing strained and posed cover photos of performers in concert dress (or conspicuously casual). Instead, there may be action shots of performers in rehearsal, deep in discussion with the composer, involved in a recording session, and so on. An essay from the performer or a critic (usually with a track record with ECM) may be included, or an interview with performer or composer. There is an attempt to focus our attention on the music; it is very rare that any extraneous detail is given. I particularly like Helen Wallace's description of building up "a picture" of the musicians of the ECM New Series by following the thread of their recordings with the label. Significantly for my line of reasoning, she relates this back to arguments over autonomy:

Follow cellist Anja Lechner through her Silvestrov *Postludium*, to her tango with Dino Saluzzi, through Webern and Burian, to her improvisation on Armenian hymns and you begin to build a picture of a highly unusual, questing artist. [...] why is this so rarely the case? Because in the 'real' world the dynamic between record company and its artist is the drive to exploit a commodity. [...] How often can it be said that a product is created for its own sake in this age of frenzied capitalism? And naturally, it follows that when the artist is no longer the commodity, it is the music that leads. (85-6)



I am cautious about espousing the possibilities of 'pure' production in the terms described here, but find the symmetry between this statement and my line of reasoning compelling. The opposition of autonomy and heteronomy in the institutional relationships between ECM and the musicians elect are clearly picked up and rhetorically underlined; not simply practised, but critically acknowledged, discussed, and published as a position-taking.

Further, Wallace's identification of "the highly unusual, questing performer" is a key description of the musician especially beloved by the ECM ethos, speaking directly to Eicher's desire to work with musicians who have "a common quality or [...] capacity". Fitting with this definition, regular performers with ECM New Series are understood to be constitutive in important ways to the production of the range of music heard; they are often 'ECM composers' themselves, contributing improvised passages, arrangements, or privileged interpreters. Whether in direct interaction with the living composer or in exploration of possibilities with the dead, the usually well-established (and problematic) division between composition and interpretation seems to be particularly ambiguous in the case of ECM.<sup>171</sup> Again, the emphasis is upon creative collaboration as the organizing principle. On the one hand ECM encourages the development of performers who engage in a productive dynamic with composer and producer, and on the other the label doesn't provide any documenting of this relationship, demanding that it is recognized aurally. This point is again rhetorically advanced by Wallace:

[T]he trace they leave is not merely interpretatively unique, it is the print of their own creation. [...] These invisible players in fact form a group of the most rounded, 'complete' classical musicians in the world. [...] the boundaries between interpretation and creation are blurred, a musical text forms a starting point for a journey of cultural and personal discovery. (86)

Composers with the ECM New Series are incorporated into this close creative relationship and are often explicitly involved in the recording process. The status of the composer is set not as the privileged author, but as a musician working with other musicians and subject to the same ECM requirements (i.e., that they be questing and collaborative). This close relation

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<sup>171</sup> This is, of course, a well-established division in the classical field but less so in other fields of musical production. The discussion here is focused on the classical context of the ECM New Series.

between performers and composers has led to a number of close and lasting partnerships. For example, Tõnu Kaljuste and the Estonian Chamber Choir and Orchestra deal with the majority of the new works of Arvo Pärt. Again, this is an interesting dynamic, considering the lack of any formal contractual obligation. At the risk of drawing too heavily on a single source, Wallace offers an excellent final consideration:

Eicher and his musicians have searched for a solution to the modern musical paradox: the need for beauty that can escape time and dogma, against the need to engage with the music of our day, Their solution? It has been to seek out and engage with those composers 'out of time', [...] composers who have been through the fire of the avant-garde and forged something personal from its embers [...] the romantic aspect of these composers shining like a candle in the darkness of their material, drawing the musicians towards intimacy. [...] Empathy at the simplest emotional level is the key [...]. (90)

ECM privileges the collaborative and productive practice of the network of relationships active under its aegis. Performers and composers are provided with access to a platform which champions the traditions of autonomous production, and in return are required to submit to the primacy of the music itself. The social relations of the further productive labour required to prepare an ECM product for the market are, in these key areas, shaped by the pressures and limits of the demands of the pole of autonomous production. This assertion is based on a number of points: first, a notion of autonomy is insisted upon as a condition of election to the catalogue; second, the values of autonomy are applied in ideological opposition to a generalized contemporary condition; and third, critical commentary is deployed to highlight, celebrate and ultimately legitimate this practice. What is missing from this discussion is a consideration of the range of music privileged by ECM: this will be the subject of the next section.



### 2.6.3 The Musics of ECM

Considering its reputation as a specialist label, the breadth of music produced by ECM is surprising. Its commitment to various forms of jazz is undeniable; it is still often considered primarily a jazz label servicing a jazz audience. However, alongside this commitment there is a range of classical music from early to contemporary music, and in recent times even some Romantic repertoire, “world” music, and film soundtracks. Despite this breadth of interest, problematic notions of a cohesive unity are often articulated in discussions of ECM. Consider again the idea of an ‘ECM sound’: is it possible that a label can produce a *sound* that is equally identifiable in Chick Corea, Zakir Hussein, Elliot Carter, John Cage, and Arvo Pärt? Clearly the ability to identify ECM recordings does not reside in a stylistic thematic among the artists in its catalogue or the aural qualities provided by the production values of its engineers. It would perhaps be closer to the mark to describe an ‘ECM approach to practice’ as the unifying principle: an ideology of autonomy, organized by an oppositional relationship with a *perceived* dominant hegemony, with the various artists chosen by Eicher possessing “certain capacities” which are symmetrical in various ways with this ECM ethos. Nevertheless, even within this argument, the homologies drawn by ECM between seemingly irreconcilable aspects of the field are surprising and require some further comment.

#### **European Revolutions in Jazz: Towards Independence and Emancipation**

ECM’s relationship with the many forms and tributaries of ‘jazz’ is complex and deserves an extended commentary outside of the scope of this thesis. There are, however, some important general observations to be made which bear on the generative principles of Eicher’s position-taking within a changing field and have relevance to the discussion here. John Fordham’s essay “ECM and European Jazz” charts a struggle within European jazz of the late 1960s and early 1970s to break with the dominant hegemony of the American jazz tradition. In the process of doing so, he provides some indication of the early pressures on Eicher’s developing sensibilities:



Garbarek reflected on the period in the late 1960s when he had begun to doubt the point of an improvised music in which the lessons of past giants were taken as gospel rather than guidance. [...] [Garbarek] caught the mood of growing European independence that ECM founder Manfred Eicher was to tune in to. Stop, listen, don't play the lick that seems the obvious thing to do next. Explore the music of your own culture, develop a technique that's as responsive to others as possible, make a personal music from whatever comes out of that process. (13)

Fordham charts a period of exploration in 'European jazz'; a searching within the jazz avant-garde for an adequate and personal mode of expression not reliant on the rules of a received tradition. Evident here are many of the themes that regularly emerge in the rhetoric of ECM: a 'search' or 'quest' for personal expression, or a finding of one's own way through the received formulas of a dominant selective tradition, variously reworked and re-presented as striving for personal independence and emancipation. Fordham links this musical search for freedom to the wider social revolutions of the late 1960s:

Manfred Eicher [...] had made one of his first forays into record production with *Nipples* [...]. That horn-blasting free-jazz rallying cry for the independence of the European avant-garde [...] had been made in the summer of the continent's student revolts, May 1968. (14)

While a thorough-going critique of the jazz field of this period, which shaped both Eicher and ECM, would be valuable, it is sufficient for my purposes to recognise the process of fracture which allowed for the imagining and realising of alternative musical possibilities and the establishment of new positions. Eicher, particularly in collaboration with Garbarek, used this situation to establish precisely his own relationship with musical materials and musicking. While the "European mutations" of the jazz field were important to Eicher, Fordham argues that it was the influence of the "cooler rebellion" of Garbarek which has had a lasting importance for ECM:

The Garbarek-Eicher debut on 1970's *Afric Pepperbird* affirmed the idea that a stripped-down soundscape, still energised by the freedoms of jazz improvisation but without its traditions of virtuoso display, could establish a new kind of music-making. It was Garbarek's approach to these materials that won out in the first ECM agenda. (14)

This mixture of a distinctive timbre and a re-thinking of received structural ideas often seems to be valorized as the distinctive 'ECM sound'. Eicher's subsequent collaborations with

other individual jazz practitioners must undermine such a reduction. Enrico Rava, Louis Slavis, Eberhard Weber, John Surman, Miroslav Vitous, Tomasz Stanko, Azimuth, the Electro-Acoustic Ensemble of Evan Parker, amongst many others, are distinctive artists who could be described as 'searching for their own mode of expression', but whose sound worlds are not (could not be) equivalent. Alongside this European involvement, ECM also re-established ties with North American musicians through its longstanding relationships with Keith Jarrett, Pat Metheny, Bill Frisell, and others, further giving the lie to the idea of a homogenized sound.

What is crucial here is that it is this early relationship between the organization of this field of 'jazz', the social developments in the wider field of power, and the *habitus* of Eicher which allowed the struggle for an individual position-taking to take place, to be established, and eventually to be consecrated. It is in this struggle that are formed many of the values of ECM which later come to play a programmatic role in practices, commentaries, and rhetorics, most particularly a 'searching' or 'questing' for 'genuine' artistic expression, privileging individual freedom and emancipation, in a modernized, globalized, *difficult* contemporary world. It is this that becomes the constitutive element of Eicher's "critical mind" as described by Lake: the selective mechanism by which "common qualities or capacities" among artists are judged. Further, it is this complex network of values which finds such a self-conscious resonance with threatened notions of autonomy.

### **The New Series**

ECM New Series was launched in 1984 to provide a platform for Pärt's *Tabula rasa*. The series became a line separate from the main output of ECM and profiled developments in classical 'new music'. This was not a clear break; Steve Reich, Meredith Monk, and John Adams were already recorded on the main line, and there is frequent movement between artists on the two (consider Garbarek's collaborations with the Hilliard Ensemble in the album *Officium*). The range of the New Series has become at least as broad in its reach as the ECM main lines, exploring developments in American and European composition (Bryars, and further recordings of Reich, Monk, Adams, amongst others) and particularly championing Soviet and

'post-Soviet' composers (Shostakovich, Pärt, Kancheli, Schnittke, Tormis, Silvestrov, Mansurian, Tüür, and so on). The New Series has also started to explore the music of composers more clearly established in the modernist tradition (Schoenberg, Stravinsky, Carter, Cage, Stockhausen, Berio, Lachenmann, Holliger, for example), the music of the more consecrated classical traditions (including Bach, Handel, Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, Brahms, and Schumann), and early music (Byrd, Tallis, Dowland, de Machaut, and so on). The New Series is also the outlet for Eicher's involvement in film soundtracks, most especially the work of Jean-Luc Godard, but also Karaindou and others.

Again, the unifying element here cannot be the specific content of this vast range of musical material, but is something more generally felt: rhetorically this would be described as the urge to musical engagement, exploration, and expression. The importance of the relationships between performers, composers and Eicher should not be overlooked here. While certain developments (especially the venture into modernist music) enlarged the pool of musicians, there is also some overlap between these genres and the regular ECM collaborators. Consider Jarrett's and Kramer's engagement with Bach in *Das Wohltemperierte Klavier* (1987) and *Sonatas and Patitas for Violin Solo* (2001) respectively. Dennis Russell Davies, conductor for the version of *Cantus* on ECM's *Tabula rasa* (1984), also leads on the recording of Berio's *Voci* (2000) and Cage's *The Seasons* (1997). Paul Hillier provides the text for Elliott Carter's *What next?* (2000). Certainly, András Schiff and Thomas Zehetmair come to be prominent on the recordings of classical repertoire, while Kim Kashkashian, Heinz Holliger (as performer), and Thomas Demenga become closely involved with modernist programmes, but even here no sharp lines should be drawn: these performers appear on other projects outside of these generic divisions.

Eicher's approach to repertoire traditionally seen to have emerged from the most autonomous areas of the field of musical production, has some complex ramifications for its social status. Hudson observes:



Eicher refers often to the utopianism and ‘magic’ of the 1960s, the period when he came of age, and ECM is what an aspect of the era became. The baby boomer generation [...] hasn’t acceded to more ‘mature’ forms like classical music and jazz. ECM offers you the opportunity to do precisely that, but without taking on all the establishment cultural baggage of traditional labels like Deutsche Grammophon. (45)

Here the most formally autonomous musics, whose schemas of understanding Bourdieu would describe as requiring dispositions produced by “privilege within a general privilege” (1996, 288), are disembedded from the usual production and distribution processes residually associated with social privilege and distinction. Thus ECM is seen to open a route to repertoire usually deemed inaccessible, or rejected as elitist, to a broader proportion of consumers. In this way, the positive values of autonomy appear to have been appropriated and rhetorically re-positioned to serve an idealistic quest for utopian emancipation and freedom rather than traditional forms of symbolic violence and social distinction.<sup>172</sup> I am reminded here of Tony Pinkney’s description of Williams’s relationship with post-modernism, in which the implications of an “aesthetic populism” become a stake:

Much of what we now dub post-modernism is, in his [Williams’s] view, simply a continuation of Modernism, the old defamiliarizing forms and gestures launched from the old metropolitan centres but now tolerated and even actively cultivated by the very bourgeoisie they had once scandalized, the old formations now integrated into a capitalism which had itself mutated in their own ‘paranational’ direction. What is distinctive in post-modernism [...] is that populist impulse [...]: the antiseptic, elitist, directive high-cultural impulse of modernism assailed in the name of the warmer, more creaturely world of the mass culture where most of us actually live most of the time. [...] aesthetic populism of this kind must itself become a formational rather than a merely formal matter, a shift in the social relations of cultural forms rather than a pure act of individual authorial violation. (Williams, 1989, 23)

The relationship between the New Series and its chosen repertoire seeks to provide just such a formational and institutional organization, able to support a “shift in the social relations of cultural forms”. Whether ECM could be described as truly populist remains a doubt, but Eicher has sought to retrieve and revive aspects of a consecrated autonomous culture, re-think the value of autonomous utterances in quite general terms, and re-presented them as products

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<sup>172</sup> This is not to argue that ECM has managed to transcend social distinction or the use of cultural goods for symbolic violence, but rather that the old class associations of much of this repertoire have been re-worked.



to the market. Parallel to this, ECM as institution helps to create, explore, and occupy a key position in the developing phenomenon of music made for recording. It has perhaps done more than any other label in attempting to address the legacy of music residually produced for performance in an age of technological reproduction; in making the creative production of an album *simultaneously the exploration of cultural form and technology*, ECM explicitly attempts to guard against the commodification of the developed technologies of reproduction. The appendix “Music, Technology, and Cultural Form” clarifies my thinking on this point.

### “Post-Soviet” Composers

The extent to which ECM finds some symmetry between its own ideals and the range of “post-Soviet” composers deserves some brief exploration. I have borrowed the term “post-Soviet” from David Fanning’s essay “Late-Soviet and Post-Soviet Music: the World Within”, in which it is used to identify an array of composers who emerge into the autonomous pole of the Western musical field from the end-game of the Soviet state in the late 1980s and 1990s. Considering the social and geographical range from which these musicians originate, it is difficult to group them together as a formation, or to identify a coherent general structure of feeling. However, as with the discussion of Pärt above, the general material point of their emigration from the organization of the Soviet field to that of the Western capitalist field should be noted. This social movement engenders both differences of practice (most especially social and political) but also some recognition of values (most especially found in autonomous musical production) leading to complexity and ambiguity.<sup>173</sup>

There are attempts, on the part of agents active in the Western field, to use this ambiguity to equate these post-Soviet composers to areas of the Western field. What I wish to draw out here is that in the case of ECM there appears to be a general meshing of the values and ideals of Eicher and those expressed in the body of music of the post-Soviet composers. Fanning’s essay itself constitutes a good example of this. Published in *Horizons Touched: The Music of ECM*

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<sup>173</sup> This ‘recognition of values’ is meant at a quite general level of the organization of cultural production, and is not meant to equate a direct link between the autonomous utterances of the two fields.

(Lake and Griffiths, 2007), it argues for a symmetry between the music emerging from the collapse of the Soviet Union and the ideology of ECM.

He identifies one of the identifiable characteristics of the Soviet field as the drive to find legitimate articulations, beyond the enforced doctrine of Socialist Realism, capable of articulating artistic lament in the face of the human suffering. In these conditions, notions which have fallen out of the sphere of artistic activity in the Western field maintain some validity. Most particularly, Fanning notes that “modern man is in search of his soul; that this soul is in search of its voice; and that music can be the voice of the soul” (2007, 194). This is argued to function as a “substitute creed” in the Soviet field, providing an outlet for suppressed religious feeling, an alternative to the dominant social and political hegemony, and a vehicle for subversive musical strategies. The paradigmatic case here is Shostakovich, with Fanning noting that he articulates “hidden social commentary”, “assertion of independence” and “eternal artistic values” in his music (2007, 194). In this way, the Soviet field inherits the musical strategies of “cryptic quotation, symbolic allusion, and stylistic mixture” which are linked to an urge to seek solace (2007, 194). These themes find their way in various forms into the music of subsequent generation of composers growing up in the last years of the Soviet world many of whom become represented by ECM.

For Fanning, the “drama” of this music is derived from its emergence from the “painful outer experience” and the “precious inner world” of the community of ex-soviet composers fragmented by exile and subjected to Western freedoms (2007, 195). The connections between ECM and this music are left unstated, but the implications seem clear enough. The structure of feeling described by Fanning is one of searching for an adequate individual expression of sorrow and comfort in the face of political oppression. The symmetry with the structure of feeling permeating ECM, which privileges the status of the questing artist searching for individual expression and the desire to use cultural expression to articulate what is valuable in the face of the modernized world, is compelling. Dennis Russell Davies parallels Fanning’s argument, making these links explicit:

This new music [...] has found astonishing and profound approval and acceptance in the West, largely through the care and support of Manfred Eicher and ECM. The rootless materialism and disillusioned cynicism in the Western social fabric created a yearning for inspiration and solace in our ostensibly educated young people that the music of Pärt, Gubaidulina, Kancheli, Tüür et al. speaks to. Non-ECM composers such as Philip Glass deserve to be included in these observations, and many of these new listeners have begun to rediscover the beauty of and inspiration in the music of Berio, Boulez and Kurtág as well. ECM's pivotal role in these developments makes me especially proud of my long involvement and friendship with these great composers. (Lake and Griffiths, 214)

Whatever the strengths of this position, it expresses the desire to find proximity between these composers and the institution/formation of ECM. It presents a valorized opposition between an old 'difficult' avant-garde (Berio et al.) and an artistically younger pole of the field (represented solely by Glass, but with the implication that more ECM composers occupy this position) with whom the post-Soviet composers somehow share a quite general oppositional vision. This opposition is implied to be weakening, allowing listeners to "rediscover" in this old avant-garde the stakes and values of the same opposition.

Drawing connections between the structures of feeling of these emergent composers and Williams's dominant tragic/utopian structure of feeling is difficult to sustain. Alternatively, I contend that these rhetorics of ECM articulate a vaguely felt desire for an ideological *unity of autonomous utterance*, made against the increasing hegemony of the heteronomous principles of the late capitalist globalized market. How else can the disparate musics of Boulez, Glass, and Gubaidulina be united to fight the same fight, to provide a solution to the "rootless materialism" and "disillusioned cynicism" of modernity? While the expressions of "searching" and "solace" are valuable points of symmetry, it is the status of this post-Soviet music as emergent autonomous utterances, also without the overt class associations of the consecrated autonomous traditions of the West, which is of most value to the ideals of ECM and their market.

### **Clarity, Autonomy, and Hope**

One of the characteristics of ECM implicit in the above (although explicit in many of the critical commentaries used) is its rhetorical emphasis on some kind of utopian alternative to a



quite generally defined contemporary condition. In an essay published as part of a dedication to the cover art of ECM (*Sleeves of Desire: a Cover Story* Müller, 1996) Peter Kemper offers one of the most direct articulations of this position:

We are informing ourselves to death. Stimulated by the technical potential of the new media [...] we cannot help answering the call: "Use the technology at hand, use it always and use it all!" [...] Physical experiences, affective involvement in perception, it will all disappear when lived experience is reduced to processing information, gathering data, and recognizing situations. [...] Have we forever lost the unity of art and nature? [...] The flagrant flexibility of the space of perception, in the music as well as in the visual design of ECM productions, seems to be a conscious moment of cessation in the midst of the ceaselessly flowing rush of information. [...] For twenty-five years, ECM productions have demonstrated that a steadily declining sensual substance must be complemented by a progressive aesthetization of reality – the world as a space of experience – to prevent art from fading into the spectacle of animation. (Kemper, 7-9)

This is an explicit railing against a perceived process of modernization, a concomitant culture industry, and the impact these have on human experience and artistic practice.

It is interesting to compare the different treatment that the "new media" receive from Williams as a central part of his work on "communications". Here, new technologies are acknowledged but are argued to offer the potential for greater democratic organization. Kemper's position suffers from what Williams describes as the "unholy combination" of technological determinism (a focus on "the imperative of machines", not the social forces which shaped their development) and cultural pessimism which denies these potentials. In the face of this combination

many radicals draw back to defensive positions: identifying the new technologies with the corporations which control them, and both with a new and disastrous phase of 'para-national hyper-capitalism'. The forces they are identifying are real, but all that follows from so undeveloped a position is a series of disparaging remarks and defensive campaigns, leading in many cases to tacit alliance with the defenders of old privileged and paternalist institutions, or, worse, with the fading ideas of the old cultural argument: a high culture to be preserved and by education and access extended to a whole people. (1983, 129)

It is the untangling of these positions, and the attempt to offer some alternative, that lead to Williams's most explicit normative commitments. These are also closely tied to the dominant structure of feeling identified in *Modern Tragedy*; both technological determinism and cultural



pessimism were seen by Williams as forms of intellectual conformism (especially embodied for him by the work of Marshall McLuhan) and despair, in the face of the crises and “deadlocks” of modernity and liberalism.

The ECM position is perhaps more sophisticated than the targets of Williams’s arguments in *Towards 2000* as it also articulates some form of utopian prospect. For example, Kemper goes on to propose such a prospect active in ECM, rhetorically drawing on a conception of a lost organic unity between “art and Nature”. It is significant that Williams anticipates this position as one of the social bases for the “oppositional” external relationships of artistic formations. In more general terms, ECM locates utopian hope in the values enabled and instituted by the development of an autonomous pole in the organization of the Western field of cultural production. This position is discoverable in the formational and institutional organization of ECM, through: the demand that projects ‘exist’ rather than ‘sell’; the conspicuous lack of engagement with the organized heteronomous commercial mechanisms of marketing and publicity; the explicitly creative nature of its “further productive work” in preparing its product for the market; the selective mechanism for electing projects to its catalogue and the privileging of a questing or searching approach to materials; and the call (in its visual identity) to the expressive value of ‘pure art’.

Rhetorically ECM mobilizes the autonomous utterance as a mechanism with which to critique the social world. Eicher himself puts it best when he tells us: “Music is my Utopia [...] I grew up at a time when Utopia still had a meaning – Ernst Bloch, Theodor Adorno, and other imaginative philosophers were, in a sense, dreamers with a keen sense of reality” (Cowan, 1998, 29). Thus ECM exemplifies Bourdieu’s observation that autonomous agents must inculcate the dispositions of both autonomy and heteronomy if they are to survive, often leading to ambiguous positions and actions. This is taken to an extreme in ECM’s rhetorical advocacy of the most principled autonomous values from a position in which autonomy is provided by the functioning of the globalized heteronomous market.

## Conclusion – ECM's *Tabula rasa*: Towards an Autonomous Market Position?

His [Arvo Pärt's] perfectionist approach to sound [...] is fastidiously mirrored in ECM's recordings; and while rival CDs of other works are accepted – some respectfully, others regretfully, it seems clear that the artistic relationship with producer Manfred Eicher is something rather special. (Cowan, 1998, 29)

The arguments presented above have attempted to cover a lot of ground. Chapter 4 built on the general reflections in the first part of the thesis by outlining the presence of a material critique of the *refusal* and the *wager* in Williams's and Bourdieu's assessment of modernism and modernity. Their privileging of avant-garde mechanisms was contrasted with an increasingly dominant post-modern notion of cultural change as disparate and fragmented, related in many cases to an increasingly dominant heteronomous market. Chapter 5 moved to discuss the terms of Pärt's emergent position-taking, noting the terms of the tintinnabuli compositions and the contemporary field developments. Chapter 6 explored the conditions of practice in ECM, attempting to discern some of the stakes and themes in the label's productive relations and the range of music it recruits to its catalogue. What remains to be done is to explore the degree of symmetry operating over this range of activity and to identify the extent to which this speaks to the themes identified in chapter 4.

I contend that the production of ECM New Series 1275 *Tabula rasa* in 1984 constituted a remarkable convergence of various aspects of the field; a coherent and symmetrical constellation of productive practices tending to occupy difficult relationships with autonomy and finding popular support and acceptance. These relationships are deeply ambiguous – dissenting yet also belonging and attempting to extend into a period of changing relations of production some of the historically received values of autonomous practice transformed into something resembling ideology. Pärt, emergent from the avant-garde pole of musical production, struggles to define a practice which tacitly privileges the most consecrated of received autonomous musical production, while also rejecting the immediate pre-history of the Western musical avant-garde. This musical practice, the taking of a position inscribed in the potentialities of a field in transition, becomes the subject of variously defined rhetorics of

legitimation and consecration.<sup>174</sup> ECM emerges from the “magic” of the 1960s into the market of musical production, privileging the values of autonomy across the range of its activities, and attempting to rework these received positions into a consciously conceived oppositional ideology aimed at the perceived “imbecilities” of the contemporary condition and the culture industries.

The targets of both Williams's and Bourdieu's theoretical critiques of autonomy (the refusal and the wager) play a generative and determining factor in these primary practices but also in the rhetorics which become part of the wider practices (reviews, articles, critical commentary, and so on). The ambiguity of these position-takings lies in their attempt to negotiate both the autonomous and heteronomous principles – the tightrope walk between opposition to the dominant market hegemony and a tragic conformism to its terms. Bourdieu contends that cultural production in the modern age *must* be ambiguous by its very nature, and any cultural producer must embody both the autonomous and heteronomous principles in order to be successful. What is evident in this particular instance is an attenuation of this ambiguity, with heteronomy providing the foundation for the adoption of an autonomous ideology. These deep ambiguities are engendered by the changing nature of productive relations in the general sphere of production, and the positions taken here very often constitute brave and creative attempts to establish a productive base in a difficult contemporary situation.

The ambiguities are discoverable through the range of instances when practice is successful and others when it seems only to be sustained by the terms of its rhetorics. In terms of Williams's emancipatory critique, there is the danger of lapsing into conformism; both with the industry which is rejected, but also with charges of ‘New Age escapism’ levelled against Pärt and ECM. However, the conditions identified by Williams in his postulation of a dominant structure of feeling are recognized in the rhetorics which accumulate around ECM. There is an attempt to respond to the pressures of modernization, to recognize and respond to the despair of a generalized and widespread “loss of the future”, and to mount a redemptive sortie

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<sup>174</sup> The character of Pärt's position-taking is just one realization of the potentialities presented by the fragmentation of the dominant *illusio* in the field of musical production in the 1970s and 1980s.



on modern subjectivity. ECM, especially, rhetorically adopts the institutional role of a “resource of hope” (Williams, 1983, 243-269), recognizing and combating the effects of “strategic advantage” or “globalization” through the privileging of a “genuine” (equated to “autonomous”) arts practice. In doing so, both Pärt and ECM are perceived to have a general and contemporary relevance; to produce an utterance which is meaningful to a broad proportion of listeners. They discover a market. When the terms of such a practice are seen to offer *comfort* in the face of the effects of the modern capitalist organization, it is difficult to escape the suspicion of a complementarity, or conformism to its terms.

In Bourdieu's theory, the tensions produced by opening autonomous practices to the activities of the heteronomous pole of production can only hope to be sustained through strongly phrased ideologies. The positions established here move away from the autonomous organization of the field and engender an early instance of the mutual complementarity of the fields of commercialism, art, and politics. Here, artistic engagement with the para-national and globalized market has become central to the process of cultural production; this is no longer a critical modernist phase but the late capitalism of post-modernism. The logic of this field is not a move *beyond* the organization of production instituted by the heroic position-taking of the early modernists – the autonomous/heteronomous opposition – but, rather, these mechanisms have become a subject available for manipulation even for immediate commercial gain. There should be no hasty judgements here; I am categorically *not* accusing ECM and Pärt of ‘selling out’ or any other such simple reduction, but wish to note that the *ambiguity* of these formations lies in the adoption of the values of a critical autonomy for rhetorical purposes and their deployment to establish and consecrate positions within the field (not cynically, but as part of the struggle of practice), while the *condition* of autonomy is supplied by the terms of the heteronomous market.





## Postscript

The work of Williams and Bourdieu on artistic production examines, from within their respective intellectual cultures the range of meanings produced by the institution of the autonomous artist, the products of dramatic change in the material determinations of the general organization, and the course of these legacies in the twentieth century. It is for this reason that I have emphasized the themes of autonomy of practice, the topos of refusal, and the wager on the future in their work; it is in these areas that such concerns can be most usefully highlighted. How these tropes are sustained and transformed in different instances and different contexts becomes their key task.

I have tried to take a critical approach to this range of debate, choosing Arvo Pärt as the case study less to see these theories applied to a musical case than in order to examine an instance of musical practice which spans the opposition of autonomy and heteronomy and so puts strain on both Williams's and Bourdieu's readings of artistic production. In this sense, their respective interpretations of avant-garde mechanisms, so central to this way of examining cultural production, is one of the tacit themes of the study. This mechanism is now clearly under severe strain as a governing logic of practice, though the notion of "newness" retains a transformed and multifaceted stake in the field. Bourdieu's theory of the artistic field of production does not dissolve with the weakening of the autonomous avant-garde imperative, but must now recognize the increasing complexity of the self-conscious and referential play of practices between the poles he identifies. The loose oppositions he sets up (and which occasionally run the risk of lapsing into structuralist solidity) must be reconsidered in each analysis, and the increasing proximity and overlap between different fields (especially of power and cultural production) must be acknowledged.

Considering his recent status, it is perhaps surprising that the subtleties of Williams's model of production, applied to cultural form, formations and institutions, and communications technologies, are well suited to discussing the complexities of contemporary production. In the year of Dai Smith's seminal biography and the fiftieth anniversary of the publication of *Culture*

*and Society*, a reconsideration of this body of work is timely.<sup>175</sup> To close my reflections on Williams, I should like to reiterate that the emphasis on tragedy in the above is not casual. Used by Bourdieu to describe the refusal of autonomy, it is through this formulation that Williams articulates his ideas on social change. Of all the contributions made by Williams's work, I find the presence of a relevant model of emancipatory critique to be particularly welcome in the contemporary climate. As David Hare puts it in his review of Smith's biography, "there is a strong feeling, in the present atmosphere of debauched intellectual panic, that if Raymond were still here, there would be somebody around who could make sense of all this" (2008).

Williams's work constantly engages in the assessment of how society could be changed, and offers the theoretical tools for measuring the progress towards or away from deepening democracy. How would he have engaged with today's problems and debates? Most generally, Williams espoused a commitment to genuine cultural and democratic pluralism, asking whose democracy, and in whose interests? Such an open democracy is still to be developed. However, Williams would acknowledge that a genuinely socialist democracy would have to be more democratic, more complex, than the current capitalist democracy: this is no simplification or whimsical yearning after utopian idealism. What Williams's theoretical, fictional, and political writings point towards are ways of developing and supporting the consciousness of collective communities – or, to put it another way, consciousness of the connections (or discontinuities) across aspects of a way of life: a material culture. This sense of a connected culture was a reality which Williams had lived and felt in the early twentieth-century, through the residual presence of the collective aggregations organized for work in the South Wales industrial communities, before, through education, he was abstracted from it. Whether such a conception of socialist democracy can be sustained is debatable, and the signs are, perhaps, unremittingly pessimistic. However, it is in a continued search for and support of

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<sup>175</sup> While the question of why a fifty year old book should still be read is to be expected, the question of why it still excites debate should also be considered. The range of responses to Smith's biography indicates a continued debate. This continued relevance was the central topic of the Centre for Research into the English Literature and Language of Wales's (CREW) recent conference *Culture and Society @ 50*, Swansea, 7 November 2008.

“resources of hope” – cultural formations that offer the opportunity for alternative futures – that Williams might have spent his energy were he still alive. Perhaps unusually for a twentieth-century left-wing intellectual, Williams also recognized the potentialities of technological advance. The “new” communications systems erode central control and enable discourse and debate; the possibilities of the internet and satellite communications are certainly something that he would have engaged with.<sup>176</sup>

If Williams's focus could have been shifted to music, he would surely have been drawn by the degree of popular interest in Pärt's music – the broad response to its structure of feeling – and may have sought some interaction with it. He would also, characteristically, have been cautious, circumspect, and encouraged careful analysis of a complex situation. Further, Williams would have welcomed as a positive step the turning of the production of recorded music in to an amalgam of technology and cultural form. Similarly, he would probably have seen the relations of production of ECM as an admirable development. However, concerns over conformity (realised as nostalgia and withdrawal) would remain. ECM's utopia is not that of Williams's, despite its rhetorical reliance on similar debates. Williams's prospective analyses consistently argued that alternatives to the capitalist economic and technological hegemonies would have to be more complex, both in organization and consciousness, avoiding a valorized yearning for Romantic ideals.

I have attempted to develop a materialist reading of the determinations of a particular post-modern musical practice, to try to discover some of its determining characteristics and a way of responding to it. There is room to explore how this body of theoretical understandings holds its shape when applied in different contexts. All methodologies need careful reconsideration for each analysis, but, at a general level at least, these approaches to study have some wider currency. Within this, the conjunction of theories suggests that there lies the opportunity for dialogue between theoretical traditions rather than faction – for working over

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<sup>176</sup> For example, it is impossible to imagine that he would have had nothing to say about the uses of technology in the recent American election.



the received generalized opposition of a Frankfurt Marxist approach to cultural works and a French post-structuralist one.

### 3 RESOURCES

#### Appendix: Music, Technology, and Cultural Form

This appendix is designed to trace key points rather than to present a full argument. One of the central aspects of the field of production in the period under scrutiny above was the development of technology. The late 1970s and 1980s saw a proliferation of recording technologies, the development of the CD, and a consolidation of the relations of production which organize the creation and distribution of musical products (i.e. the record industry). A clear perception of technology in the field at this time can be found in Roger Johnson's slightly later essay "Machine Songs I: Music and the Electronic Media" (1991). Superficially, this work follows a similar line to that of Williams, taking the long, trans-epochal view, and noting the move through various modes of music production: from embedded production ("folk" and "ritual" oral cultures), through to disembedded production (the music of "high European culture", exemplified through the notion of a disembedded "genre masterpiece"). Johnson argues that the development of electronic and digital music was moving the field towards a new era of production (12).

In this new era, Johnson argues, there was a divide in the production of music between that which is "based on the traditions of live performance", and that which is "determined by electronic media, created in a studio, designed for listening by recording, and sold as a commodity" (12). The term "music", he notes, was being increasingly used to describe music which is broadcast or amplified, processed by electronic media, or stored for reproduction. Johnson uses these observations to establish that:

This process makes music into a commodity with use value and exchange value very different from those for music that is based on notation and live performance. An enormous industry, one of the largest in the world, has grown up in the past 75 years or so to produce, control, and market electronic musical "software." (12)

Johnson therefore argues that changes in technologies have had an extensive impact upon the logics of practice in the field, but have also heralded a shift in who is controlling the interests

of the dominant musical culture. Johnson explicitly invokes Marshall McLuhan, arguing that the means of communication have a determining impact on the content and mode of musical utterance (“the medium is the message”). Williams’s work on communications technologies and media (especially as discussed in *Keywords* (1988, 203-204) and in *Marxism and Literature* (1977, 158-164)) exhibits considerable hostility to the work of McLuhan as a prime exponent of technological determinism. For example:

The work of McLuhan was a particular culmination of an aesthetic theory which became, negatively, a social theory: a development and elaboration of formalism which can be seen in many fields, from literary criticism and linguistics to psychology and anthropology, but which acquired its most significant popular influence in an isolating theory of ‘the media’. (1974, 126)

I will use this opportunity to outline Williams’s position with regard to developments in technology and cultural form, discussing his opposition to technological determinism and the alternative position he developed. I will then return to Johnson’s reflections on the state of recorded music, and offer an alternative position based on Williams’s approach to technology.

Williams’s most detailed consideration of technological determinism is to be found in the first chapter of *Television: Technology and Cultural Form* (1974). This work follows on from *The Long Revolution* (1961) and *Communications* (1962), evidencing the development of Williams’s thinking through of the relationships between technology, society, and cultural forms, and categorizing different views of the “cause and effect” relations operating between these categories.<sup>177</sup> Amongst this, technological determinism is introduced as the dominant contemporaneous attitude, defined as follows:

The first class of opinion [...] is that usually known [...] as *technological determinism*. It is an immensely powerful and now largely orthodox view of the nature of social change. New technologies are discovered, by an essentially internal process of research and development, which then sets the conditions for social change and progress. Progress, in particular, is the history of these inventions, which ‘created the modern world’. The effects of the technologies, whether direct or indirect, foreseen or unforeseen, are as it were the rest of history. The steam engine, the automobile, television, the atomic bomb, have made modern man and the modern condition. (1974, 13)

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<sup>177</sup> See especially Part A of Chapter 1 in *Television: Technology and Cultural Form*, “Versions of Cause and Effect in Technology and Society” (1974, 10-14).

Resistance to technological determinism, and the “cultural pessimism” which Williams identifies as its consequent partner, survives into the normative statement of *Towards 2000*.

Here an alternative characterisation is implied:

The basic assumption of technological determinism is that a new technology – a printing press or a communications satellite – ‘emerges’ from technical study and experiment. It then changes the society or the sector into which it has ‘emerged’. ‘We’ adapt to it, because it is the new modern way.

Yet virtually all technical study and experiment are undertaken within already existing social relations and cultural forms, typically for purposes that are already in general foreseen. [...] It is only when it is selected for investment towards production, and when it is consciously developed for particular social uses – that is, when it moves from being a technical invention to what can properly be called an available technology – that the general significance begins. (1983, 129-130)

In his body of work on communications, Williams attempts to theorize the complex relations between his production paradigm, cultural forms, and developing technologies; he tries to deploy his production paradigm in the sphere of technology. This approach is most clearly articulated in the essay “Means of Communication as Means of Production”:

As a matter of general theory it is useful to recognize that means of communication are themselves means of production. It is true that means of communication, from the simplest physical forms of language to the most advanced forms of communications technology, are themselves always socially and materially produced, and of course reproduced. Yet they are not only forms but means of production, since communication and its material means are intrinsic to all distinctively human forms of labour and social organization, thus constituting indispensable elements both of the productive forces and of the social relations of production. (Williams, 1980, 50)

Identifying communications technology as means of communication, Williams is able to bring these into relation with his “general” productive forces as part of the historical development:

[T]he means of communication, both as produced and as means of production, are directly subjected to historical development. This is so, first, because means of communication have a specific productive history, which is always more or less directly relate to general historical phases of productive and technical capacity. It is so, second, because the historically changing means of communication have historically variable relations to the general complex of productive forces and to the general social relationships which are produced by them and which the general productive forces both produce and reproduce. These historical variations include both relative homologies between the means of communication and more



general social productive forces and relationships, and, most marked in certain periods, contradictions of both general and particular kinds. (1980, 50)

In this way, Williams draws a parallel between the “general complex” and developments in the means of communication. This move obeys the same logic as his attempt to bring his “cultural” and “general” categories of production into relation. Williams's key example here, drawn from *Television: Technology and Cultural Form*, is the social process of the privatisation of the home:

The earlier period of public technology [...] was being replaced by a kind of technology for which no satisfactory name has yet been found: that which served an at once mobile and home-centred way of living: a form of *mobile privatisation*. Broadcasting in its applied form was a social product of this distinctive tendency. [...] this privatisation, which was at once an effective achievement and a defensive response, carried as a consequence, an imperative need for new kinds of contact. The new homes might appear private and 'self-sufficient' but could be maintained only by regular funding and supply from external sources [...] this relationship created both the need and the form of a new kind of 'communication': news from 'outside', from otherwise inaccessible sources. [...] the new 'consumer' technology which reached its first decisive stage in the 1920s served this complex of needs within just these limits and pressures. [...] Some people spoke of the new machines as gadgets, but they were always much more than this. They were applied technology of a set of emphases and responses within the determining limits and pressures of industrial capitalist society. (1974, 26-27)<sup>178</sup>

Williams attempts to develop a way of privileging social practice as the determining factor in the question of technology. He moves to find a relationship between the development of technical inventions (mechanical devices, such as TV), the social institutions of technology (such as the development of institutions for the broadcasting of TV programmes), and the general organization of social relations (in which particular pressures and limits produce social needs to which the other categories respond). Williams thus extends his emphasis on the values of social practice to means of communication. Further, his attempt to bring these means into relation with the general and cultural organizations of production means that he is also able to accommodate hegemonic issues of social and cultural reproduction active in new technologies.

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<sup>178</sup> Williams's arguments on mobile privatisation and technology are more complex than can be caught here in summary form – the key reference is Part C of Chapter 1, “The Social History of the Uses of Television Technology” (1974, 19-31).

In opposing McLuhan's "the medium is the message", Williams acknowledged that cultural forms are part of the mediation, but from a social formalist position in which forms are themselves a form of practice. In *Television: Technology and Cultural Form* he categorizes the various cultural forms available to TV broadcasting, noting the continued use of earlier forms (such as news, education, and drama), new forms (particularly "education by seeing"), and forms which are both technology *and* cultural form. This last group is captured in his discussion of the "planned flow" of TV programmes, described as a consequence of the social institutionalization of TV broadcasting within the available cultural forms for distribution via TV (1974, 78-118). Williams's normative commitments are also evident within this debate:

We shall already have entered a new social world when we have brought the means and systems of the most direct communication under our own direct and general control. We shall have transformed them from their normal contemporary functions as commodities or as elements of a power structure. [...] socialism is then not only the general 'recovery' of specifically alienated human capacities but is also, and much more decisively, the necessary institution of new and very complex communicative capacities and relationships. In this it is above all a production of new means (new forces and new means) of production, in a central part of the social material process; and through these new means of production a more advanced and more complex realization of the decisive productive relationships between communication and community. (1980, 62-63)

Thus, developments in modern communications form a central and integrated part of Williams's late critical theory. This, along with his theoretical emphasis on difficulty and discontinuity, allows for a more nuanced understanding of the targets of Adorno's culture industry thesis. This focus on communications technology and the organization of the relations of production also makes consideration of the practices of a record label (ECM) alongside those of Arvo Pärt compelling.

It is interesting to revisit Johnson's discussion of recording practices in light of the above. He offers an account of the development of recording technologies, observing a shift of values to *recording* from *performance*. This shift to a "new mode" of production is described as serving the commercial interests of record sales and broadcasting. While this observation is interesting, it deserves some further consideration. Speaking in very general terms, it could be argued that the general social demand for private entertainment enables the social institution

(the social organization) of recording and distributive institutions to develop.<sup>179</sup> These institutions are served by the socially directed technical inventions (such as recording equipment) which make use of received cultural forms: developing earlier forms, attempting to create new forms, or producing something which is at one and the same time both a technology and cultural form. In the latter case, the production of “the album”, with its programmatic organization of musical material (often by an intermediary) and accompanying packaging, can become simultaneously the social technology of recording and cultural form. This is central to my discussion of ECM.

Johnson goes on to make the interesting argument that “classical music” is the genre which most denies the “new” mode of production because of the stakes it has invested in the traditions preceding recording technology.<sup>180</sup> Further, he contends that it is also the genre which most strongly resists the hybridization of social technology and cultural form. This line of argument is carried to an extreme when Johnson asks us to consider that the opposition between classical and commercial music has been created by the technology of recording:

Many composers suffer because their music is essentially concert music but in a style that has never established itself with the now-rigidified audience for classical concert music. Some postmodern art composers like Steve Reich, John Adams, and Arvo Pärt and groups like the Kronos Quartet have been able to establish a somewhat larger audience for their acoustic concert music, but it is largely an alternative audience without much sympathy for either academic modernism or “standard” classical music. Other composers, such as David Del Tredici and Bill Bolcolm, have made other inroads to the concert hall. These are encouraging signs to some, but most traditionally trained concert composers are caught between the closed world of classical music and the equally closed world of commercial music. These are formidable barriers that have been created, or at least hardened, by recording. (15)

While this extract catches some of my own concerns with the changing nature of the pressures and limits acting on practice in recent times, it is severely reductive (and indeed technologically determinist) to attribute the determinations of these challenges to technology in itself. My discussion of Williams’s position on this point has been the result of an attempt to

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<sup>179</sup> This is perhaps linked to the same process of mobile privatization which Williams identifies as the determination for broadcasting services. However, such a claim would require fuller substantiation.

<sup>180</sup> Here “classical music” clearly means the dominant selective tradition of Western Romantic music and the accompanying ideologies of privilege.

find a more adequate account of the developments of technical inventions and social technologies, placing them firmly within the general social process. Through this body of theoretical reflections, the development of technical invention, social technology, and cultural form can be brought into relation with the notion of hegemonic incorporation (which can be theorized as, in its dominant form in the current period, the globalized market economy). This offers a more qualified explanation for the close association of technology and commodification. The more completely the commercial imperative is dissolved in this process, the closer the recording institution is to the heteronomous principle, and of course the reverse holds true for the autonomous principle.





# Musical Examples

## Ex. 1 Für Alina, bars 1 – 7

### für alina

für klavier

arvo pärt  
(\* 1935)

Ruhig, erhaben, in sich hineinhorchend

The musical score consists of three systems of piano music. Each system has three staves: a treble clef staff, a grand staff (treble and bass clefs), and a bass clef staff. The first system includes a piano dynamic marking (*p*) in the grand staff. The second system has a fermata over the first measure of the grand staff. The third system has a fermata over the first measure of the grand staff. The music is in a key with one sharp (F#) and a 3/4 time signature. The tempo/mood is indicated as 'Ruhig, erhaben, in sich hineinhorchend'.

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### Ex. 2 Spiegel im Spiegel, bars 1-33

für W. Szpakow  
**Spiegel im Spiegel**  
für Violine und Klavier (1978)

**Arvo Pärt**  
(<sup>c</sup> 1935)

$J = 80$  ca

Musical score for bars 1-6. The score is in 3/4 time and consists of two systems. The first system covers bars 1-3, and the second system covers bars 4-6. The music is written for violin and piano. The piano part features a steady eighth-note accompaniment. The violin part has a melodic line with some grace notes. A dynamic marking of *mf* is present at the end of bar 6.

Musical score for bars 7-12. The score is in 3/4 time and consists of two systems. The first system covers bars 7-9, and the second system covers bars 10-12. The piano part continues with its eighth-note accompaniment. The violin part has a melodic line with grace notes. A dynamic marking of *mf* is present at the end of bar 12.

Musical score for bars 13-18. The score is in 3/4 time and consists of two systems. The first system covers bars 13-15, and the second system covers bars 16-18. The piano part continues with its eighth-note accompaniment. The violin part has a melodic line with grace notes. A dynamic marking of *f* is present at the end of bar 18.

Musical score for bars 19-24. The score is in 3/4 time and consists of two systems. The first system covers bars 19-21, and the second system covers bars 22-24. The piano part continues with its eighth-note accompaniment. The violin part has a melodic line with grace notes. A dynamic marking of *mf* is present at the end of bar 24.

Musical score for bars 25-30. The score is in 3/4 time and consists of two systems. The first system covers bars 25-27, and the second system covers bars 28-30. The piano part continues with its eighth-note accompaniment. The violin part has a melodic line with grace notes. A dynamic marking of *mf* is present at the end of bar 30.

Musical score for bars 31-33. The score is in 3/4 time and consists of two systems. The first system covers bar 31, and the second system covers bars 32-33. The piano part continues with its eighth-note accompaniment. The violin part has a melodic line with grace notes. A dynamic marking of *mf* is present at the end of bar 33.

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### Ex. 3 Cantus in memory of benjamin britten, bars 1-21

cantus in memory of benjamin britten  
für streichorchester und eine glocke (1950)

Campese (J. 111-120) *ppp*

arvo päärt (1925)

1

Camp.  
VI. I div.  
VI. II div.  
Violo  
Vc. div.  
Cb. div.

2

Camp.  
VI. I div.  
VI. II div.  
Violo  
Vc. div.  
Cb. div.

3

Camp.  
VI. I div.  
VI. II div.  
Violo  
Vc. div.  
Cb. div.

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Ex. 4 *Tabula rasa*, movement I (*Ludus*), bars 94-101

6  
4/4  
p  
mp  
mp  
mp  
mp  
mp  
mp

VI. I solo  
VI. II solo  
VI. I  
VI. II  
Vle.  
Vc.  
Cb.

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Ex. 5 *Tabula rasa*, movement I (*Ludus*), bars 58-67

Musical score for bars 58-67 of *Tabula rasa*, movement I. The score includes parts for Piano (Pf.), Violin I solo (VI. I solo), Violin II solo (VI. II solo), Violin I (VI. I), Violin II (VI. II), Viola (Vle.), Violoncello (Vc.), and Contrabasso (Cb.). The time signature is 6/4. Dynamics include piano (*p*) and fortissimo (*ff*).

Musical score for bars 58-67 of *Tabula rasa*, movement I, continuing from the previous system. The score includes parts for Piano (Pf.), Violin I solo (VI. I solo), Violin II solo (VI. II solo), Violin I (VI. I), Violin II (VI. II), and Viola (Vle.). The time signature changes to 4/2 and 4/4. Dynamics include mezzo-piano (*mp*) and Grand Pause (G.P.).

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Ex. 6 *Tabula rasa*, movement 2 (*Silentium*), bars 1-9

II. *silentium*

Senza moto (♩ = ca 60)

①

Pianoforte

Violino I solo

Violino II solo

Violini I

Violini II

Viole

Violoncelli

Contrabassi

②

Pf.

VI. I solo

VI. II solo

VI. I

VI. II

Vle.

Vc.

Cb.

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Ex. 7 *Tabula rasa*, movement 2 (*Silentium*), bars 60-69

Musical score for bars 60-69. The score includes parts for Piano (Pf.), Violin I (VI. I solo), Violin II (VI. II solo), Violin I (VI. I), Violin II (VI. II), Viola (Vle.), Violoncello (Vc.), and Contrabasso (Cb.). A circled number 11 is above the piano part. The Cb. part includes markings for *pizz.* and *arco*.

Musical score for bars 60-69, continuing from the previous page. It includes parts for Violin I (VI. I solo), Violin II (VI. II solo), Violin I (VI. I), Violin II (VI. II), Viola (Vle.), Violoncello (Vc.), and Contrabasso (Cb.). A circled number 12 is above the Violin I solo part. The Vc. and Cb. parts include markings for *sim.* and *ppp*.

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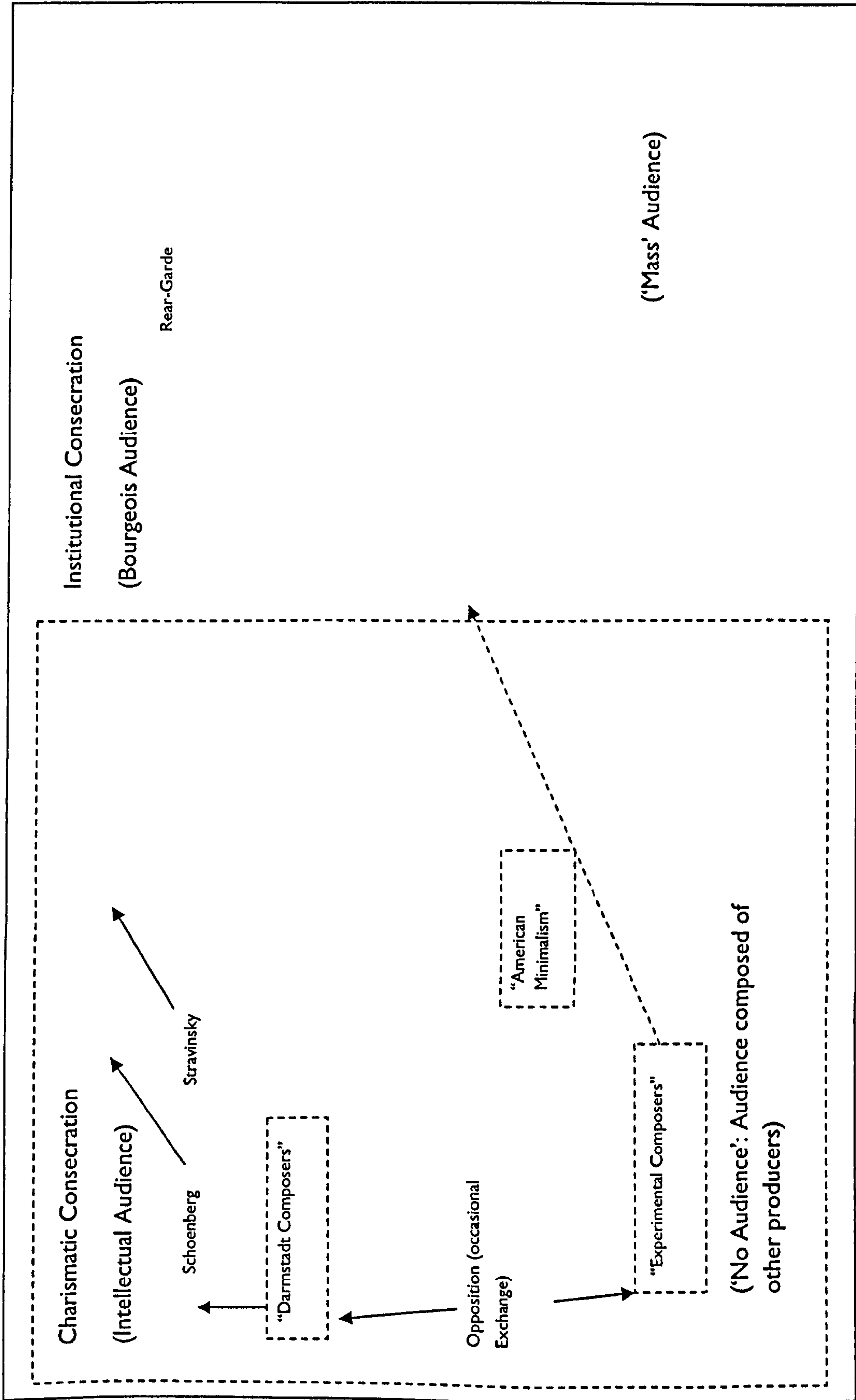




## Figures



High Degree of Consecration (old)



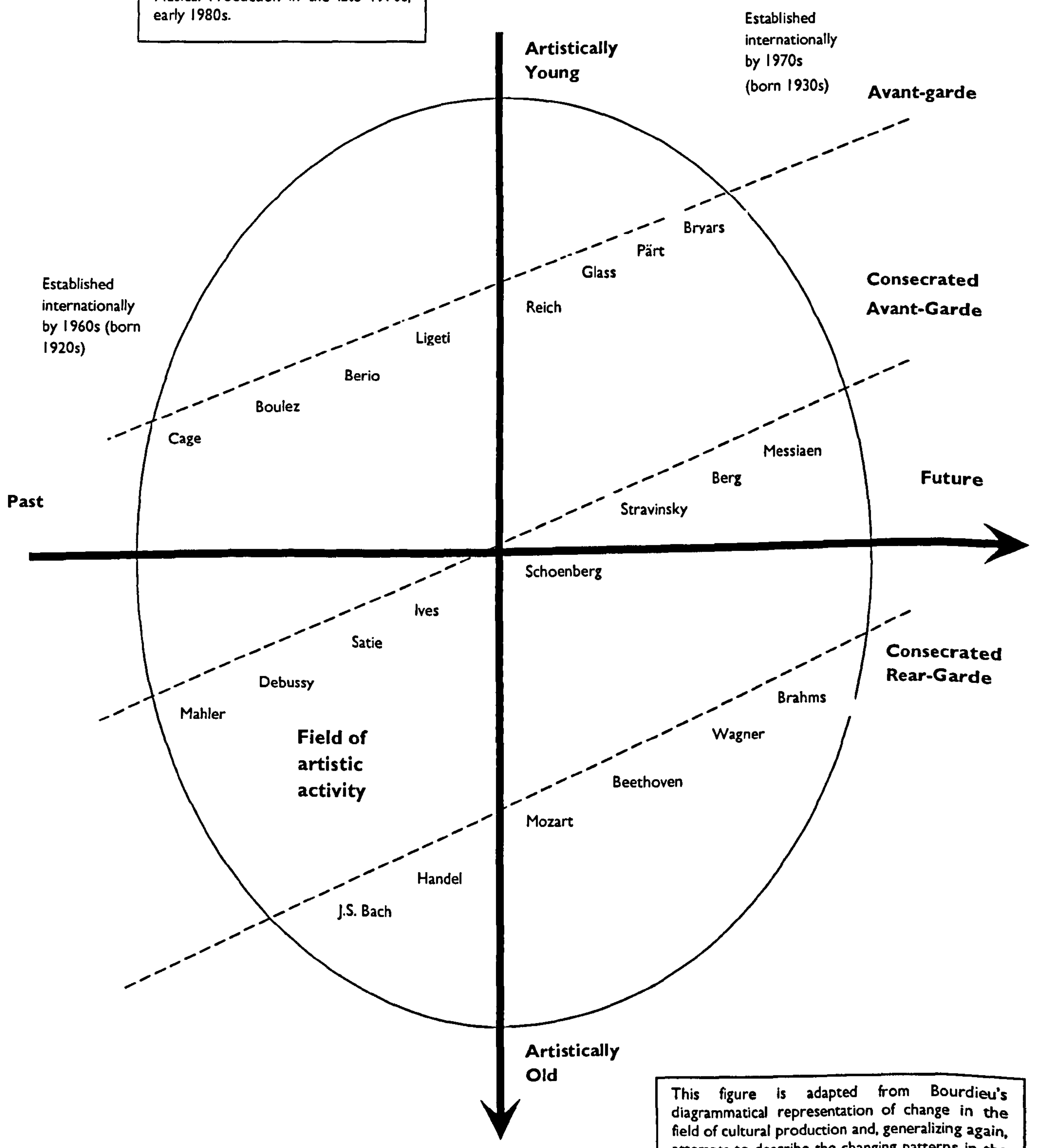
Strong Specific Consecration and Low Economic Profits

Low Degree of Consecration (young)

Figure 1 shows a generalized schematic of the movement in the autonomous pole of production in the late 1970s, early 1980s, as described in the analysis of the field above. It is worth reiterating again that these positions are drawn from readings of contemporaneous sources; the figure is not meant to represent an objectively accurate organization of the field.



Figure 2: Temporality in the Field of Musical Production in the late 1970s, early 1980s.



This figure is adapted from Bourdieu's diagrammatical representation of change in the field of cultural production and, generalizing again, attempts to describe the changing patterns in the autonomous pole of the Western field of musical production. The list of composers in the figure is clearly not intended to be exhaustive: the diagram is exemplary only.

## List of Scores Used

The date of publication is indicated after the name of the composer. The date of composition is shown immediately after the title of each work with revision dates shown where pertinent.

Pärt, A. (1980) *Tabula rasa* (1977). London: Universal Edition.

Pärt, A. (1981) *Cantus in memory of benjamin britten* (1977, rev. 1980). London: Universal Edition.

Pärt, A. (1982) *Credo* (1968). London: Universal Edition.

Pärt, A. (1982) *Passio* (1982). London: Universal Edition.

Pärt, A. (1985) *Stabat Mater* (1985). London: Universal Edition.

Pärt, A. (1986) *Spiegel im Spiegel, für Violine und Klavier* (1978). London: Universal Edition.

Pärt, A. (1989) *Miserere* (1989, rev. 1992). London: Universal Edition.

Pärt, A. (1990) *Für Alina* (1976). London: Universal Edition.

Pärt, A. (1991) *Fratres* (1977) (for string orchestra and percussion). London: Universal Edition.

Pärt, A. (1996) *Symphony No. 2* (1966). London: Universal Edition.

Pärt, A. (1999) *Collected Choral Works: Complete Scores*. London: Universal Edition.

Includes: *Solfeggio* (1964); *An den Wassern zu Babel* (1976); *Cantate Domino* (1977); *Missa Syllabica* (1977); *Summa* (1977); *De Profundis* (1980); *Zwei slawische Psalmen* (1984); *Sieben Magnificat-Antiphonen* (1988); *Magnificat* (1989); *The Beatitudes* (1990); *Beatus Petronius* (1990); *Bogoróditse Djévo* (1990); *Stauit ei Dominus* (1990); And

one of the Pharisees (1992); Dopo la vittoria (1996); I am the True Vine (1996); The Woman with the Alabaster Box (1997); Tribute to Caesar (1997); Triodion (1998).

Pärt, A. (2003) *Lamentate* (2003). London: Universal Edition.

## Discography

### Pärt on ECM

Pärt, A. (1984) *Tabula rasa*. ECM New Series 1275.

*Fratres* – Gidon Kremer (violin); Keith Jarrett (piano).

*Cantus in memory of benjamin britten* – Staatsorchester Stuttgart, conductor Dennis Russell Davies.

*Fratres* – 12 cellists of the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra.

*Tabula rasa* – Gidon Kremer and Tatjana Grindenko (solo violins); Alfred Schnittke (prepared piano); Lithuanian Chamber Orchestra, conductor Saulus Sondeckis.

Produced by Manfred Eicher; tonmeisters: Heinz Wildhagen, Peter Laenger, Eberhard Sengpiel, Dieter Frobeen; cover design by Barbara Wojirsch.

Pärt, A. (1987) *Arbos*. ECM New Series 1325.

*Arbos (1)* – Brass Ensemble of the Staatsorchester Stuttgart, conductor Dennis Russell Davies.

*An den Wassern zu Babel sassen wir und weinten* – The Hilliard Ensemble; Christopher Bowers-Broadbent (organ).

*Pari Intervallo* – Christopher Bowers-Broadbent (organ).

*De Profundis* – The Hilliard Ensemble; Christopher Bowers-Broadbent (organ); Albert Bowen (percussion).

*Es sang vor langen Jahren* – Susan Bickley (alto); Gidon Kremer (violin); Vladimir Mendelssohn (viola).

*Summa* – The Hilliard Ensemble.

*Arbos (2)* – Brass Ensemble of the Staatsorchester Stuttgart, conductor Dennis Russell Davies.

*Stabat Mater* – The Hilliard Ensemble; Gidon Kremer (violin); Vladimir Mendelssohn (viola); Thomas Demenga (cello).

Produced by Manfred Eicher; tonmeisters: Martin Wieland, Peter Laenger, Andreas Neubronner; cover design by Barbara Wojirsch.

Pärt, A. (1988) *Passio*. ECM New Series 1370.



*Passio Domini Nostri Jesu Christi Secundum Johannem* – The Hilliard Ensemble; The Western Wind Chamber Choir.

Produced by Manfred Eicher.

Pärt, A. (1991) *Miserere*. ECM New Series 1430.

*Miserere* – The Hilliard Ensemble; Christopher Bowers-Broadbent (organ); James Woodrow (electric guitar); Glyn Matthews (bass guitar); Paul Parker (percussion); The Western Wind Chamber Choir and Instrumental Ensemble.

*Festina Lente* – Orchester der Beethovenhalle Bonn Bonn, conductor Dennis Russell Davies.

*Sarah was Ninety Years Old* – The Hilliard Ensemble; Christopher Bowers-Broadbent (organ); Pierre Favre (percussion).

Produced by Manfred Eicher; tonmeisters: Peter Laenger, Andreas Neubronner; cover design by Barbara Wojirsch.

Pärt, A. (1993) *Te Deum*. ECM New Series 1505.

*Te Deum* – Estonian Philharmonic Chamber Choir; Tallinn Chamber Orchestra, conductor Tõnu Kaljuste.

*Silouan's Song* – Tallinn Chamber Orchestra, conductor Tõnu Kaljuste.

*Magnificat* – Estonian Philharmonic Chamber Choir.

*Berlin Mass* – Estonian Philharmonic Chamber Choir.

Produced by Manfred Eicher.

Pärt, A. (1995) *Alina*. ECM New Series 1591

*Für Alina (1)* – Alexander Malter (piano).

*Spiegel im Spiegel (1)* – Vladimir Spivakov (violin); Sergej Bezrodny (piano).

*Spiegel im Spiegel (2)* – Vladimir Spivakov (violin); Sergej Bezrodny (piano).

*Spiegel im Spiegel (3)* – Dietmar Schwalke (cello); Alexander Malter (piano).

*Für Alina (2)* – Alexander Malter (piano).

Produced by Manfred Eicher.

Pärt, A. (1996) *Litany*. ECM New Series 1592.

*Litany* – The Hilliard Ensemble; Tallinn Chamber Orchestra; Estonian Philharmonic Philharmonic Chamber Choir, conductor Tõnu Kaljuste.

*Psalom* – Lithuanian Chamber Orchestra, conductor Saulius Sondeckis.

*Trisagion* – Lithuanian Chamber Orchestra, conductor Saulius Sondeckis.

Produced by Manfred Eicher; tonmeisters: Teije van Geest and Peter Laenger; cover design by Barbara Wojirsch.

Pärt, A. (1997) *Kanon Pokajanen*. ECM New Series 1654/55.

*Kanon Pokajanen* – Estonian Philharmonic Chamber Choir, conductor Tõnu Kaljuste.

Produced by Manfred Eicher.

Pärt, A. (2001) *Orient Occident*. ECM New Series 1795.

*Wallfahrtslied* – Swedish Radio Choir; Swedish Radio Symphony Orchestra, conductor Tõnu Kaljuste.

*Pilgrims' Song* – Swedish Radio Choir.

*Orient & Occident* – Swedish Radio Symphony Orchestra, conductor Tõnu Kaljuste.

*Como cierva sedienta* – Swedish Radio Choir; Swedish Radio Symphony Orchestra, conductor Tõnu Kaljuste.

Produced by Manfred Eicher.

Pärt, A. (2005) *Lamentate*. ECM New Series 1930.

*Da pacem Domine* – The Hilliard Ensemble.

*Lamentate* – Alexei Lubimov (piano); SWR Suttgart Radio Symphony Orchestra, conductor Andrey Boreyko.

Produced by Manfred Eicher; tonmeisters: Dietmar Wolf, Peter Laenger; cover design by Sascha Kleis.

**Pärt on other labels**

Pärt, A. (1989) *Early Works*. BIS BIS-CD-434

Includes: *Pro et contra; Perpetuum mobile; Symphony No. 1; Symphony No. 2; Symphony No. 3.*

Pärt, A. (1992) *Collage*. Chandos CHAN9134.

Includes: *Collage sur B-A-C-H; Summa; Wenn Bach Beinem Gesuchtet Hatte; Fratres; Symphony No. 2; Festina lente; Credo.*

Pärt, A. (1994) *Tabula rasa; Fratres; etc.* EMI Classics for Pleasure 2221.

Includes: *Cantus in memoriam benjamin britten; Festina lente; Fratres; Spiegel im Spiegel; Summa; Tabula rasa.*

Pärt, A. (1996) *De Profundis*. Harmonia Mundi HMU907182.

Includes: *De profundis; Missa Sillabica; Solfeggio; And one of the Pharisees; Cantate Domino; Summa (for voices); Seven Magnificat Antiphons; The Beatitudes; Magnificat.*

Pärt, A. (1997) *Fratres, etc.* Naxos 8553750.

Includes: *Fratres (strings and percussion); Fratres (violin, strings and percussion); Festina lente; Fratres (string quartet); Fratres (cello and piano); Summa; Fratres (eight cellos); Fratres (wind octet and percussion); Cantus in memory of benjamin britten.*

Pärt, A. (1997) *Stabat Mater*. Virgin Classics, 0724354527227.

Includes: *Stabat Mater* transcribed for voices and viol consort by Malcolm Bruno (alongside music by Palestrina and John Browne).

Pärt, A. (1999) *Symphonie No. 3*. Deutsche Grammophon 4576472.

Includes: *Symphony No. 3; Tabula rasa; Fratres.*

Pärt, A. (2000) *Symphony No. 3 & Tabula rasa*. Naxos 8554591.

Includes: *Tabula rasa; Collage über B-A-C-H; Symphony No. 3.*

Pärt, A. (2000) *I am the True Vine*. Harmonia Mundi HMU907242.

Includes: *Bogoroditse Djevo; I am the true vine; Ode IX; The woman with the alabaster box; Tribute to Caesar; Berliner Messe.*

Pärt, A. (2002) *Symphony 3*. Virgin Classics, 0724354550126.

Includes: *Summa; Trisagion; Symphony No. 3; Fratres (string orchestra and percussion); Silouans Song; Festina lente; Cantus in memoriam benjamin britten.*

Pärt, A. (2003) *Arvo Pärt: Beatus*. Virgin Classics 724356220522.

Includes: *Missa Syllabica; Solfeggio; Beatus Petronius; Statuit ei Dominus; Memento; Cantate Domino; De Profundis; Sieben Magnificat-Antiphonen.*

Pärt, A. (2003) *Passio*. Naxos 8555860.

Includes: *Passio.*

Pärt, A. (2003) *Triodion*. Hyperion CDA 67375.

Includes: *Dopo la vittoria; Nunc dimittis; [...] which was the son of [...]; I am the true vine; Littlemore Tractus; Triodion; My Heart's in the Highlands; Salve Regina.*

Pärt, A. (2004) *Credo*. Deutsche Grammophon 4717692.

Includes: *Corigliano Fantasia on an ostinato; Beethoven Klaviersonate No. 17 op. 21 No. 2; Fantasie für Klavier, Chor und Orchester, op. 80; Pärt Credo.*

Pärt, A. (2004) *The Best of Arvo Pärt*. EMI Classics 724358591422.



Includes: *Summa*; *Sieben Magnificat-Antiphonen*; *Fratres* (violin and piano); *Festina lente*; *Spiegel im Spiegel*; *Magnificat*; *Fratres* (string orchestra and percussion); *Cantus in memoriam benjamin britten*.

Pärt, A. (2004) *Instrumental Works & Choral Works*. Virgin Classics, 0724356243422.

Includes: *Cantus in memory of benjamin britten*; *Summa*; *The Beatitudes*; *Fratres*; *Festina lente*; *Magnificat*; *Silentium* (2<sup>nd</sup> movement of *Tabula rasa*); *Statuit ei Dominus*; *Missa syllabica*; *Beatus petronius*; *7 Magnificat Antiphons*; *De profundis*; *Memento*; *Cantate domino*; *Solfeggio*.

Pärt, A. (2004) *Berliner Messe*. Naxos 8557299.

Includes: *Berliner Messe*; *Magnificat*; *De profundis*; *Summa*; *The Beatitudes*; *Cantate Domine canticum novum*.

Pärt, A. (2004) *Symphonies I & 2*. Virgin Classics, 0724354563027.

Includes: *Pro & Contra*; *Symphony No. 1*; *Collage sür BACH*; *Perpetuum mobile*; *Meie aed*; *Symphony No. 2*.

Pärt, A. (2005) *Arvo Pärt: A Portrait*. Naxos 8558182/83.

Includes: *Triodion*; *The Beatitudes*; *Tabula rasa (Ludus)*; *Symphony No. 3 (3<sup>rd</sup> movement)*; *Symphony No. 1 (2<sup>nd</sup> movement)*; *Summa*; *Spiegel im Spiegel*; *Passio (extracts)*; *Magnificat*; *Für Alina*; *Fratres (strings and percussion)*; *Fratres (cello and piano)*; *Collage über B-A-C-H*; *Pro et Contra*; *Cantus in memory of benjamin britten*; *Cantate Domino*; *Berliner Messe (extracts)*.

Pärt, A. (2005) *Arvo Pärt: A Tribute*. Harmonia Mundi HMU907407.

Includes: *Dopo la vittoria*; *The woman with the alabaster box*; *Berliner Messe*; *Solfeggio*; *Bogoroditse Djevo*; *I am the true vine*; *Which was the son of [...]* .

Pärt, A. (2006) *Da pacem*. Harmonia Mundi HMU907401.

Includes: *Da pacem Domine; Salve Regina; Zwei slawische Psalmen; Magnificat; An den Wassern zu Babel; Dopo la vittoria; Nunc dimittis; Littlemore Tractus.*

Pärt, A. (2006) *Music for Unaccompanied Choir*. Naxos 8570239.

Includes: *Triodion; Tribute to caesar; Nunc dimittis; Kanon Pokajanen (ode vii); I am the true vine; The woman with the alabaster box; Dopo la vittoria; Bogoroditse Djevo.*



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