

For a Relational Musicology: Music and Interdisciplinarity, Beyond the Practice Turn¹

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Music's sub-disciplines, conceptual boundaries, and regional epistemologies

Is there something especially complex about music as an object in the world, and as an object of study? I hope to give some new perspectives on these old questions, and I will twice answer 'yes'. But this complexity does not excuse us from the imperative to advance the intellectual framework for researching music of all kinds, historical and contemporary – advance that can both underpin and help to foster creative developments in musical practices of all kinds. Grandiose claims, perhaps; but in what follows I want to try to justify this opening gambit.

The production of knowledge about music is, of course, performative in J. L. Austin's sense:² it *acts*, both reflecting and forming our musical values, practices and institutions. It follows that I count myself lucky to be working in an age both of diversity in music scholarship, and of the aspiration to achieve some kind of fruitful interaction or convergence – an urge to reconfigure the sub-disciplinary boundaries signalled in current debates about moving beyond the terms musicology, ethnomusicology, popular music studies, sociology and psychology of music and so on to a new, integrated 'music studies'. But what an anodyne term that is! Do we perhaps give up too much of the rich and idiosyncratic patchwork of sub-disciplinary histories by suggesting such an integration? Do we suppress the agonistic pleasures of continuing inter-sub-disciplinary dialogues? Indeed, despite the question of the relation between the music sub-disciplines being posed with increasing frequency and obvious good will, the challenges posed by their mutual engagement are often obscured.

In an important essay from 1993, Philip Bohlman raised similar issues while offering a historically situated as well as forcefully political reading of the changing contours of music scholarship in the face of what he insisted was a crisis.³ For Bohlman this crisis was evident both in musicology's attempts to immunise itself from the incursions of feminist theory, and in its failure to respond to such external social and political crises as the urban insurrection in Los Angeles that followed the Rodney King trial verdict and, in particular, to engage with the role of rap music in articulating that insurrection. Musicology, Bohlman reflected, has historically shown a 'remarkable capacity to imagine music into an object that [has] nothing to do with

¹ I am grateful to Andrew Barry, Katherine Brown, John Deathridge, Eric Drott, Byron Dueck, Katherine Ellis, Martin Stokes and Ben Walton for helpful comments. Needless to say, the idiosyncrasies that remain are mine. The paper was originally written for a study day, 'Musical Anthropologies', on November 28th 2008, to mark the award of the Dent Medal of the Royal Musical Association, and presented in revised form as a keynote lecture at the RMA graduate students' conference in January 2009 at King's College London.

² J. L. Austin, *How To Do Things With Words* (Clarendon, 1962).

³ Philip V. Bohlman, 'Musicology as a political act', *Journal of Musicology*, v. 11, n. 4, 1993, pp. 411–436.

political and moral crises'.⁴ His claim was that any assumption that musicology could be apolitical was itself profoundly political; that 'the reason for the field's imagined escape into a world without politics results from its essentializing of music itself. This act of essentializing music, the very attempt to depoliticize it, has become the most hegemonic form of politicizing music'.⁵ For Bohlman, writing as an ethnomusicologist, none of the music sub-disciplines escaped these charges: 'And so I name myself.... This is not someone else's musicology. Musicology is not just the discipline of "others" who work primarily with Western art music; my criticisms, here, are themselves self-reflexive.' Presciently for my purposes, Bohlman insisted that 'My goal is to decenter and to move us constantly to questions of discipline and discourse.'⁶

Bohlman used spatial metaphors to convey the changing topology and boundaries of music scholarship, notably what he argued are musicology's several definitive (and linked) exclusions: the political, but also the body, and the 'Other' (whether Islam or black musics). Yet ultimately he was optimistic: 'That musicology *can* respond to the transformation of music in the public sphere is evident by the ways in which a recent body of scholarship has reconfigured the internal spaces of the field itself. Feminist theory is not only here to stay, but its presence has meant that no music historiography can ignore the fundamental challenge to the representation of the past.... The different domains within the study of music, moreover, no longer simply co-exist, but rather interact to change the spatial construction of the field. No domain is spared from the approaches of its discursive cohabitants - say, historical musicology from analysis, ethnomusicology from history, or music theory from cultural contexts.... If the reconfiguration of spaces internal and external to musicology continues, the field will change.... It is the nature of the resulting postdisciplinary musicologies that must concern us as we take stock of and comfort in current changes.'⁷

I have quoted at length from Bohlman's treatise in order to laud his analysis, including his identification of incipient changes in the domains of academic music study, although in noting the absence of a response from music scholarship to rap's critical role in signifying on the politics of race and class he overlooked early contributions from popular music studies to the study of black musics. This is significant in that when defining the disciplinary space he is addressing, 'musicology in a broad rather than narrow sense',⁸ Bohlman mentions 'ethnomusicology, music theory, and music criticism' but not popular music studies. If changes were happening in the early 1990s, then, and depending on one's perspective, they were fed by a pincer movement in which the impact of humanistic feminist and critical theory in musicology was being matched by that of the emergent field of popular music studies, which, influenced in turn by British cultural studies and its sociological orientation, was from the outset permeated by a range of post-Marxist problematics, including, centrally, the politics of race and class.⁹ Bohlman stressed that the drawing of disciplinary and conceptual boundaries in musicology,

⁴ Ibid, 414-415.

⁵ Ibid., p. 419

⁶ Ibid, p. 419.

⁷ Ibid., pp. 435-436.

⁸ Ibid., p. 418.

⁹ See, at the borders of cultural and popular music studies, Stuart Hall and Tony Jefferson (eds), *Resistance Through Rituals* (Hutchinson, 1976), Dick Hebdige, *Subculture: The Meaning of Style* (Methuen, 1979), Hebdige, *Cut 'N' Mix: Culture, Identity, and Caribbean Music* (Methuen, 1987); as well as David Toop, *The Rap Attack* (South End Press, 1984), and the work of an earlier generation of popular music scholars, notably Charles Keil and Paul Oliver.

notably the placing of the ‘political’ outside musicology’s core concerns, is immanently political. In this his analysis is precisely parallel to that of the historian of science Steven Shapin who, in a 1992 paper tracing the changing relations between the history of science and sociology of science and the place in both of ‘externalist’ and ‘internalist’ explanatory theories, addressed the question of where politics figures in the analytical schemes of both disciplines.¹⁰ Shapin’s answer was that politics should not be conceived as ‘something that happens solely outside of science and which can... press in upon it’,¹¹ but that there is also a politics concerned with how the ‘political’ and ‘social’ are conceived of in any scientific discourse; that is, an ‘internal’ politics of knowledge centred on the creation or contestation of conceptual boundaries between ‘science’, on the one hand, and ‘social’ and ‘political’ matters, on the other hand, for these boundaries have historically been a source of contention in diverse disciplinary formations and have also, therefore, been subject to change. For Shapin, ‘The language that transports politics outside of science is precisely what we need to understand and explain’.¹²

It is easy to agree with Bohlman and Shapin about the political nature of disciplinary boundaries. And while I concur with Bohlman’s account of the hegemony of certain forms of music scholarship, I take these issues in a different direction in this article. I want to re-weight the argument and highlight not so much the political dimensions, but the conceptual, epistemological and ontological consequences of this historical settlement. Indeed I would say that the politics of music scholarship – signalled by Bohlman’s apt use of the Gramscian term, hegemony – do not simply turn on musicology’s responsiveness to developments in the public sphere. As Shapin shows, there is in addition a politics of knowledge internal to the field and its disciplinary formations, one that is concerned with the conceptual boundaries that define how music is to be conceived, and what counts as music to be studied, boundaries that in turn afford varying degrees of legitimation to the music sub-disciplines; and it is in the relative legitimacy and therefore institutional presence and resources accorded to the various sub-disciplines that the politics of music scholarship and the reproduction of hegemony are most in evidence and most in question. It follows that any reconfiguration of sub-disciplinary boundaries, and any redistribution of legitimacy and resources between the music sub-disciplines, cannot be accomplished by appealing solely to the politics of the public sphere. Rather, they necessitate the presentation of cogent and compelling intellectual justifications for a redistribution of attention and resources to new objects of study, new perspectives on old disciplinary objects, and new conceptual and methodological approaches relevant to all musics.

Specifically, I will argue with reference to my own and other contemporary research that it is now timely to problematise two dominant conceptual boundaries that have underpinned the hegemony of a certain kind of musicology. The first boundary concerns *what music is*: it rests on the ontological assumption that ‘music’s’ core being has nothing to do with the ‘social’ (a conceptual equation in which the ‘cultural’ is often seen as a mediating or even substitute term for the social). According to this conceptual dualism, the ‘social’ is extraneous to ‘music’, and equivalent to ‘context’, such that the appropriate focus in music scholarship is self-evidently on the ‘music itself’. The second boundary concerns *what counts as music to be studied*: at issue

¹⁰ Steven Shapin, ‘Discipline and bounding: The history and sociology of science as seen through the externalism-internalism debate’, *History of Science*, v. 30, 1992, pp. 333-369.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 354.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 354.

here is musicology's preoccupation with the bounded, internal, immanent development of the lineages of Western art music, rather than attending to their complex interrelation and imbrication with contiguous musical systems existing in the same or proximate physical, geographical, historical or social space. In light of such boundary problems, and given Bohlman's pluralist call for 'postdisciplinary' musicologies, my contention is that almost twenty years later it is productive to take stock of the interdisciplinary engagements that are occurring between the music sub-disciplines, as well as the kinds of disciplinary futures they presage.

A key issue, then, is how we conceive of the relations between the distinctive sub-disciplines of music. Here I'll make a detour with the philosopher of science Michel Serres, who, extending the spatial metaphors, portrays the evolution of modern knowledge as a process of ever greater specialisation – 'more divisions and separations developing into... territories, disciplines and branches of knowledge'.¹³ Serres connects this to the move beyond a naïve positivism in that we now grasp that our own subjectivity as researchers is part of the reality that we seek to understand. Formerly, the relations between branches of knowledge was such that 'from local configurations one could move without... interruption to a more encompassing global configuration', implying a homogeneous space of knowledge ruled by a single scientific truth. But now, Serres argues, there are only 'regional epistemologies': we have a kind of 'truth that is... local, distributed haphazardly in a plurality of spaces', 'in which the passage from one... singularity to another [requires] an arduous effort'. In a memorable image he portrays the spaces of knowledge as 'islands sown in archipelagos on the noisy, poorly-understood disorder of the sea'.¹⁴ In these circumstances the role of the intellectual is 'to attempt to see on a large scale, to be in full possession of a multiple, and... connected intellection'.¹⁵ And this involves a journey through 'multiple times, spaces and cultural formations', in which the task is 'resolutely [to] open a new epistemological spectrum and read the colours that our prejudices had previously erased'.¹⁶

This brief journey through Serres is intended to convey something of the inevitable conceptual difficulty - the reading colours that our prejudices have previously erased - that I believe is entailed in the wished-for rapprochement between the sub-disciplines of music scholarship. I want to suggest that such an engagement is likely to depend on certain kinds of effort that do not as yet appear to be recognised in the general debate; and those efforts, oriented to reconfiguring dominant conceptual boundaries such as those mentioned above, cannot be confined to the conversation between the music sub-disciplines. Instead, they require us to look outside, beyond the archipelago, to the key adjacent disciplines – the next-nearest knowledge continents – that lie beyond musicology: that is, to the sciences of the cultural, social and temporal, which is to say anthropology, sociology and history. Rapprochement will require cumulative expansion of the conceptual and theoretical frameworks within which music scholarship proceeds. It will require a commitment to certain arduous passages by which we might eventually arrive on new

¹³ Michel Serres, *Hermès: Literature, Science, Philosophy*, ed. J. Harari and D. Bell (Baltimore, 1982), 'Introduction: *Journal à plusieurs voies*' by Harari and Bell, p. xii.

¹⁴ Michel Serres, *Hermès V: Le Passage du Nord-Ouest* (Minuit, 1980), pp. 23-4.

¹⁵ M. Serres, *Hermès V*, p. 75.

¹⁶ M. Serres, *Hermès II*, pp. 31-2. All other references this paragraph, Serres, *Hermès*, 'Introduction', Harari and Bell, pp. xiii-xv.

epistemological and even ontological terrain, backed by serious commitment to changing music pedagogies.

In mentioning ontology at this point I register not only the seminal work of Lydia Goehr and (once again) Philip Bohlman in pointing to the diverse ontologies of music that we confront in both historical and cross-cultural research.¹⁷ I intend also to highlight the way that all research on culture, including music, exists at the interface of two dimensions of ontology: not only the ontology of the embedded musical or cultural object, but the analytical ontology that we bring to our analysis – and which, through projection on to the object, can either enable us to recognise the startling diversity of music's existence in the world, or obstruct that recognition.

Interdisciplinarity: modes and logics

The question of ontology became central to a research project on interdisciplinarity in knowledge production - *not* related to music - that I was involved in recently, where we examined ethnographically three fields characterised by 'strong' interdisciplinarity: fields that cross between the natural and physical sciences and engineering, on the one hand, and the arts, humanities and social sciences, on the other. The three fields were environmental and climate change research, ethnography in the computer industry, and art-science. I want to outline the key findings of this study, which owed its genesis to the poverty of existing empirically-informed theories of interdisciplinarity.¹⁸ We found it necessary to distinguish, first, three *modes* of interdisciplinary practice, and then three *logics* of interdisciplinarity, by which we point to three distinct forms of rationale, motivation or justification for interdisciplinary research.¹⁹

Previous studies of interdisciplinarity have tended to assume an integrative or synthesis model, in which the interdisciplinary field is conceived in terms of the integration of two or more 'antecedent disciplines' in relatively symmetrical form. Thus, according to a major Harvard study, 'In this integrative approach it is proposed that interdisciplinary work should be judged according to the criteria of the "antecedent disciplines" and the value will be assessed in terms of these additive criteria.... In this study we defined "interdisciplinary work" as work that integrates knowledge and modes of thinking from two or more disciplines'.²⁰ If we take this *integrative-synthesis* mode as a first type, on the basis of our research we propose two additional ideal-typical modes of interdisciplinarity, both of which figure prominently and may co-exist in some fields. In the second, *subordination-service* mode, one or more disciplines are organized in a relation of subordination or service to other component disciplines. This points to the

¹⁷ Lydia Goehr, *The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works* (Clarendon, 1992), Philip V. Bohlman, 'Ontologies of music', in N. Cook and M. Everist (eds), *Rethinking Music* (Oxford, 1999). On the comparative analysis of contrasting music ontologies of the 20th century, see Georgina Born, 'On musical mediation: Ontology, technology and creativity', *twentieth century music*, v. 2, n. 1, pp. 7-36.

¹⁸ For an overview of this research, a collaboration with Dr. Andrew Barry (Geography, Oxford) and Dr. Gisa Weszkalnys (Social Anthropology, Exeter), see: <http://www.geog.ox.ac.uk/research/technologies/projects/interdisciplinarity.html> (accessed May 5th 2010).

¹⁹ For more on these concepts, and on the theoretical findings of this research, see Andrew Barry, Georgina Born and Gisa Weszkalnys, 'Logics of interdisciplinarity', *Economy and Society*, v. 37, n. 1, pp. 20-49.

²⁰ Veronica Box Mansilla and Howard Gardner (nd) 'Assessing interdisciplinary work at the frontier: An empirical exploration of "symptoms of quality"': <http://www.interdisciplines.org/interdisciplinarity/papers/6>, p. 1 (accessed May 5th 2010).

hierarchical division of labour that characterizes many examples of interdisciplinarity, an arrangement that may favour the stability of component disciplines and inhibit epistemic change. In this mode the service discipline(s) is usually understood to be filling in for an absence or lack in the other, (master) discipline(s). The natural and physical sciences' engagement with the social sciences, for example, is commonly understood in these terms. In the third, *agonistic-antagonistic* mode, in contrast, interdisciplinary research is conceived neither as a synthesis nor in terms of a disciplinary division of labour, but as driven by an agonistic or antagonistic relation to existing forms of disciplinary knowledge and practice. Here, interdisciplinarity springs from a self-conscious dialogue with, criticism of or opposition to the intellectual, aesthetic, ethical or political limits of established disciplines, or the status of academic research in general – a transposition on to the plane of the politics of knowledge of Chantal Mouffe's stress on antagonism as constitutive of the political.²¹ This does not mean that what is produced by such interdisciplinarity can be reduced to these antagonisms; nor does it imply any overtly conflictual relations between emergent interdiscipline and prior disciplinary formation. Rather, with the agonistic-antagonistic mode we highlight how this kind of interdisciplinary practice stems from a commitment or desire to contest or transcend the given epistemological and ontological foundations of historical disciplines – a move that makes the new interdiscipline irreducible to its 'antecedent disciplines'.

If the integrative-synthesis mode can augur epistemic transformations, and if the service-subordination mode, with its disciplinary division of labour, does not necessarily afford even this, then what is remarkable about the agonistic-antagonistic mode is that it is often intended to effect more radical shifts in knowledge practices, shifts that are at once epistemic and ontological. Indeed in our study we suggest that the three interdisciplinary fields that we studied evidence a privileged relation between the agonistic-antagonistic mode and what we call a logic of ontology, one of the three logics of interdisciplinarity that we identified, and which I will now describe. In the first place, according to a number of prominent writers and as evident in our ethnographic studies, interdisciplinary research can be justified in terms of a logic of *accountability*. Here, interdisciplinarity is intended to foster a culture of accountability, breaking down the barriers between science or academic expertise and society, leading to greater interaction, for instance, between scientists and various publics and stakeholders.²² A second kind of rationale for the involvement of social scientists and artists in natural scientific and engineering research takes the form of a logic of *innovation*, such that interdisciplinarity is conceived as fuelling the 'knowledge economy' or 'creative economy'. In our study this justification was prominent both in the growth of ethnographic research in the computer industry, where it is seen as a means of connecting businesses to the unarticulated desires of customers, desires that are not sufficiently evoked by conventional forms of market research and that it is believed can drive innovation; and in art-science, where proponents argue that artists' and musicians' creative engagement with scientific and technological research can act as an incubator for innovation.²³

²¹ Chantal Mouffe, *On the Political* (Routledge, 2005).

²² Helga Nowotny, Peter Scott and Michael Gibbons, *Re-thinking Science: Knowledge and the Public in an Age of Uncertainty* (Polity, 2001); Marilyn Strathern, *Commons and Borderlands* (Sean Kingston, 2004).

²³ See, for example, Michael Century, *Pathways to Innovation in Digital Culture*, Report for the Rockefeller Foundation, 1999.

Yet in addition, what is notable across a range of fields is the stress placed by researchers on conceiving of and justifying interdisciplinarity not only in terms of accountability or innovation, but in terms of a logic of *ontology*: an orientation apparent in diverse interdisciplinary practices in each of the fields that we studied towards effecting ontological transformation in both the objects and relations of research. Such an orientation is evident, for example, in interdisciplinary environmental and climate change research, where it draws on a range of intellectual traditions including science and technology studies, social anthropology, cultural geography, natural hazards research, political ecology and poststructuralist theory, and where it has three marked inflections. It is apparent, first, in arguments that natural science models of the environment fail to address the ways in which such models are shaped by political assumptions and cultural values: [in the words of writers committed to this perspective, ‘it is not that the scientific models... are empty of culture and politics, but that they are impregnated with them without even recognising it, let alone the implications’].²⁴ It is present also in a second perspective founded on a dual awareness of the limitations of scientific expertise and of the important potential contributions of indigenous and lay environmental knowledges. In this view, non-expert accounts of environmental problems should be recognised as expressions of scientific citizenship with which dominant knowledge practices should engage, and by which they will be enriched.²⁵ These two perspectives point in turn to a third, more encompassing ontological rationale. In this account, the development of environmental policy and politics has implications for the relations between the natural and social sciences not only because the environment is a complex system of natural and social elements, but because environmental problems raise fundamental questions concerning the very boundary between the ‘natural’ and the ‘social’.²⁶

What music is - beyond text and practice

Returning to interdisciplinarity in music scholarship, what do we find: which modes, which logics? In fact we find a halting state of affairs, well evidenced by recent collections. Over a decade ago Nicholas Cook and Mark Everist, at the opening of *Rethinking Music*, were able both to write that ‘the history of musicology and music theory in our generation is one of loss of confidence: we no longer know what we know’, and to ask, rhetorically, ‘what musicologist working on an archival or institutional project is likely to ignore (and not publish) material that relates to a major named composer?’.²⁷ Stressing the fissured, self-contradictory state of musicology, they called for an ‘accommodation between established methodologies and new horizons’: a ‘musicology of the provisional’ that problematises its own disciplinary past.²⁸ Eleven years on, what is striking about the volume is that the currents it brings together and puts

²⁴ S. Shackley and Brian Wynne, ‘Integrating knowledges for climate change: Pyramids, nets and uncertainties’, *Global Environmental Change*, v. 5, n. 2, pp. 113-26, 1985, p. 124.

²⁵ Andrew Barry, *Political Machines: Governing a Technological Society* (Athlone, 2001); F. Berkhout, Melissa Leach and I. Scoones (eds), *Negotiating Environmental Change: New Perspectives from Social Science* (Elgar, 2005); Melissa Leach, I. Scoones and Brian Wynne (eds), *Science and Citizens: Globalisation and the Challenge of Engagement* (Zed, 2005).

²⁶ Alfred North Whitehead, *Science and the Modern World* (Free Association, 1985); Sheila Jasanoff (ed), *States of Knowledge: The Co-production of Science and Social Order* (Routledge, 2004); Sarah Whatmore, *Hybrid Geographies* (Sage, 2002).

²⁷ Nicholas Cook and Mark Everist (eds), *Rethinking Music* (Oxford, 1999), ‘Preface’, p. v.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. x.

side by side - from reception analysis, to semiotics, to gender, to non-western musicologies - are barely set into dialogue.²⁹

Moreover at key moments when sub-disciplinary recognition and realignment might most be expected, such as in the chapter on rethinking the relation between popular music and musicology by John Covach, they falter.³⁰ In this chapter, the faltering takes the form of a resilient reification of the opposition 'text' and 'context', 'music' and the 'social', with the result that a disciplinary chasm is reinscribed between musicology and popular music studies, the latter associated firmly with sociology - such that any concern to trace the mutual mediation of musical sounds and social processes is placed outside the conceptual bounds of musicology. At the same time there is a refusal to take seriously the challenges issued to this dualism by popular music. Covach's apparently reasonable claim is that, rather than insist on the analysis of social dimensions of popular music, 'popular music can also be considered as inherently musical'.³¹ But this soon hardens into the view that musicology should continue with business as usual. Thus, 'For musicology, the problem of bridging the gap between popular music studies and musicology can be addressed most profitably... by exploring popular music *vis a vis* issues that already tend to occupy musicologists';³² or, more pointedly, 'Ultimately, I am arguing that if popular music is going to be interesting to musicologists, it will be interesting because it engages issues that already exist in the current discourse.... The proposals made by McClary and Walser, Shepherd, and Middleton not only ask musicologists to look at different music, but also tell them to care about different issues in all the music they study. This is too much to demand of the discipline, and this kind of radical change is therefore unlikely to occur'.³³ What is remarkable is that this appears to be an argument primarily based on realism about disciplinary inertia, rather than a principled argument concerned with analytical adequacy.

Perplexingly, Covach had earlier duly noted, without dissenting, Richard Middleton's restatement of the questioning by popular music scholarship of the limitations of musicology when examining popular music *qua* music: 'The general conclusions that Middleton comes to... is that popular music simply cannot be studied in the same way as art-music; scholars applying traditional methods to popular music produce distorted readings. These readings emphasise harmony, melody, and form, but neglect what are often key components in popular music – components such as timbre, rhythmic structure and its subtle deviations, and expressive pitch deviations'.³⁴ Arresting here is Covach's repeated (and non-ironic) use of 'deviation' to characterise the aesthetics of popular music, apparently unacquainted with the scholarship devoted to this topic, and unconcerned by how this reinscribes popular music as aberrant with reference to the putatively universal musical norms of Western art music.³⁵ Accompanying this is

²⁹ The volume, rather than being interdisciplinary, is therefore best described as multidisciplinary, usually defined as the gathering into the same space of multiple (sub-)disciplines which are not, however, required to enter into dialogue.

³⁰ J. Covach, 'Popular music, unpopular musicology', pp. 452-70 in Cook and Everist (1999).

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 466.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 467.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 469.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 461.

³⁵ On the aesthetics of popular music see Charles Keil, 'Motion and feeling through music', *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, v. 24, n. 3 (1966), pp. 337-349, and 'Participatory discrepancies and the power of music', *Cultural Anthropology*, v. 2, n. 3 (1987), pp. 275-283; Andrew Chester, 'Second thoughts on a rock aesthetic: The

Covach's confident reassertion of the music / social dualism in relation (also) to Western art music, seemingly unaware (again) of the investigation in my own and others' work in the last two decades of the mutual mediation of music and social conditions in Western art music - a stance that he fails to recognise as at once a contentious ontological claim.³⁶ No 'rethinking' but a reinscription of sub-disciplinary boundaries, then, in this symptomatic essay.³⁷

The question of disciplinary realignment is also central to *The New (Ethno)musicologies*, a collection from 2008 edited by Henry Stobart.³⁸ The volume features repeated comparison of the disciplinary substance and boundaries of musicology and ethnomusicology, and considers whether they are converging. Nicholas Cook acts as marriage broker, declaring 'we are all ethnomusicologists now'.³⁹ His case is that, while musicology has evolved from a focus on meaning to the empirical study of performance and practice, ethnomusicology is becoming more like musicology. He cites a shift from the diffuse study of music as culture to an orientation towards 'the individual subject' in the guise of exceptional musicians, as well as musical events.⁴⁰ Cook's advocacy of empirical methodologies as a means of rapprochement is welcome; however this can overlook the very different epistemological commitments embodied in distinct empiricisms and the resilient tensions between them. Also productive is Jim Samson's advocacy of a two-way movement in which ethnomusicology should concern itself more with the aesthetic, while historical musicology should embrace the study of practice and performance, of medium and musical spaces. Samson goes on to propose that musicology should adopt the 'global perspective invited by today's multi-national culture industry'.⁴¹ This approach would foreground not only the diffusion of musical traditions, their relative international provenance and power - as he puts it, 'How did European music become global? How did European music become European?' - but also the interrelations between apparently unconnected musics. Samson's example is 'when a Jacobean composer mimics the professional gypsy musics heard in England in the early seventeenth century... using asymmetrical rhythmic patterns and melodic formulae, which are alive and well in the Balkans today'.⁴²

It is worth noting the resonances between Cook's and Samson's views and Gary Tomlinson's powerful *reversal* of the usual terms of disciplinary engagement, a position staked out in his contribution to a third influential interdisciplinary volume, *The Cultural Study of Music*, edited

Band', *New Left Review*, n. 62 (1970); Simon Frith, 'Towards an aesthetics of popular music', in Richard Leppert and Susan McClary (eds), *Music and Society: the Politics of Composition, Performance and Reception* (Cambridge, 1987), and *Performing Rites: On the Value of Popular Music* (Harvard, 1996); and Peter Wicke, *Rock Music: Culture, Aesthetics and Sociology* (Cambridge, 1990).

³⁶ See Georgina Born, 'On modern music culture: Shock, pop and synthesis', *New Formations* n. 2, pp. 51-78, 1987; Born, 'Against negation, for a politics of cultural production: Adorno, aesthetics, the social', *Screen* v. 34, n. 3, pp. 223-42, 1993; and Born, *Rationalizing Culture: IRCAM, Boulez, and the Institutionalization of the Musical Avant-Garde* (California, 1995). The foundational statement of this kind from musicology is Leppert and McClary (eds), *Music and Society*.

³⁷ Although the following chapter in the same volume is a strong statement of the diametrically opposed view: see Suzanne G. Cusick, 'Gender, musicology, and feminism', pp. 471-498 in Cook and Everist (1999).

³⁸ Henry Stobart (ed), *The New (Ethno)musicologies* (Scarecrow, 2008), from the series 'Europea: Ethnomusicologies and Modernities'.

³⁹ Nicholas Cook, 'We are all (ethno)musicologists now', pp. 48-70 in Stobart (2008), p. 65.

⁴⁰ Cook in Stobart, pp. 57-9.

⁴¹ Jim Samson, 'A view from musicology', pp. 23-27 in Stobart (2008), p. 24.

⁴² Samson in Stobart (2008), all p. 25.

by Martin Clayton, Trevor Herbert and Richard Middleton and published in 2003. In this essay Tomlinson proposes that ‘musicology needs to embrace the fact of its position within a more general ethnomusicology’, itself situated within ‘the broader disciplinary and historical panorama’.⁴³ Tomlinson advances this argument having traced historical processes, through the writings of Kant and Forkel, that led to a splitting off of European from non-European musics and instrumental from vocal musics.⁴⁴ While Kant ‘offers a differentiation of beauty in song from beauty in instrumental music that militated toward a Eurocentric music history’, Forkel emphasised musical perfection as a species of ‘alphabetism that could separate music history from music anthropology.... Each is predicated on a mode of abstraction,... [a] decontextualisation’. The result, according to Tomlinson, was to institutionalise musicology as ‘a discipline erected on propositions of cultural difference’, while ‘ethnomusicology arose, ambivalently, as a reaction to musicology’s concealment of the truth that it was always already a particular instance of ethnomusicology’.⁴⁵

These interventions suggest a series of observations. To begin with, any drive for sub-disciplinary rapprochement has to confront the desirability of an abandonment of the predominantly historicist and value-based view of music scholarship, one intimately tied to the late 18th and 19th century formulation of musicology as a kind of musical philology. As Cook puts it, ‘Musicology has traditionally been a retrospective discipline,... turning time back so as to arrive at the Urtext’.⁴⁶ Note the three elements in this formulation - historicism, value, and text - each of which I will briefly pursue. On historicism I have two comments. First, the reflexive transcendence of this kind of first-order historicism is exactly what was at stake in the long-standing and lively debate about historically-informed performance. In the words of John Butt, ‘Historicist movements like HIP are not part of an *ancien régime* that new audience practices are eroding; they are a direct consequence of a new historicist stance in public culture.... The concept of HIP as a simulacrum of a lost historical past is the most convincing way of relating the movement to the conditions of a postmodern age’.⁴⁷ Yet despite the nuanced commentaries, what is striking about the larger debate is how little it nourished itself by drawing on wider historiographical currents. Second, a burgeoning conviction is evident in musicology in the last fifteen years that the discipline must overturn its historicist stance and address musics of the present, let alone of the later 20th century. But such a shift adds new questions, particularly - in the absence of the deeply-etched grooves of legitimacy given by canonisation - what counts as music to be addressed, what’s in and what’s out.

Which raises value, in turn necessitating a leveraging open of conceptual differences between, on the one hand, musicology and ethnomusicology and, on the other, anthropology and sociology. This is because ethnomusicology has often joined musicology in contending that research on music must be founded on aesthetic advocacy of the music to be studied. As in musicology, this may entail a kind of entrancement by the musical object; but it also occurs when music acts for the ethnomusicologist as a synecdoche for a romanticised conception of the ‘people’, against any

⁴³ G. Tomlinson, ‘Musicology, anthropology, history’, in M. Clayton et al (eds), *The Cultural Study of Music* (Routledge, 2003), p. 42.

⁴⁴ Tomlinson in Clayton (2003), p. 37.

⁴⁵ Tomlinson in Clayton (2003), p. 41.

⁴⁶ Cook in Stobart (2008), p. 58.

⁴⁷ John Butt, *Playing with History: The Historical Approach to Musical Performance* (Cambridge, 2002), pp. 39-40, p. 156.

assumption of their cultural or musical inferiority.⁴⁸ In contrast – and note here the tension between ethnomusicology and anthropology – anthropologists, despite adhering on occasion to a similarly romanticised understanding of non-western peoples, are commonly *not* led to idealise their subjects since ethnographic fieldwork invariably demands that they confront the full spectrum of human behaviour, from the redemptive, creative and beautiful to the cruel, authoritarian and ugly. So if aesthetic advocacy appears characteristic of the humanities (I am always struck, for example, by the way colleagues in film studies will only study films that they intend to valorise aesthetically or politically), anthropology and sociology tend to start out when studying music, art or media from a value agnosticism - *start out* because, as is apparent in my own work, this does not obviate a later return to questions of value. The social sciences - in their initial suspension of questions of value, in researching the nature and the differentiation of value judgements, the existence of local contestations and controversies over value in any culture, and in the possibility of an eventual return, after all this, to address value anew – in all this, I suggest, the social sciences inhabit a less idealist and parochial, more informed and subtler epistemological universe, one that is emphatically non-relativist while being undergirded by value pluralism. This is a universe in which it is possible reflexively to take *value communities* - the equivalent, perhaps, of interpretive communities - and related processes such as canon formation as researchable features of social life, as I did in my ethnographies of both IRCAM and the BBC.⁴⁹

Which takes us to text and the current injunction to move ‘beyond text’⁵⁰ - that is, beyond the assumption that the score and its apparent embodiment of composers’ intentionality can be taken as tantamount to musical experience. Here we face full on the challenge of reconfiguring the conceptual boundary that determines what music is; and this is where, to provide a more adequate account of musical experience, Cook and Samson turn to performance and practice, believing that ethnomusicology backs them up, and that this *practice turn* is sufficient to provide a non-essentialist, non-notation-focused socio-cultural analytics of music. Certainly ethnomusicology, along with popular music studies and music sociology, has played a crucial role in transforming our conception of what the musical object is, bringing the socialities and discourses mediating musical experience into the frame. At best, the focus in ethnomusicology on musical practice and performance has functioned as a means of analysis of wider social processes as they mediate music; but ethnomusicology can also fall back on overly micro-social, social-interactionist conceptions of musical practice and of the social relations in music. It is popular music studies and music sociology that have more reliably connected this to a macro-social analytics of music, bringing to the fore the large-scale political, economic, institutional and cultural forces that condition musical experience. What I am suggesting, given the long-standing tensions between ethnomusicology’s musicological and social-scientific sides, is that

⁴⁸ I am indebted to Katherine Brown for this point.

⁴⁹ Born, *Rationalizing Culture*; Georgina Born, *Uncertain Vision: Birt, Dyke and the Reinvention of the BBC* (Vintage, 2005). For an extended discussion of the ideas in this paragraph, including the concept of value communities, see Georgina Born, ‘The social and the aesthetic: For a post-Bourdieuian theory of cultural production’, *Cultural Sociology*, v. 4, n. 2, 2010, pp. 1-38, esp. pp. 28-30.

⁵⁰ ‘Beyond Text’ is the title of a research programme initiated in 2007 by the UK Arts and Humanities Research Council ‘to investigate the formation and transformations of performances, sounds, images, and objects in a wide field of social, historical and geographical contexts, tracing their reception, assimilation and adaptation across temporal and cultural boundaries’: see <http://www.ahrc.ac.uk/FundingOpportunities/Pages/BeyondText.aspx>, (accessed May 5th 2010).

the latter, social-scientific dimension has neither been sufficiently recognised nor sufficiently exercised in its intensifying dialogue with musicology – although there are exceptions, and this may be changing.⁵¹

Evidence of a determination within ethnomusicology to analyse the several orders of social mediation in music comes from the work of Steven Feld in his seminal papers of the 1980s, ‘Communication, speech, and speech about music’ and ‘Sound structure as social structure’. In them, anticipating the rediscovery of mediation by post-Adornian music sociology,⁵² Feld made two critical moves: he probed the discursive mediation of music, identifying this as autonomous from and formative of all musics, and as demanding its own analytics (for which he drew communication theory and sociolinguistics into dialogue with semiotics); and he departed from a reflectionist or homology model of text and context, music and the social, proposing instead what amounts to an analytics of social mediation.⁵³ Thus, in the second paper, criticising the reified quantifications of the comparative ethnomusicology of Alan Lomax,⁵⁴ Feld proposed a critical anthropology of music intended to overcome the music / social dualism by analysing ‘sound structure as socially structured’, that is, musical cultures as immanently social.⁵⁵ Feld advocated ‘six areas of enquiry into the social life of organised sound’ in order to enable rigorous analysis of music’s socialities. They included *competence* - asking who is empowered to make music? Is there a stratification of musical knowledge? And how is music learned?; *value and equality* - asking who evaluates sound? How are expressive resources distributed? How are inequalities or equalities manifest in expressive ideology and performance? And how does musical performance mark social differences?; *theory* - asking what are the sources of authority and legitimacy about music? Is musical knowledge public, private, ritual or esoteric? Is theory necessary, and how detached can theory be from practice?; *form* – asking what are the materialities of music? Is there an aesthetics of music? And are musical codes open or resistant to change?; and *performance* – probing what is the relationship between individual and collective expressive forms? And how do cooperative and competitive social relations emerge in performance?. Through the prism of sound structure as social structure, Feld enjoined us to attend not only to the nature of the immediate socialities of musical practice and how they are

⁵¹ Notable here are certain essays from the 2003 collection *The Cultural Study of Music* edited by Martin Clayton, Trevor Herbert and Richard Middleton: xx give eg’s?

⁵² Here I refer to the work of Antoine Hennion and Tia Denora. My own development in this area drew together Feld and other influences from ethnomusicology with a critical reading of Adorno and Bourdieu.

⁵³ Steven Feld, *Sound and Sentiment: Birds, Weeping, Poetics and Song in Kaluli Expression* (Philadelphia, 1982); Steven Feld ‘Sound structure as social structure’, *Ethnomusicology*, v. 28, n. 3, 1984; and Steven Feld, ‘Communication, speech, and speech about music’, *Yearbook for Traditional Music*, v. 16, 1984.

⁵⁴ Alan Lomax, ‘Song structure and social structure’, *Ethnology*, v. 1, n. 4, 1962, pp. 425-451.

⁵⁵ There is again a strong analogy with Steven Shapin’s account of debates in the history of science over the relations between the categories of ‘science’ and the ‘social’, wherein the ‘social’ is equated with something ‘external’ to science. In response, Shapin develops an argument drawn from the sociology of science akin to Feld’s for music. ‘A pervasive feature of [debates over the relative merits of externalist and internalist explanations in the history of science] has been an equation between the “external” and the “social”’. From the emergence of the problematic through the 1980s most commentators have used the “social” and the “external” as synonyms. The usage is as commonplace as it is unjustifiable. There is as much “society” within the scientific community, and scientific workplaces, as there is outside them. Scientific work is no less collective and coordinated than is everyday social life.... For at least twenty years the major... and least contentious of the contributions of the sociology of scientific knowledge has been to provide resources for eroding such a distinction’. Shapin, ‘Discipline and bounding’, pp. 349-350.

freighted ontologically, but, crucially, to their entanglement with and mediation of wider social relations. I return to these issues later.

Towards a relational musicology: identity, difference, and the constitutive outside

If Feld proffers an analytics that traces the social inside music, disrupting the conceptual boundary between music and the social, others have addressed the second conceptual boundary identified earlier which determines what counts as music to be studied. Here I want to highlight a significant area of convergence between Samson, specifically his advocacy of an analytics of the global and of the interrelations between different musics, Tomlinson, and my own work. Suggesting that relocating musicology within an encompassing ethnomusicology need ‘not involve a repudiation of musicology’s canons’, Tomlinson ends his 2003 paper with a magnanimous vision of disciplinary détente. He calls for a new, ‘sweeping neocomparativism that could explore the broadest questions about the place of musical activities in human experience... across large stretches of human history and culture... [This project] would not avoid situated, detailed study of musical matters... [but would] differ from earlier comparativisms in its critical dismemberment of the hegemonic, Europe-first strategies on which they rested... [It would] bring a deep historical consciousness to [ethnomusicology]... and, at the same time, grant a cross-cultural perspective on European musics’. Such a disciplinary realignment would ‘enact the exchange... of conventional historiographic and ethnographic values’.⁵⁶

It is a similar encompassing perspective resting on a methodological reading of Foucault and Bourdieu combined with anthropological and social theory, popular music, postcolonial and cultural studies, that underpins my own research. I take from Foucault the idea of difference as a methodological principle, a position articulated in an interview in which he outlines three modalities of difference to be utilised in analysis.⁵⁷ The first is synchronic: Foucault suggests that when analysing dominant socio-cultural formations, we should assume their differentiation, tracing both their identity or coherence and their heterogeneity or dispersion. This is akin to Bourdieu’s theory of the field, with its insistent probing of the relational, of the ‘consensus in dissensus, which constitutes the objective unity of the... field’.⁵⁸ The second modality is diachronic: that when tracing the trajectory of such dominant formations, we should assume neither continuity nor discontinuity, nor a uniform rate of transformation. Here Foucault enjoins us to read historical or ethnographic material for its encapsulation of currents of different temporal depth – a theme to which I will return. The third modality is analytical: that in elucidating dominant socio-cultural formations, we should effect ‘a multiplication or pluralization of causes... a multiplication [that] means analyzing an event according to the multiple processes that constitute it’.⁵⁹

⁵⁶ Tomlinson in Clayton (2003), pp. 42-3.

⁵⁷ Michel Foucault, ‘Questions of method’, in James Faubion (ed.), *Foucault: Essential Works, Vol. 3*. London: Penguin, 2001.

⁵⁸ Pierre Bourdieu, ‘Systems of education and systems of thought’, in Michael F. D. Young (ed.), *Knowledge and Control* (Collier Macmillan, 1971), p. 191; Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production*. (Polity, 1993).

⁵⁹ Foucault 2001, all pp. 227-8.

Against this background, from the outset my work took as its problematic the aporetic fragmentation of music scholarship between art and popular musics. Rather than conform to these disciplinary givens, I chose to conceive of the two domains as distinct but contiguous, coeval and plural musical universes that demand to be analysed both in their singularity, as heterogeneous unities, and comparatively and relatedly, in their complex co-existence.⁶⁰ The attempt to read across contiguous musics defined by their differences – differences of aesthetic and practice, of discursive, social and technological mediations as they form a constellation⁶¹ – was an optic that I took to my ethnography of the computer music institute, IRCAM. In this book, *Rationalizing Culture*, I proposed that to discern the substance and boundaries of the institution's identity and cosmology, I needed to attend not only to what was insistently present within IRCAM – musics, scientific discourses, technologies, socialities – but to what was relatively or systematically absent – the institution's constitutive outside. An obvious symptom at the time of fieldwork was the policing of aesthetic and technological boundaries: the subtle and not so subtle, routine and occasionally bizarre efforts by which popular and (less strictly) postmodern musics and small commercial technologies were kept out of IRCAM.⁶² Such exclusionary practices reflected the unequal status and legitimacy accorded to these musics and technologies in the modernist worldview that prevailed at IRCAM. The exclusions were not accidental, but definitive; in Judith Butler's formulation, indebted to Derrida, 'A constitutive or relative outside is... composed of a set of exclusions that are nevertheless *internal* to that system as its own nonthematizable necessity'.⁶³ To accomplish such an analysis, I had to denaturalise current arrangements by tracing the genealogies of IRCAM's music, philosophy, scientific discourses and technologies – that is, by moving in different chapters between the diachronic and synchronic, history and ethnography, so as to generate what Foucault calls a history of the present. Foucault advances this concept against the search for origins and essences characteristic of realist and teleological historiography, arguing that the historical processes that give rise to contemporary events and formations are contingent, discontinuous and divergent. In his words, 'The purpose of history, guided by genealogy, is not to discover the roots of our identity but to commit itself to its dissipation. It does not seek to define our unique threshold of emergence...; it seeks to make visible all those discontinuities that cross us.'⁶⁴ In turn this required me to attend to broad historical trajectories of discursive formations, to the coherence yet heterogeneity of modernisms and postmodernisms in 20th century music, and their interrelations. This method enabled me to describe a whole topology of unities and differences, continuities and discontinuities that together composed IRCAM.⁶⁵ All of which is to say that I developed a relational account of IRCAM's identity.

⁶⁰ The approach was set out in my first publication: Born, 'On modern music culture' (1987).

⁶¹ On the idea of analysing musical cultures as a constellation of mediations, see Georgina Born, 'Music, modernism and signification', in Andrew Benjamin and Peter Osborne (eds) *Thinking Art: Beyond Traditional Aesthetics* (Institute of Contemporary Art, 1991), pp.157-78; Born, 'Understanding music as culture: Contributions from popular music studies to a social semiotics of music', in Raffaele Pozzi (ed.) *Tendenze e Metodi nella Ricerca Musicologica* (Florence, Olschki, 1993), pp. 211-228; and Born, 'On musical mediation' (2005).

⁶² See Born (1995), chapter 10, 'Subjectivities: Difference and fragmentation', pp. 279-307.

⁶³ Judith Butler, *Bodies that Matter* (Routledge, 1993), p. 39. On the concept of the constitutive outside, see also Stuart Hall, 'Introduction: Who needs identity?', p. 3, in Stuart Hall and Paul Du Gay, *Questions of Cultural Identity* (Sage, 1996).

⁶⁴ Michel Foucault, 'Nietzsche, genealogy, history', pp. 139-165 in *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice*, ed. Donald F. Bouchard (Cornell University Press, 1977).

⁶⁵ I should acknowledge that *Rationalizing Culture* has been criticised for treating musical modernism as too unitary and not grasping its heterogeneity, in the guise of different compositional and ideological tendencies within the

It was this relational analytics that was further developed in the volume *Western Music and Its Others*, in which the contributors examined processes of representation, of appropriation, and of the mutual constitution of musical and social difference in a series of case studies of western and non-western art and popular musics.⁶⁶ The essays in this collection – including Julie Brown’s account of Bartók’s simultaneous denigration of gypsy music and idealisation of Magyar music in his nationalist project; Jann Pasler’s analysis of the contending Orientalist ideologies and aesthetics, based on distinctive appropriations of Indian musics, in the early 20th century French modernisms of Delage and Roussel; Philip Bohlman’s history of the evolving musical aesthetics and audibility of the Jewish cantorate as an internal subaltern in central Europe in the late 19th and early 20th centuries; Martin Stokes’s reading of the changing ideological projections vested in Arabesk – a hybrid subaltern popular music - in relation to wider shifts in the Turkish polity in the late 20th century; and Steven Feld’s analysis of the chain of stereotyped, primitivist imitations and appropriations of a characteristic Ba-Benzélé pygmy musical figure by Herbie Hancock, Brian Eno, Madonna and other musicians through a process that he calls ‘schizophonic mimesis’:⁶⁷ these and other essays from *Western Music and Its Others* demonstrate the powers of relational analysis through their systematic focus on historical relations between art and popular musics - in the guise of allusion, mimesis, parody, negation or absolute difference. In turn these figures are linked by contributors to the racial, ethnic or religious stereotyping or subordination that inhere in wider systems of colonial, internal colonial or post-colonial domination. The contributions attest also to the gains of attending to mediation: to music’s social, discursive and technological constructions, their autonomy and their articulation, as they constitute the ‘music itself’. The methodological stance in this book remains cogent, and works against the reified conceptual boundaries and self-evident closures of the sub-disciplinary division of labour. In this way both this collection and *Rationalizing Culture* prefigured the global, neocomparativist moves recommended by Samson and Tomlinson.

As a last mapping point in this analysis of sub-disciplinary relations, it is worth noticing a hiatus between this broad methodological drift and Martin Stokes’s position in his essay in *The New (Ethno)musicologies*. In contrast with my bullish affirmation of the benefits of aspiring to an always impossible analytical totality, Stokes is hesitant, suspicious of the ‘upward scalar movement’ by which ethnomusicologists ‘try to understand the “local” in order to make, via “areas”, claims about “all music”’. Instead he stresses the partial and strategic – we might say, with Serres, the regional - nature of critical operations and of ethnographic truths. Indeed, while he is ‘not in favour of abolishing all reference to totalities’, Stokes is ambivalent about any claim that we can somehow ‘speak for a more inclusive and thus truer, less ideologically compromised totality’.⁶⁸ My own view is that the conceptual gains of the ‘impossible totality’ project outweigh the risks of hegemonic intellection; unless we cast our nets wide, as it were, and speak our analytical minds, there is no chance for others (and Others) to answer back. Despite these

modernist lineage. See Bjorn Heile, ‘Darmstadt as Other: British and American responses to musical modernism’, *twentieth century music*, v. 1, n. 2, 2004, pp. 161-178. However Heile overlooks the repeated attempts in the book (chapters 2, 6 and 10) to develop analyses of the broader differentiation of 20th century musics, by delineating a series of lineages according to their aesthetic, technological, ideological and political propensities.

⁶⁶ Georgina Born and David Hesmondhalgh (eds), *Western Music and its Others: Difference, Representation, and Appropriation in Music* (California, 2000).

⁶⁷ S. Feld, ‘The poetics and politics of pygmy pop’, pp. 254-79 in Born and Hesmondhalgh (2000), p. 263.

⁶⁸ M. Stokes, ‘Afterword’ in Stobart (2008), all pp. 212 and 213.

tensions, my sense is that the differences between Stokes and myself, Samson and Tomlinson are less dramatic than the agreements.

Such a convergence is borne out by wider signs of an incipient relational musicology scattered across the sub-disciplinary terrain. The effect is to reshape or blur the boundaries that have demarcated the proper objects and methodologies of the music sub-disciplines. I want to point to inventive work of this kind in three directions. A first direction is evident in studies that examine a range of musical cultures that are spatially and/or temporally contiguous, enabling explicit or implicit comparison between them, and effecting a productive defamiliarisation and levelling of these musics. In ethnomusicology such a stance is pioneered in Ruth Finnegan's *The Hidden Musicians*, which traces a series of amateur musical 'worlds' – classical, folk, jazz, brass band, music theatre, country and western – coexisting in the English city, Milton Keynes. As Finnegan puts it, her ethnography is 'specific to its place and time,... struggling [for] a greater understanding of the pluralism of multiple musics, of musical practices not just works, and of the active pathways trod by practising musicians in a local setting'.⁶⁹ An analogous approach informs musicologist Eric Drott's *Music and the Elusive Revolution*, which examines the ways in which 'May '68 and its aftershocks provoked a politicization of musical life in France'.⁷⁰ Moving at the outset between a programmatic lecture on French musical life by Pierre Boulez, the denunciation of stride piano by a militant enraged by the carnivalesque atmosphere in the occupied Sorbonne, and 'engaged' singer Francesca Solleville's performances to factory workers during the general strike, Drott examines how 'different kinds of music, performed or conceptualized in different social contexts, engage politics in different ways'. In chapters devoted to three musical genres prominent in May '68 - contemporary classical music, free jazz, and rock *français* – Drott anatomises the plural forms of music's politicization.

A second direction pursues a path forged by *Western Music and Its Others*. It takes the form of an interrogation of the constitution by musical knowledge systems of the dominant classificatory systems for music through the construction of hierarchical differences or conceptual boundaries between art, popular and non-western musics, or through the subordination of one music to the terms of another. Examples come from both historical musicology and ethnomusicology. From the former, Alexander Rehding addresses the traumatic confrontation of European music theorists with non-western and subaltern musics with the advent of recording. He charts the 'wax cylinder revolutions' unleashed when theorists such as Hugo Riemann encountered the recordings of Native American and Chinese musics made by the anthropologist Jesse Walter Fewkes and music psychologist Benjamin Ives Gilman in the 1890s. Rehding outlines the threats posed by these 'dangerous' recordings to the music theorists' universalising systems: 'Riemann's worry was that the phonograph... would allow nonsense to enter the world of musical thought: intervals that were unthinkable in the rational system of Western music and had been barred from coming into circulation by the sheer impossibility of writing them down as musical notation'.⁷¹ However at this critical disciplinary juncture, music theory 'could reject ethnological research only at the expense of the importance of performance'; moreover 'if such a maneuver –

⁶⁹ Ruth Finnegan, *The Hidden Musicians: Music-Making in an English Town* (Cambridge, 1989, second ed. Wesleyan, 2007), 'Preface to the 2007 edition', p. xiv.

⁷⁰ Eric Drott, *Music and the Elusive Revolution: Cultural Politics and Political Culture in France, 1968-1981* (California, forthcoming).

⁷¹ Alexander Rehding, 'Wax cylinder revolutions', *Musical XX*, 2005, pp. 123-160, p. 132 and 133.

the study of performance instead of that of musical works or systems – were successful, music theory would lose its active controlling role as an arbiter of musical thought'.⁷² Rehding portrays the theorists' attempts to 'domesticate' these musics by altering them utterly in transcription; thus, through piano transcription, 'Reimann ironed out the small imperfections' apparently harboured by Chinese melody, while promulgating an exoticism that in the *fin-de-siecle* era of colonial expansion 'played a popular and important cultural role'.⁷³ Ultimately Rehding stresses the powers of particular media to both stabilise and weaken the ontology of the work, while representing the unruly difference of non-western musics. Given the 19th century 'medial triumvirate of score, piano and harmony', 'both the specific storage and reproduction media – conventional score and piano – could be used as barriers to keep non-Western music out'.⁷⁴

A parallel perspective comes from the ethnomusicologist Ana Maria Ochoa Gautier in her analysis of the role of ethnomusicology and other types of musical knowledge in the historical constitution of Latin American 'aural modernity'. Ochoa Gautier traces the intensifying practices 'at the moment of the invention of sound reproduction in the late 19th century' by which the circulation of music came to construct 'an aural public sphere characterised by sonic hierarchies that [was also] itself a sphere of [the] production of social differentiation and inequalities'.⁷⁵ Her focus is the emergence and impact of Latin American folklore studies, a heterogeneous movement involving a range of intellectuals holding posts in folklore institutes, radio stations, music studios and cultural departments, but who 'shared an interest in identifying and visibilizing local musics as part of... nationalist postcolonial projects'.⁷⁶ These efforts institutionalised a 'sonic division of labour: while creative transculturation is a practice that can be embodied by certain figures (*avant garde* composers, folklorists, musicians of the popular identified as valid, and writers), it depends on others whose proper place is to represent "the local" without deviating from it'.⁷⁷ At the same time Ochoa Gautier probes the 'epistemologies of purification' by which the dominant classifications of Latin American music were established: 'The process involves, first, the construction of autonomous realms, second, the creation of mediations and hybrids linking these separate domains, and through that, third, the epistemological work of invisibilization (and naturalization) of this separation.... [Thus] purification involves not only the construction of music as an autonomous domain but also the construction of indigenous, folk and popular musics as *separate* domains from those of Western classical music'.⁷⁸ Tracing scholarly and intellectual complicity over decades, Ochoa Gautier argues that 'Rather than a binary division between tradition and modernity, or thinking of tradition as a backdrop for modernity, what we hear here [are] multiple mediations enacting a constant relation between sonic transculturation and purification'.⁷⁹

A third direction in what I am calling relational musicology extends a further dimension of *Rationalizing Culture and Western Music and Its Others*. It pursues the nature of the inter-

⁷² Ibid., pp. 133-134.

⁷³ Ibid., both p. 144.

⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 148.

⁷⁵ Ana Maria Ochoa Gautier, 'Sonic transculturation, epistemologies of purification and the aural public sphere in Latin America', *Social Identities* v. 12, n. 6, 2006, pp. 803-825; p. 813.

⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 814.

⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 817.

⁷⁸ Ibid., p. 810.

⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 820.

musical or inter-aesthetic relations between distinct music lineages, including those that are held to be unrelated. This approach is manifest in the work of historical ethnomusicologist Katherine Brown in her research on music and empire, and particularly in her intention to address anew the nature of colonial transitions in music cultures in the era of European expansion in South and South East Asia between 1750 and 1900. Brown's argument is that problematic assumptions have been made about radical disjunctures between pre-colonial and colonial contexts, as well as about the impact of colonial ideologies on indigenous musical fields. Instead, through research on these transitions, her aim is to produce a 'comprehensive connected history', one that details the continuities in pre-colonial musical systems in their complex entanglements with colonial discourses – intercultural musical encounters that are better conceived in terms of 'overlapping but chronologically staggered layerings of pre-colonial, colonial and hybrid discourses'.⁸⁰ A different model of the interrogation of inter-musical relations is evident in George Lewis's study of the creation of distinct Euro-American lineages of improvised music after 1950.⁸¹ Rather than primarily knowledge formations, Lewis's focus is, first, on the constitution of two metagenres of improvisation as manifest in musical practices and aesthetics – a division between what he calls Afrological and Eurological lineages – and, second, on the discursive exegeses and ideological rationalizations attached to these musics. Of particular note is that, having defined the two lineages in post-War music, Lewis contends that despite a strong 'circumstantial case' for the aesthetic influence of Afrological improvisatory musics, especially bebop, on the burgeoning improvisatory and aleatory practices of the modernist and experimental Eurological camps, such influence is repeatedly disavowed or denied both by Eurological musicians – including John Cage and Michael Nyman – and by music historians and musicologists.⁸² Lewis's analysis therefore points at the same time to inter-musical influences and to their repeated discursive denial – as though Euro-American experimental music discovered improvisation through 'a sort of immaculate conception... [rather than] any kind of musical miscegenation with jazz'.⁸³

As demonstrated by this diverse but conceptually coherent body of work, the development of a relational musicology depends upon a break with dominant conceptions not only of what counts as music to be studied, but how it should be studied, with these principles applying as much to scholarship in ethnomusicology, jazz and popular music studies as to historical musicology. Two conceptual energies seem to animate the developing varieties of relational musicology that I have outlined. One is the Foucaultian, Bourdieuan and Derridean orientation, enmeshed in sociological, anthropological and historiographic sensibilities, towards analysing the identities, differences, and constitutive outsides of disciplinary and aesthetic formations. As Butler suggests, rather than just 'exist', such outsides are commonly produced by forces of 'exclusion, erasure, violent foreclosure [or] abjection'.⁸⁴ The second energy appears to derive from a curiosity about the new musical and intellectual horizons opened up by transcending the limiting conceptual boundaries of the various music sub-disciplines, yielding an expanded empirical (and therefore conceptual) imagination of the kind announced in Tomlinson's compelling intervention

⁸⁰ Katherine Brown, *Musical Transitions to European Colonialism in the Eastern Indian Ocean*, research proposal for the European Research Council, April 2010, p. 1.

⁸¹ George E. Lewis, 'Improvised music after 1950: Afrological and Eurological perspectives', *Black Music Research Journal* v. 16, n. 1, 1996, pp. 91-122.

⁸² In detailing the 'circumstantial case' (ibid., p. 100), Lewis draws on the analysis given in *Rationalizing Culture*, Chapter 2, pp. 40-65: see especially pp. 56-65, and the fuller account in note 29 (p. 351).

⁸³ Ibid., p. 103.

⁸⁴ Butler, *Bodies That Matter*, p. 8.

- one that strains against the confines both of subject-centred music histories and of single-genre-centred music ethnographies.

To conclude this section, I have suggested that the kind of interdisciplinarity that is most often envisaged in the debate over reconfiguring the boundaries between the music sub-disciplines is one that, in the guise of a turn to practice or performance, sutures together the historically-inclined, humanities model of musicology with the micro-social, musicologically-inclined aspects of ethnomusicology. But this obscures other sources of renewal in music scholarship: those deriving from the social sciences and historiography, their methodologies and theoretical resources, and how they infuse recent work that I have gathered under the rubric of a relational musicology. These are studies that reflexively interrogate the history of, and question, the sub-disciplinary settlement in music scholarship. As an alternative to the practice turn in musicology, I am proposing a direction for future research that provides an expanded analytics of the social and cultural in music, and thus also better explanation. It is worth noting the blue ocean separating the archipelago of new anthropological musicologies that I am envisaging here from the Geertzian culturalism more often proposed. My islands look more to contemporary anthropological and social theory for ways to enrich our analytics, and music, with its fecund socialities and profuse cultural and discursive elaborations, suits this well. Such changes, as I have indicated, are welcomed by some musicologists, who seek new resources – from anthropology and sociology, art and cultural history and media theory – as a backdrop for their increasingly adventurous research. Given the challenge to existing pedagogies and disciplinary identities, the passage, again, may be arduous.

What we commonly see, however, in proposals for sub-disciplinary détente is that it is envisaged either in the comforting terms of integration - as though musicology's existing premises can carry on unchanged in conversation with popular music studies or ethnomusicology; or in the imperial terms of subordination - as though bits of social analysis can be drafted in to serve musicology's needs for a better account of 'context', while everything else remains the same: 'music' is not 'social'. What is less easy to accept is the more radical stance of the agonistic-antagonistic mode, which suggests that addressing music as immanently social and cultural requires a break: an epistemological and ontological shift in our understanding of all musics, an approach that is irreducible to the addition of the antecedent sub-disciplines, since all will be changed in the process.

Four topics: the social, technology, temporality, and ontology

In this last part of the article I pursue the implications of a relational musicology, primarily in its comparativist guise. I do this with reference to four topics which - enriched by perspectives from anthropology, sociology and history - may be generative for emergent re-definitions of the field, topics that span both art and popular musics, and that render problematic the music / social opposition: questions of the social, technology, temporality, and ontology.

In returning to music and the social, and in light of the earlier discussion of Feld, my intention is to complicate the model of musical sociality implicit in the turn to practice and performance; indeed we might even say that the present concern with performance can be a way of addressing the social in music without really addressing it. I want also to question a prior musicological

cipher for the social: meaning. Thus for Lawrence Kramer, the social enters music through ‘the relationship of musical meaning to individual subjectivity, social life, and cultural context’.⁸⁵ Characteristically, Kramer’s method is restricted to a textual hermeneutics attentive to figuration, trope and connotation, in which ‘the trick is to align the interpreter’s art of presupposition with the work of culture’.⁸⁶ Against this reduced image of socio-musical experience, the practice turn’s ushering in of the body and of the micro-socialities of performance is certainly an advance.

Yet both of these orientations foreshorten music’s social mediation, neglecting other dimensions of the social in play. Indeed if music manifests myriad social forms, it is productive to analyse them in terms of four orders of social mediation. The first equates to the practice turn: here music produces its own socialities – in performance, in musical ensembles, in the musical division of labour, in listening. Second, music animates imagined communities, aggregating its listeners into virtual collectivities or publics based on musical and other identifications.⁸⁷ Third, music mediates wider social relations, from the most abstract to the most intimate: music’s embodiment of stratified and hierarchical social relations, of the structures of class, race, nation, gender and sexuality, and of the competitive accumulation of authority and legitimacy. Fourth, music is bound up in the large-scale social, cultural, economic and political forces that provide for its production and reproduction, whether elite or religious patronage, mercantile or industrial capitalism, public and subsidised cultural institutions, or late capitalism’s multi-polar cultural economy – forces the analysis of which demand the resources of social theory, from Marx and Weber to Bourdieu. The four orders of social mediation are irreducible to one another, and are articulated in non-linear and contingent ways through conditioning, affordance or causality. While they are invariably treated separately in discussions of music and the social, all four orders enter into musical experience. The first two orders amount to socialities, social relations and imaginaries that are assembled specifically by musical practice. The last two orders, in contrast, amount to wider social conditions that themselves afford certain kinds of musical practice – although these conditions also permeate music’s socialities and imagined communities, just as music inflects these wider conditions. In all these ways music is immanently social, as ethnomusicology has long demonstrated by testifying to those many musics of the world in which there is little separation between musical and social processes.

How is this perspective productive? Let me give some examples. The analysis of canon formation is enhanced by this approach, which makes it possible to analyse how it is that a repertoire can accumulate the authority and legitimacy that endow it with canonic status and achieve its institutionalisation. To do this is to trace the social practices of particular agents as they develop and circulate a vocabulary of value. Mark Everist has traced canon formation in several guises: he charts the growing reputation of Sibelius in Britain in the 1930s through transformations between the writings of Tovey and Gray; he notes the legitimising work of

⁸⁵ L. Kramer, *Musical Meaning: Toward a Critical History* (California, 2002), p. 1.

⁸⁶ Kramer (2002), p. 26.

⁸⁷ On the concept of musically imagined community, see Georgina Born, ‘Afterword: Music policy, aesthetic and social difference’, pp. 266-92 in Tony Bennett, Simon Frith, Lawrence Grossberg et al (eds), *Rock and Popular Music: Politics, Policies, Institutions* (Routledge, 1993), esp. pp. 281-288; and Georgina Born, ‘IV: Music and the representation of sociocultural identities’ (pp. 31-37) and ‘V: Techniques of the musical imaginary’ (pp. 37-47) in ‘Introduction: On difference, representation and appropriation in music’ (pp. 1-58), in Born and Hesmondhalgh, *Western Music and Its Others*.

organisations like the Britten-Pears Foundation; and Philip Gossett's crucial interventions since the 1980s in building Rossini's canonic status.⁸⁸ But Everist lacks the sociological terms that would enable him more readily to recognise and name these processes. *Rationalizing Culture* offers a case study in the historical analysis of canon formation and artistic power. In the book, with reference to Weber and Bourdieu, I trace how Boulez - IRCAM's founder and director - was able over decades, through strategies that enabled the international accumulation of authority, legitimacy and power, to build the cultural capital, converted into political and financial backing, that permitted him eventually to ask President Pompidou for IRCAM as a condition of returning to France in the 1970s. At the same time I chart how - through his composition and conducting, but also writing, institution building, pedagogic and programming activities in Paris, London, New York, and IRCAM - Boulez became globally influential in erecting and reproducing a particular canon of 20th century music.⁸⁹ Without a social analytics, any such understanding of canon formation is hampered.

A second set of examples highlights the need to analyse *cross-scalar* articulations (or relations) between orders of the social in music.⁹⁰ The practices of both the Simon Bolivar Youth Orchestra and the world fusion band Transglobal Underground exemplify in distinctive ways such cross-scalar relations.⁹¹ The SBYO is part of a movement that attempts to intervene in larger structures of social inequality through the cultivation of musical practices which, it is believed, will assist in combating deprivation among Venezuelan youth on a mass scale. That is to say, the micro-socialities of musical performance are taken to moderate in humanly effective ways the larger structures of inequality in which they are embedded and which in turn they mediate. For bands like Transglobal Underground, alarmed by the mid 1990s at the exploitative treatment of non-western musicians whose music was digitally sampled in their own and others' electronic dance musics without credit or recompense - that is, alarmed by the effects of the commercial system within which their music was being produced, one answer was to change their practices. Instead of sampling, they engaged in performing (or 'real playing') with non-western musicians, a collaborative and paid music-making. Once again, the immediate socialities and economic relations of live performance were enrolled with the intention of mitigating larger - here transnational - structures of inequality.

From these cases it is also apparent that analysis of the relations between social orders is the key to analysing diverse forms of the political in music. Let me offer two further instances. Louise Meintjes in her study of recording in apartheid and post-apartheid South Africa shows how the recording studio is both a social microcosm with its own social dynamics, while it is also crossed

⁸⁸ Mark Everist, 'Reception theories, canonic discourses, and musical value', in Cook and Everist (1999), pp. 385, 393 and 397.

⁸⁹ Born (1995) chapter 2, 'Prehistory: Modernism, postmodernism, and music', pp. 40-65, and chapter 3, 'Background: IRCAM's conditions of existence', pp. 66-101.

⁹⁰ On the productivity of crossing scales in the analysis of ethnographic and historical material, see the anthropologist Marilyn Strathern's notion of the relation, which 'brings together phenomena of quite different scale', and which entails a crossing of scales in analysis, so as to attend to the complexity of conditions and causalities. Strathern, *The Relation: Issues in Complexity and Scale*, (Prickly Pear, 1995).

⁹¹ On Transglobal Underground, see David Hesmondhalgh, 'International times: Fusions, exoticism, and antiracism in electronic dance music', pp. 280-304 in Born and Hesmondhalgh (2000).

by wider social relations.⁹² The politics of recording occur on two intersecting planes: first, in the micro-politics of the studio – evident in who has musical power and control, whose fantasies prevail about how things should sound,⁹³ and second, in how these micro-politics are crossed by larger structures of race and class, such that in the apartheid era black musicians worked in a ‘white-controlled industry’ personified in white sound engineers who knew little of black styles. Recording in this period was therefore the site of struggles over the control of musical gestures and sound qualities, struggles in which black musicians would secretly try to wrest back control from the engineer at the mixing desk.

A different case is Robert Adlington’s account of a series of convulsions in contemporary music in the Netherlands in the 1970s signalled by the eruption among a younger generation of composers (including Louis Andriessen and Misha Mengelberg) of the leftist ‘Movement for the Renewal of Musical Practice’ or BEVEM. Here we glimpse how important for the politics of music in the west since the 1960s has been a reflexive engagement with the social in music, and specifically with the relations between the socialities of musical practice and broader structures of power. Adlington portrays the attempts at a revolution in musical practice stemming from a widely felt contempt for the bourgeois complacency of orchestral life around the Concertgebouw and its intimate ritual functions for the ruling elite. BEVEM demanded an overturning of ‘authoritarian management structures’ and called instead for the emancipation of musical life through musicians’ self-organisation in egalitarian performing ensembles;⁹⁴ this was to be accompanied by mass musical education programs and the wider democratisation of musical life. Central to the demands were parallels drawn between the alienated conditions of orchestral labour and socialist critiques of workers’ alienation. Adlington draws out the unhappy contradictions of BEVEM’s activities, and how incapable they were of extending their radical experiments beyond the musical sphere. Yet at stake was the idea of musical practice as a crucible in which could be incubated challenges – and a space of exception⁹⁵ – to larger structures of social power; and the developments he describes were paralleled elsewhere.⁹⁶ The point is not to endorse these examples; rather, it is to show that all of these cases, and many forms of the political in music, require a social analytics that addresses different orders of the social in music and their complex interrelations.⁹⁷

⁹² Louise Meintjes, ‘The politics of the recording studio’, pp. 84-97 in Nicholas Cook et al (eds) *The Cambridge Companion to Recorded Music* (Cambridge, 2009).

⁹³ Ibid., p. 85.

⁹⁴ Robert Adlington, ‘Organizing labour: Composers, performers, and “the renewal of musical practice” in the Netherlands, 1969-72’, *The Musical Quarterly*, v. 90, n. 3-4, 2007, pp. 539-577, p. 554.

⁹⁵ With the notion of musical practice as potentially a ‘space of exception’ I create a resonance with Giorgio Agamben’s concept of the ‘state of exception’, but through its definitive inversion. Agamben charts the exceptional extension of state power such that what were provisional arrangements become normal modes of government, with the capacity to turn democratic into totalitarian regimes. In contrast, I intend to highlight how musical practice may on occasion be created and experienced as an exceptional space apart from the normal structures of social life, and endowed with radically alternative or transformative properties in relation to normative social orders. Giorgio Agamben, *State of Exception* (Chicago, 2005).

⁹⁶ Two examples, with very different political orientations, were Cornelius Cardew’s Scratch Orchestra (see Michael Nyman, *Experimental Music* (Schirmer, 1974), pp. 112-8), and the Chicago-based African-American jazz collective, the Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians (see George E. Lewis, *A Power Stronger Than Itself: the AACM and American Experimental Music* (Chicago, 2008)).

⁹⁷ On the plural forms of the politics of music see Born, ‘Afterword: Music policy, aesthetic and social difference’.

The second topic is technology, and here it is notable that it has taken until the 2000s – more than a century after music recording began to transform the nature of musical experience, and thirty years after popular music scholars began to write on recording – for the first large-scale musicological initiative to appear: the UK’s Centre for the History and Analysis of Recorded Music (CHARM).⁹⁸ While this is a welcome development, it indicates the profound dislocation that has existed between the philological orientation of score-based musicology and the aural-oral nature of recording, manifest in recording’s fundamental contribution to the aesthetics and ontology of many 20th century popular musics, where it replaces the score as the primary medium of musical representation, education and circulation. This is a productive dislocation, since it alerts us to the mediated nature and the materiality of all musical experience. And while popular music studies led the way, we now see a convergence in which musicology and ethnomusicology are also producing significant research in this area. Yet the terms of the *détente* remain uncertain: cognitivist and positivistic, or hermeneutic and cultural-theoretical?

Indeed recording poses radical challenges to any interdisciplinary *détente*. It calls for a meta-analytical framework that would grasp the legacy of recording not as just another branch of music study, but as constitutive of all musical experience – art and popular, past and present – over the last century. Against this background, it is plausible to argue, any *non*-recording-based musical experience has to be understood in a post-mediated light: as the negation, supplement or mimesis of recording. Such a stance amounts to a variant of Philip Auslander’s analysis of the transformation of performance in a mediatized age, where he criticises any fetishism of the live as ontologically prior to, and opposed to, mediatized performance. Instead, he observes, ‘mediatization is now explicitly and implicitly embedded within the live experience’,⁹⁹ such that live performance today is coming more and more to mimic its own mediatization. His persuasive conviction, then, is that ‘the historical relationship of liveness and mediatization must be seen as a relation of dependence and imbrication’.¹⁰⁰

But Auslander’s account is too simple, and fails to see that the question of ontology should be posed not in terms of live versus recorded performance – that is, at the level of medium – but in terms of distinct musics. For if recording and its aesthetic potentials have been central to the development of 20th century popular musics, other musical cultures perceive recording’s effects more negatively. Paul Berliner and Ingrid Monson have shown the centrality of recording to the history and aesthetics of jazz. Despite the growth from the 1940s of jazz transcription, recording has remained the primary means of style transmission and musical education, the source of musical subtlety and truth. Berliner describes how ‘[musicians] hung out at one another’s homes “listening to records together, humming the solos till we learned them”.... When learning new solos from recordings, [some] commit endless hours to the task.... Once absorbed from recordings, solos pass from one aspiring artist to another’. He observes further that ‘[a]lthough experienced improvisers regard published materials as valuable learning aids, they caution against becoming too dependent on them. Without comparing transcriptions to the original recordings, students cannot determine the accuracy of the transcription.... Moreover, all transcriptions are reductive representations of performance and provide learners with little

⁹⁸ On CHARM see <http://www.charm.rhul.ac.uk/index.html> (accessed May 5th 2010).

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 31.

¹⁰⁰ Philip Auslander, *Liveness: Performance in a Mediatized Culture* (Routledge, 1999), p. 53.

information about the fundamental stylistic features of jazz.¹⁰¹ Recording emerges from these jazz studies, then, as the equivalent of the Urtext, but also as the ontological equal or double of live performance. In contrast, the classical chamber musician Susan Tomes exemplifies a profound ambivalence when reflecting on her experience of recording. She observes that, compared to live playing, recording elicits ‘hyper-critical’ performances, bringing a ‘bell-jar of self-consciousness’.¹⁰² The resulting recording has an unreal ‘surface perfection’ made of a ‘mosaic of the best [takes]’.¹⁰³ For Tomes, recording dehumanises chamber music: the epitome of a music created through communion in live performance.¹⁰⁴ Different musics therefore entail radically unlike experiences and valuations of recording, indicating the powers of the new comparativism, while suggesting that we should conceive of recording as but one, variable element in the make-up of particular music ontologies.

The third topic is temporality, responding to a widespread sense that the historiographical foundations of music studies demand to be renewed. Leo Treitler has cautioned that ‘the historical study of music has hardly been conducted on the grounds of serious reflection about historiographical principles’.¹⁰⁵ While Kevin Korsyn argues, with reference to Foucault, that rather than reduce history to a temporal horizon in which a unified human consciousness is the origin of all historical development, a ‘pure succession, [historical analysis should allow for] the simultaneity of different temporalities’.¹⁰⁶ For Korsyn, ‘just as music analysis has generally privileged unity over heterogeneity, so music history has preferred continuity to discontinuity’. Instead, he suggests, ‘music history must learn to accommodate... “discontinuities, ruptures and gaps”’.¹⁰⁷ There is an obvious kinship between these observations and the Foucaultian ideas mentioned earlier, as well as recent studies in the anthropology of time.¹⁰⁸ The latter exhibit a concern with multiple temporalities, stressing that ‘plurality in time-scales... is “normal” rather than [atypical of] human history’.¹⁰⁹ Moreover anthropological scholarship has moved away from the hegemony of a unilineal history focused primarily on subject, text and discourse, and instead dwells insistently on the social and the material. Thus with reference to his work on Indian art and photography, the anthropologist Christopher Pinney extends from Kracauer the idea of the ‘nonhomogeneity’ and ‘uncontemporaneous’ nature of time, suggesting that ‘to make time uncontemporaneous is to insist on its multiplicity and difference’.¹¹⁰ In a similar way, the

¹⁰¹ Paul Berliner, *Thinking In Jazz* (1994), pp. 96 and 98.

¹⁰² Susan Tomes, ‘Learning to live with recording’, in N. Cook et al (eds) *The Cambridge Companion to Recorded Music* (Cambridge, 2009 forthcoming), ms. pp. 1-2.

¹⁰³ Tomes ms. pp. 2 and 3.

¹⁰⁴ Tomes ms. p. 2.

¹⁰⁵ Leo Treitler, ‘The historiography of music: issues of past and present’, pp. 356-77 in Cook and Everist, *Rethinking Music*, p. 356.

¹⁰⁶ Kevin Korsyn, ‘Beyond privileged contexts: intertextuality, influence, and dialogue’, pp. 55-72 in Cook and Everist, *Rethinking Music*, p. 66.

¹⁰⁷ Korsyn pp. 64-65; the reference is to Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (trans. A. M. Sheridan Smith, New York, 1972), p. 169.

¹⁰⁸ See, inter alia, Nicholas Thomas, *Out of Time: History and Evolution in Anthropological Discourse* (Michigan, 1989); [CH] Nancy Munn, ‘The cultural anthropology of time: a critical essay’, *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 1992; Alfred Gell, *The Anthropology of Time* (Berg, 1992); and Wendy James and David Mills, *The Qualities of Time: Anthropological Approaches* (Berg, 2005).

¹⁰⁹ James and Mills 2005, p. 9.

¹¹⁰ Christopher Pinney, ‘Things happen: Or, from which moment does that object come?’, in D. Miller (ed), *Materiality* (Duke, 2005), all p. 264.

theorist of history Reinhart Koselleck proposes a conception of historical process as a multileveled temporality ‘subject to differential rates of acceleration and deceleration [which] functions not only as a matrix within which historical events happen but also as a causal force in the determination of social reality in its own right’.¹¹¹ Koselleck emphasises the radical gap between historical events and the language used to represent them: ‘historical time again and again reproduces the tension between society and its transformation, on the one hand, and its linguistic processing and assimilation, on the other’.¹¹² This is productive in alerting us, again, to the historical gap between musical experience and its elaboration in discourse, suggesting that we should resist any temptation to take historical discourses or linguistic exegeses as the equivalent of, or a reliable guide to, changes in musical practice.¹¹³

Particularly suggestive by analogy for music history is Pinney’s contention that in studying visual cultures we should be alert to investigating ‘the disjunctures between images and their historical location.... Images are not simply, always, a reflection of something happening elsewhere. They are part of an aesthetic, figural domain that can *constitute history*, and exist in a temporality that is not necessarily coterminous with more conventional political temporalities’.¹¹⁴ Pinney’s insistence here on how cultural objects *act* – on the way that such objects have their own temporality, and are themselves a constitutive force in history – disrupts any imperative to discover unities between an epoch (modernity, say), the subjectivities of composers, critics or listeners, and musical works. Instead, Pinney enjoins us to probe their disjunct and different temporalities: how they may be out of time with, or *not* reflect, one another. Here he gestures towards a concern with how the musical object – in the guise of work, performance or recording – can engender an event, where an event is understood as the kind of exceptional musical experience that catalyses a transformation in the relations between musical subject and object, a situation underdetermined by other historical processes.¹¹⁵

To develop an alternative approach to time in the analysis of cultural production, including music, it may be productive to attend to the multiple temporalities that subtend cultural objects. It is possible to discern, I suggest, four such modes of temporality. First, the ‘inner time’ of the cultural object, as Alfred Schutz calls it for music drawing on Bergson’s concept of *durée*, and which in the other arts is equivalent to narrative or diegetic time.¹¹⁶ Here it is of more than passing interest that in his studies of music and temporality, Jonathan Kramer draws on the anthropology of time in order to distinguish five categories of intramusical time: directional linear time, nondirectional linear time, moment time, vertical time, and what he calls multiple

¹¹¹ Hayden White ‘Foreword’ to R. Koselleck, *The Practice of Conceptual History* (Stanford, 2002), p. xii.

¹¹² Koselleck, pp. 24-5.

¹¹³ On the plural existence and the limits of discourses on music, see Gianmario Borio’s distinction between three levels of poetics associated with musical works: philosophical aesthetics, the explicit musical poetics in composers’ own writings, and the implicit musical poetics manifest in the ‘technical structures of their works’. Borio, ‘*Dire cela, sans savoir quoi*: The question of meaning in Adorno and in the musical avant-garde’, pp. 41-67 in B. Hoeckner (ed), *Apparitions: New Perspectives on Adorno and Twentieth-Century Music* (Routledge, 2006), p. 41.

¹¹⁴ Pinney (2005), pp. 265-6, emphasis added.

¹¹⁵ For two versions of the concept of a musical event, see Georgina Born, ‘Listening, mediation, event’, *Journal of the Royal Musical Association*, v. 135, n. 1 (2010), pp. 79-89, esp. 87-88; and Tia DeNora, *After Adorno: Rethinking Music Sociology* (Cambridge, 2003), pp. 45-56. On the philosophy of the event, see Badiou XXX.

¹¹⁶ Alfred Schutz, ‘Making music together’, in *Collected Papers, Vol. 2* (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1971).

time,¹¹⁷ by which he refers to a ‘reordered linearity’.¹¹⁸ Kramer adds that ‘most compositions, in [the 20th] century at least, do not consistently exhibit one species of musical time on every hierarchic level’ and contain several varieties of temporality.¹¹⁹ In this light, even this first type of temporality immanent in the musical object exhibits a multiplicity. The second mode consists of the Husserlian dynamics of retention and protention, memory and anticipation, that map the art or musical corpus as an object distributed in time.¹²⁰ The third mode refers to the variable temporalities characteristic of particular genres, in terms of the movement in them of repetition and difference, reproduction and invention.¹²¹ The fourth mode of temporality consists of the Koselleckian epochal categories of cultural-historical consciousness evident in notions of ‘tradition’, ‘classicism’, ‘modernism’, ‘innovation’, ‘avant-garde’ and so on, concepts that inform artists’ creative agency and supervise the creation of any cultural object.¹²²

Together an analysis of these four modes, and particularly the fourth, makes it possible to resist teleological accounts of cultural and musical change, by holding prevailing self-concept, cultural object and corpus up against the actual temporality of genre. Feld, for example, argues against the universal status of Western concepts of progress in art by contrasting them with the temporal categories embedded in the expressive ontology of the Kaluli people of highland Papua New Guinea. According to Feld, ‘Kaluli place no premium on musical “innovation”... and make no assumption that change is synonymous with vitality or that stasis denotes degeneration’.¹²³ While from art history, James Ackerman warns against any unrigorous, transhistorical equation of novelty with expressive value.¹²⁴ My IRCAM study provides a variant of such an analysis. By combining the ethnography with a genealogy of musical modernism, and by probing the aesthetic qualities of IRCAM music, I was able to consider the institution’s position in this long-term aesthetic system. More precisely, by examining the third mode of temporality – evidence of the primacy of repetition over difference in the generic dynamics that link IRCAM music to prevailing modernisms – and comparing it with the fourth mode – IRCAM’s modernist meta-categories of cultural-historical time - I was able to examine the institution’s position in this long-term aesthetic system, arguing (controversially) that IRCAM modernism effected a mobile stasis, a capacity to prolong the governing aesthetic by resisting or repressing significant musical

¹¹⁷ Jonathan D. Kramer, ‘New temporalities in music’, *Critical Inquiry*, v. 7, n. 3, pp. 539-556 (1981), p. 552. See also his *The Time of Music: New Meanings, New Temporalities, New Listening Strategies* (Schirmer, 1988).

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 545.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 553.

¹²⁰ See Gell, *Art and Agency*, chapter 9, for an extension of Husserl to the analysis of the artistic oeuvre as an object distributed in time; and for an extension of Gell’s Husserlian theory to music, Born, ‘On musical mediation’, esp. pp. 20-24.

¹²¹ An exemplary analysis of the third mode of temporality comes from popular music studies. Will Straw, in ‘Systems of articulation, logics of change: scenes and communities in popular music’, *Cultural Studies* v. 5, n. 3 (1991), highlights the distinctive generic temporalities (and spatialities) constructed by two historically coexistent popular music genres, industrial rock and electronic dance music, and their respective subcultures. See also from art history James Ackerman, ‘A theory of style’, *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, v. 20, n. 3, 1962; from literary theory Hans Robert Jauss, *Towards an Aesthetics of Reception* (Minneapolis, 1982); and from media theory John Caughie, ‘Adorno’s reproach: Repetition, difference and television genre’, *Screen*, v. 32, n. 2, 1991, and Born, ‘Against negation, for a politics of cultural production: Adorno, aesthetics, the social’.

¹²² On the significance of these metacategories, see from art history Ackerman, ‘A theory of style’, and from philosophy and art theory Peter Osborne, *The Politics of Time: Modernity and Avant-Garde* (Verso, 1995).

¹²³ Steven Feld, ‘Aesthetics as iconicity of style’, chapter 4 in Charles Keil and Steven Feld, *Music Grooves* (Chicago, 1994), p. 138.

¹²⁴ Ackerman (1962), p. 236.

change.¹²⁵ Held up against IRCAM's own philosophy of history (or temporal cosmology), this is an ironic state of affairs, and one that might be termed anti-inventive.¹²⁶ Temporality, then, as another way to fold the social and material into the analysis of music, while breaking decisively with the 'pure succession' of subject-centred historiography.

The final topic is ontology; and here I conclude that, as indicated by the work of Goehr, Bohlman, myself and others, and in parallel with what is called the ontological turn in anthropology and social theory,¹²⁷ from now on we would do well to be alert to the diversity of music ontologies in the world. A non-relativist, relational musicology can proceed from the comparative study of distinctive ontologies of music - which proffer an understanding of 'local' musical experience and values, and which can in turn provide the basis for (provisional) criticism¹²⁸ - to addressing the nature of their mutual historical encounters and engagements or simple coexistence. But ontology is not only 'out there', as so many musical dark continents to be discovered. Ontology is also in us, in our analytical stance, and in this guise it can fuel misrecognition - evident, perhaps, in the universalism of philological musicology which produces canons while, in Serres' terms, failing to read the colours of other musical universes that its prejudices have erased. This double layering of ontology - in the object, and in ourselves - means that it is particularly important reflexively to uncover the ontological categories that guide our scholarship so as to avoid misrecognising other musics.¹²⁹

What is at stake in interdisciplinary détente, as I have tried to suggest, is the need to hold together sub-disciplinary currents in agonistic tension, by working through a series of core problems - value, temporality, technology, the social - that traverse the music sub-disciplines, throwing light on crucial aporia, creating inventive cross-currents, and thereby encouraging subterranean shifts in the entire conceptual settlement. In this way the erstwhile framings of music research will not only be problematised but, with reference to anthropology, sociology and history, systematically and cumulatively expanded. Music research stands poised on the verge of a generative transition in which it may be possible to effect an ontological transformation in both our optics and our objects, towards a fully relational and reflexive, social and material conception of all musics. To return finally to Serres, this would be 'to see on a large scale, [and] to be in full possession of a multiple, and... connected intellection', one that is adequate to the prodigiously fertile, noisy, and still poorly-understood disorder of our musical pasts and futures.

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¹²⁵ Born (1995), p. 325-6, and generally, chapter 11.

¹²⁶ On the concept of anti-invention see Born 1995; and also Barry 2001, chapter 9, and Andrew Barry, 'Political invention', pp. 287-308 in Kristin Asdal, Brita Brenna and Ingunn Moser (eds), *Technoscience: the Politics of Invention* (Oslo: Oslo Academic Press, 2007), esp. 297-301.

¹²⁷ Examples of the ontological turn include Bruno Latour, *War of the Worlds: What About Peace?* (Prickly Paradigm, 2002); Eduardo Viveiros de Castro, 'Perspectival anthropology and the method of controlled equivocation', keynote lecture, Meeting of the Society for the Anthropology of Lowland South America, Florida, January 2004; and Amiria Henare, Martin Holbraad and Sari Wastell (eds), *Thinking Through Things: Theorising Artefacts Ethnographically* (Routledge, 2007).

¹²⁸ On value and provisional criticism, see Born, 'The social and the aesthetic', esp. pp. 28-30.

¹²⁹ Koselleck articulates a similar caution about the conceptual inertia and circularity that tend to reproduce our basic categories of thought: 'all metahistorical categories [turn] into historical statements. Reflecting on this... is one of the research tasks of historical anthropology and of any kind of history'. Koselleck, *The Practice of Conceptual History*, p. 3.