

Notes on nuance

Rethinking a philosophy of modern music

David Cunningham

The study of contemporary music can often seem particularly neglected by philosophy, at least by comparison to the attention accorded to literature and the visual arts. It is caught between a still largely conventional musicology, whose received procedures are patently ill-equipped to deal with a vast range of recent musical production, and a cultural theory which is generally content to reduce it to little more than a background noise for the formation of subcultural identity. What then might today constitute a *philosophy* of modern music, as the title of one of Adorno's best-known books would have it, insofar as the 'philosophical investigation' of music is concerned 'not with ideas on style' but with 'the unprogrammable *concept* inherent in [its] object', a 'reflected immanence of works'?¹

If, according to a now famous definition, philosophy might indeed be understood as that 'discipline that involves creating concepts', then it is only in relation to the immanent logics of contemporary musical forms and practices that the plausibility and productiveness of any proposed concept must be judged.² Nonetheless, if this is to involve more than a mere terminological novelty a philosophy of modern music must also entail a moment of critical reflection upon the 'life' that inheres within those concepts which it inherits. It is thus in the criticism of the restrictions imposed by received conceptualizations that new conceptual terms may be developed, reconfiguring, in turn, the cultural field to which they relate. Moreover, to some still developing degree, such a process is in fact demanded by, and converges with, those historical transformations in the structures of social and cultural relations that mark the logics of the interlocking processes we have come to call 'globalization' and 'postcolonialism'. Modern(ist) music, it has been suggested, might well be thought to begin in Debussy's encounter with Javanese gamelan music at the Paris Exposition of 1889.³ And if the compositional forms which flowed from

this encounter can often seem to fit all too easily into a standard model of 'Orientalist' practice – though this is hardly the whole story – such a model should not in itself be taken as an excuse for prejudging the role that a recognition of cultural and *musical* difference has played, and (in changing contexts) continues to play, in the formation of musical modernisms,⁴ whether 'inside' or 'outside' the traditionally determined (and increasingly complexified) geopolitical and geophilosophical spaces of 'West' and 'non-West'.

What follows is an effort to reflect, critically, in the first part of this article, upon a certain concept – that of 'dissonance' – which has played a central role in existing 'philosophically oriented' considerations of musical modernism, most obviously in the work of Adorno, and then to attempt, more briefly, to elaborate alternate conceptual terms which might 'make us aware of new variations and unknown resonances',⁵ both in relation to the mediation of contemporary (and increasingly globalized) forms and, retrospectively, in relation to received accounts of musical modernism more generally. The central concept which, in this vein, these notes will begin to elaborate is that of *nuance*. This is a term that I adopt, and rework, from a number of sources: from the composer François Bayle's reference to a 'type of sound that attends carefully to the nuances of the material'; and from Walter Benjamin's early texts on colour, which invoke an intensive chromatic 'order consisting of an infinite range of nuances'. But, here at least, the term 'nuance' is primarily engaged in its rather elliptical presentation in the later work of Jean-François Lyotard, where it is implicitly proposed as the conceptual mediation of what Lyotard describes as an opening to 'a sort of infinity ... [which is] the distress and despair of the exact division'.⁶ It is, with certain crucial qualifications, the temporal *dynamics* of this 'distress and despair' that will be considered as a possible conceptual resource for a 'second reflec-

tion' upon the immanent logics of recent musical production.

Adorno, modernism, dissonance

As is probably already clear, in attempting to reflect philosophically upon these immanent logics, I would concur with Georgina Born, as with many others, that Adorno's work remains 'the best start that we have', if one which is often 'blind to aspects of itself'.⁷ That said, it is precisely in thinking the 'origins' of this 'blindness', as well as what is required for its 'overcoming', that I quickly part company with Born's own analysis. For while I would certainly agree, concerning the problems entailed by Adorno's undeviating identification of an 'authentic' musical modernism with the 'new music' of the second Viennese school, such forms of 'blindness' do not seem to me to result from the general concept of modernism as such, nor to be resolved by its displacement in favour of the kind of conception of 'postmodernism' elaborated by Born. Indeed, as several recent readers of Adorno – including Osborne, Zuidervart and Roberts – have asserted, part of the problem with many prevailing accounts of Adorno's work is a tendency to misconceive what is meant by 'modernism' in it, by virtue of this concept's now customary reduction to a form of 'generic-periodizing' category.⁸ Yet, for Adorno, the modernism of modern music is in fact to be 'defined by its inner qualities rather than by chronology'.⁹ Such 'qualities' are not to be elucidated by 'ideas on style' – with which something like a succeeding 'postmodernist' style might be contrasted – but, as I have argued elsewhere, are to be understood as relating to an immanently manifested temporal logic or dynamic of artistic production which is not, in principle, restricted to any fixed objective and generically defined referent.¹⁰ It is this conception that must therefore define any philosophical reflection upon the musically modern, and the specific ways in which the work 'participates in history and thus oversteps its uniqueness'.¹¹

The implications of such a reading – both for music and for cultural production in general – can apparently be drawn out in Adorno's work by focusing upon the particular significance he accords to the concept of *dissonance*, to the extent that, as Osborne argues, dissonance may well appear to be, for Adorno, the 'basic principle of modernism' itself. Dissonance is 'the seal of everything modern ... veritably an invariant of the modern', as Adorno writes.¹² What links dissonance and modernism conceptually is the sense in which the former only has 'concrete' meaning, as musical *experience*, by virtue of its non-identical relation to

tradition's ongoing determination of historical modes of harmony as 'second nature'. Dissonance therefore should not be understood, in principle at least, as designating any inherent 'property' of a constant musical referent (for example, particular intervallic pitch relations), but in fact requires a continual *renewal* of its non-identity to what is already given as 'music' within the cultural present. As Alan Dunant rightly states, 'in acquiring their intelligibility in relation to particular musical forms, dissonances have [an] *active* function'. On this basis, Adorno argues, the *dynamic* non-identity of dissonance and harmony can be thought of as 'exemplary' of that between modernity and tradition *in general*, in so far as both mark – at different levels of conceptual generality – the productive temporal logic of a *critical* encounter with the 'congealed history' immanent in what he calls 'artistic material'.¹³

It is at this point that aesthetic theory intersects, famously, with *social* theory, in Adorno's claim that the basis of art's relation to modern society is not 'the insertion of objective elements' into it, but the way in which 'the unresolved antagonisms of reality return to art works as immanent problems of form'. Artistic material is 'nothing less than the objectified and critically reflected state of the technical productive forces of an age with which any given composer is confronted'. As such, it is only in the modernist work that mimesis may 'unite with rationality without regression', in an attempt 'to aid the non-identical, which in reality is repressed by reality's compulsion to identity'. All this, I imagine, is now reasonably well known. Nonetheless, it is crucial in so far as it is this asserted isomorphism between artistic and social form (as well as philosophical form) – as 'an analogue which goes beyond mere analogy' – that provides an obvious basis for the privileging of dissonance in Adorno's own account of modernism.¹⁴ Yet, at the same time, it is, I would suggest, precisely the tendency towards a close *identification* of these two concepts – or at least the making of one the 'basic principle' for, or 'trademark' of, the other – that may also lie at the root of what is problematic about Adorno's understanding of a specifically *musical* modernism. No doubt this has to do, in part, with Adorno's personal identification with the Schoenberg School, of which he always considered himself to be a 'member'. Yet this oft-noted empirical truth does not, in itself, provide sufficient explanation for the 'blindness' to which Born refers. Rather, this requires a properly 'philosophical' (as well as 'musicological') examination of the presuppositions underlying Adorno's unswerving fidelity to Schoenbergian models of musical development, as he understood them, and

thus the roots of the conceptual resources he sought to develop through their ‘reflected immanence’. For it is, I would suggest, precisely these presuppositions which tend to produce in Adorno’s work something of a characteristic slippage between a specific (relatively limited) *musical* meaning of the term ‘dissonance’ and a more *expansive* (rather ‘looser’, even ‘metaphorical’) use of this term in relation to modernist art in general, as an expression of an alienated social reality and of the suffering subject within it; a slippage which, by virtue of a propensity to elide the musical sources of Adorno’s concepts, has tended to be passed over by most commentators on his work. This is certainly not to suggest that any extension of the term ‘dissonance’ beyond a musical reference is illegitimate. Rather, the initial problem comes, as it were, moving in the opposite direction; that is, once one returns to the issue of a philosophy of modern music itself, in so far as it tends to give an inbuilt privilege to the *specific* mode of ‘negation’ involved in the dismantling of tonality – where the non-identity of dissonance is understood in the essentially pitch-based terms of discord – and from which Schoenberg’s development of the twelve-tone row historically derives.¹⁵

Although it is not immediately obvious, it is this that finds a ‘practical’ parallel in ‘total serialism’, precisely by virtue of its self-defining move beyond the problems of pitch – and the totalizing definition of ‘new music’ in terms of the ‘negation of tonality’ that it insists upon – in so far as it is its progressive continuity with such a negation that serves to guarantee what Born describes as an ongoing ‘correct, rigorous direction of the avant-garde’ after Schoenberg.¹⁶ Nonetheless, if Born is surely right about this essentially unilinear determination, it is far less clear whether this has to do with problems internal to Adorno’s general concept of modernism itself, or, as I am suggesting, with the restrictions placed upon a philosophical account of its possible concrete forms of non-identity as a result of certain other theoretical presuppositions present in his work.

Now, it is evident that, by the beginning of the 1960s, if not earlier, serialism found itself facing an apparent series of impasses, acknowledged by almost all of its proponents. Perhaps most telling was the Hungarian composer György Ligeti’s analysis – in a paper first delivered at Darmstadt – of the essential arbitrariness of the ‘rationalistic’ forms in which the originally pitch-based twelve-tone row was extended to the other parameters of music, and by virtue of which ‘total determinacy comes to be identical with total indeterminacy’, at least experientially. As Alastair

Williams neatly summarizes: ‘There is no particular reason why a 12-note series should yield a meaningful organisation of duration [or of timbre] ... [Thus do] order and disorder map onto each other.’¹⁷ And it is in light of this apparent capitulation to a fundamentally irrational fetishization of *rationalist* construction – already noted of ‘twelve-tone rationality’ in *The Philosophy of Modern Music* – that, in a 1961 paper, Adorno frames his own intervention, in the debates going on at Darmstadt, with the famous call for a new *musique informelle* which would dispense with ‘all forms which are external or abstract’. Yet the persistent motif of a ‘return’ – to a lost moment of pre-serialist ‘free atonality’ which he dates ‘around 1910’ – despite all qualifications, only serves to indicate the depth of the historical impasse reached by Adorno himself.¹⁸ It is at this point, I am suggesting, that the limitations inherent in the conceptual constellation of modernism and dissonance may be most emphatically revealed, in a progressive incapacity to account for new historical experiences immanent at the level of musical form, even within the immediate context of post-serialism itself.

It is here, therefore, that one might begin to pursue that confrontation of historical categories with artistic experience that Adorno himself demands. Moreover, it is partially, *in response* to certain emergent historical experiences, broadly associated with this ‘context’, that the notion of a *post*-modernism has conventionally been elaborated, with – at the beginning of the 1960s – the increasing focus on problems of timbre, rhythm and dynamics, the extension of electronic music, the emergence of minimalism, as well as a renewed turn towards non-Western musical models and so-called popular forms.¹⁹ Yet, if our critical mediation of these events is to do more than remain on the level of disconnected empirical-stylistic analyses, then we need to attend, in a properly conceptual sense, to the reflected immanence of the works themselves. It is this that demands not an abandonment, but a *re-interrogation* of the concept of modernism, requiring an attention to the logics of non-identity which new ‘problems’ may themselves articulate in relation to a reconfigured cultural field.

Nuances

A brief (and rather simple) example: commenting recently on Morton Feldman’s *palais de mari* (1986), the pianist John Tilbury writes that ‘the softness of the music ... heightens consciousness and encourages attentiveness and alertness ... the performer, and the listener, become aware that the dynamic quality within

softness (so it's not just a matter of playing a "routine" *pp*) creates an extraordinary variety of sound.' Now, whatever one makes of Feldman's success or otherwise as (in Stockhausen's description) a 'specialist in music that is as slow, and as soft, as possible', the 'dynamic quality' alluded to here clearly involves an experience of non-identity in relation to standardized stratifications of 'loudness' (the 'routine *pp*').²⁰ At stake are the 'conceptual' demands made by modes of historical experience, and productive logics, which, in their 'pursuit' of 'new dimensions' of non-identity – whether in terms of dynamics, timbre, rhythm or, indeed, new 'non-tempered' harmonic relations – may well be understood as 'modernist' in form, but which it would seem inadequate to reflect upon in terms of dissonance. At the same time, this would also entail a retrospective dimension; one which would interrupt the restriction of Adorno's own dialectic of modernism to the poles of Schoenberg and Stravinsky, by calling up the names of those who would seem to have no place within it: Varèse, Harry Partch or Charles Ives, among others. For, problematic as her characteristic attempt to link this to some insurgent 'proto-postmodernism' might be, there is clearly much substance in Born's complaint that, 'aided by Schoenberg's substantial influence and pedagogic writings, it was the serialist lineage of musical modernism that became dominant [after the Second World War] ... [winning out over] other early modernist experiments, including the various forms of aesthetic reference to other musics'.²¹

Despite his own idiosyncratic claims for the idea of the postmodern, it is at this point that I want to turn to two essays by Lyotard, both written in 1987,

entitled 'Obedience' and 'After the Sublime, the State of Aesthetics'. The first begins with a meditation upon Adorno's question as to whether 'new technologies, which allow a refined ... ("rational, abstract") analysis of musical material, also allow its liberation?'²² Perhaps something of what is at stake in this dialectic of refinement and liberation can initially be brought out by returning to Ligeti's analysis. For, if the attempted extension of the twelve-note row to the other parameters of music is necessarily revealed as arbitrary in relation to the starting point proposed, it also works, as it were, to reveal the essential arbitrariness of that starting point itself. Ligeti cites Luciano Berio on the concomitant 'suppression of discrete scale degrees and intervals', as a means of moving forward, and suggests that, for himself, 'the 12-note method ... has to be liquidated in order that [a new form of compositional] control can be exercised in the changed situation'.²³ Yet such liquidation also puts into question *any* idea of a 'natural fit between matter and form' in general, to utilize Lyotard's own philosophical terms, in so far as the very putative 'mastery' of the 'sound continuum' may be said to suggest simultaneously the arbitrariness of any specific division of its various parameters, including those sought by serialism.²⁴ (Hence, perhaps, Berio's own posited turn towards alternately conceived questions of 'sonic quality and register'.) It is this that might be seen to be registered, for example, in Boulez's quasi-structuralist assertion, in an essay from 1968, that 'language, whether musical or any other, is for me a convention – and any convention implies artificial means'.²⁵ Moreover, in this sense, it might perhaps indeed seem plausible to argue, as Lyotard does, that,



in the face of such a recognition, ‘the analysis of the regulation of pitch leaves as its remainder only the material, the enigmatic presence of vibration’; what he designates, with an explicit nod to the writings of Varèse, as its *liberation*.²⁶

Yet, it is at precisely this point that one needs to qualify such an emancipatory rhetoric. For this can easily risk drifting into a simple utopianism, envisaging a ‘matter’ totally liberated from all formal ‘domestication’; a utopianism which would tend to reinstate its own modes of ‘naturalization’ as an erasure of historical relationships. It is for this reason that what, in his own thinking of ‘material’, Lyotard terms *nuance* must be reconfigured as itself a radically *historical* and *social* category. In fact, Lyotard’s articulation of this concept is fairly brief, Against the ‘identity-card’, abstracted for the ‘note’ within traditional technology, scoring, and performance ideals, nuance, he writes, ‘introduce[s] a sort of infinity... Nuance [is] the distress and despair of the exact division and thus the clear composition of sounds and colours according to graded scales and harmonic temperaments’: ‘[T]he point is to make felt ... what is insensible in the spatial and/or temporal sensory field, what is ... inaudible.’ Nuance is that which – ‘for at least “an instant” [which] cannot be counted’ – escapes the determination of existing specification. The *experience* of the nuance is, in other words, an experience of the *non-identical*.²⁷

Such experience is, nonetheless, precisely historical, and it is in this respect that Adorno’s work might offer a partial corrective to Lyotard’s rather sketched presentation. For if the experience, or ‘perception’, of the apparently ‘imperceptible’ nuance – whether in the spheres of timbre, rhythm or dynamics – emerges from the ‘distress and despair of the exact division’, this is still dependent on that already given (‘conventional’) division of the continuum itself. The nuance which ‘escaped’ division *altogether* – as an abstract willing away of social and historical determinations – would cease to be a nuance, would cease to be open to experience. Moreover, this is historical in so far as the division itself is a product of the historical tendency of material, subject to a variation which it nonetheless strives to conceal in the construction of a second nature. The *critical* momentum of the nuance emerges in laying bare the historical relationships which constitute the illusion of identity. (It is this that marks its proximity to the concept of dissonance, as well as its excess.)

Lyotard’s difficulties here, it should be said, relate to his own characteristic (and ultimately disastrous) attempt to read this, philosophically, back into the

terms of the Kantian category of the sublime. A better model, as I implied earlier, might be Benjamin’s early attempt to elaborate the opening to an *intensive* and *immanent* infinity that he associates with colour, although this would require more analysis.²⁸ At any rate, it can at least be said that Benjamin’s conception would seem to correspond better to, for example, what Keith Potter describes in La Monte Young’s work as an ‘obsession with exploring the *innards* of a complex sound continuum’; or to, say, the processes that mark a piece like Stockhausen’s 1964 work *Mikrophonie I*, with its sustained exploration of the timbral range afforded by a single, electronically processed gong.²⁹

Of course, as this latter example suggests, nowhere is this dynamic of intensive extension more pertinent than in relation to the development of electronic means of musical production. And if I have largely stuck, up to this point, with the context of post-serialism, in order to draw out the aporias and impasses of Adorno’s own account of musical modernism, this is just as (if not more) significant in relation to forms outside of the conventionally delineated ‘art music’ tradition. That said, returning to Tilbury’s comments on *palais de mari*, one might argue that, to some degree, Feldman’s piece is precisely defined by its pushing up against the limits imposed by the technological possibilities of the piano itself, even if, famously, it was its own capacity for dynamic variation which, in part, allowed the piano to supplant earlier keyboard instruments. Today, it is above all electronic sound production, and amplification, which have opened up new technical possibilities for exploring extremes of dynamics. If the loudness of rock music, or much contemporary techno (with the direct bodily impact of its sub-bass patterns) is perhaps the most obvious example of this, the capacity for what David Toop calls – in relation to the use of contact mikes and studio processing in the work of Thomas Köner – ‘threshold sounds’ on the very fringes of audibility is also of considerable significance.³⁰ It is in this regard that we might then go back to Lyotard’s initial ‘Adornian’ question: to what extent do ‘new technologies, which allow a refined ... (“rational, abstract”) analysis of musical material, also allow its liberation?’ – whilst seeking to elaborate further the social dimensions that might be at stake in this.

Once again, the dilemmas of post-serialism are revealing. Williams argues that something like Stockhausen’s early electronic work ‘can be seen as a protraction of [the] impulse to maintain absolute control over the parameters of music’.³¹ This is no doubt true, up to a point, but this very dynamic of ‘explora-

tion' generates its own new *dialectics* of mimesis and construction, which, as I suggested above, cannot in fact simply be resolved on the side of 'absolute control'. Some of the complexities of this dialectic can be gauged in the dynamic of an ever-more reduced refinement of 'serial organization' that Boulez once envisaged electronics opening up: '[W]e shall be able, within a serial space, to multiply the series by itself. That is, if between *a* and *b* of an initial series we can express the series in reduction, this would give a great expansion of the sound-material to be used.'³² If this seeks to extend 'control' of the 'sound-material', it also raises the question of where such a process of simultaneous immanent expansion could ever, logically, come to a halt. At any rate, 'nuance', even as it emerges from it, must always escape it. That is to say, the impulse to 'precision' always also confronts, and itself 'contains', the 'excess' of that precision, the 'distress and despair of the exact division' which 'defines' the non-identical moment of the nuance, and which it may serve (knowingly or otherwise) to articulate critically in so far as it is dynamically produced through a confrontation with the historical sedimentations (including those of 'scientific analysis' and of technological production) immanent to artistic material. As Lyotard puts it, in a rather Heideggerian vein, 'music reveals a destination which ... exceeds the scope of techno-scientific research envisaged technically, yet thanks to which [it] is revealed'.³³

A great deal more needs to be said of this dialectic, particularly in relation to the increasing focus on timbre (over pitch) which it would seem to generate. Moreover, as indicated above, this can no longer be restricted (if it ever could) to a post-serialist (or 'post-Cageian') 'art music' development, but must be seen to intersect with, for example, the 'appropriations' of musical technology at work in rock music (the electric guitar) and various genres of contemporary 'electronica', as well as, more generally, what Gilroy defines as 'the interface of science and aesthetics which is the required starting point of contemporary black cultural expression and the digital technology of its social dissemination and reproduction'.³⁴ At stake in such 'appropriations' would be the capacity of music, from a range of different 'traditions', to register immanently the *tensions* that such an 'interface' entails, as well as its 'internalized' relations to the imperatives of commodity production.

Bernard Stiegler has observed that 'the pianist [for example] has an instrumental knowledge which someone who is not a pianist does not – including the instrument's maker ... The "knowing" pianist

has "appropriated" [the] kind of expropriation that constitutes the musical instrument as such.'³⁵ In the more recent context of electronic means of musical production, the same kinds of 'instrumental knowledge' also remain key. Indeed such appropriation constitutes one significant way in which the non-identical moment of the nuance is 'produced' in its critical and dynamic 'distressing' of the divisions which musical instrument design itself imposes, precisely to the extent that musical instruments themselves 'exist at an intersection of material, social, and cultural worlds'. If, then, whether in relation to timbre or dynamics, and in the light of the convergence of 'electronics and internal musical developments', the 'invasion of nuances' is to be understood as an immanent process of 'enlargement' of musical perception – the rendering audible of the inaudible – such enlarging is both a historical and a social experience in which the 'physical and historical dimensions mutually intersect' in a particular configuration of the *new*.³⁶ Furthermore, as Gilroy's work suggests, this may well be seen to take on new significance in the context of an emergent *global* modernity – partly driven by the 'same' technological advancements that certain contemporary music immanently engages – in which non-capitalist and previously colonial societies are progressively integrated into the accumulative structures of a transnational capitalism, with evident ongoing 'musical' repercussions, both inside and outside the traditionally determined borders of the 'West'.

Occidentalism, non-identity and the modern

The coming 'global public sphere', Susan Buck-Morss suggests in a recent interview, 'will be a visual culture – or musical, perhaps, but not dominantly print'. The appearance of music here as something of an afterthought is symptomatic, and itself reflects, I suspect, the established disciplinary priorities of Western academia. Yet it seems undeniable that 'the economic and cultural correlates of aesthetic appropriation through commodification are very highly developed in music in comparison with such fields as postcolonial literature or the globalization of the ethnic visual arts'.³⁷ If this historically converges with, for example, the complex spaces of flows which have long marked the extraordinary African musical diaspora across Europe and both North and South America, and which have few equivalents with regard to other cultural forms, it also indicates a movement and mobility which has evidently been intensified in recent times. While this has undoubtedly provided much fodder for

the contemporary culture industries, it has also produced new forms, from 'outside' the traditional sites of Western modernism, whose own immanent logics of non-identity, with all too clear social implications, are formed through the unique confrontations that a historically new situation produces; confrontations for which the term 'World Music' – part marketing tool and part ethnological anachronism – is all too obviously inadequate.

At the very least this suggests the need for an ongoing attempt to meet, for example, Gilroy's demand that we 'clarify some of the distinctive attributes of black cultural forms which are both modern and modernist', resulting from the African musical diaspora, but this will also have to take place within an increasingly expanded field no longer restricted to the conventional geographical parameters of the West, or even to those well-established 'countercultures of modernity' with which Gilroy is himself concerned. If, as Tomlinson reminds us, it was indeed in the context of a late-eighteenth-century 'philosophical' establishment of Western modernity that a new concept of music first 'came to function as a kind of limit-case of European uniqueness in world history' – meaning that 'modern musicology, and not just ethnomusicology [is] a discipline erected on propositions of cultural difference' – nonetheless, as Naoki Sakai asserts, 'there is no inherent reason why the West/non-West opposition should [continue to] determine the geographical perspective of modernity except for the fact that it definitely serves to establish the unity of the West.'³⁸

One could think here, in a rather different vein, of the 'international' nature of contemporary 'popular' electronic music by comparison to earlier forms of rock, and the 'countercultural' forms that it, too, may contain. For while, in the case of rock, a clear hierarchy was early established between an innovative 'centre' (North America and Britain) and various local peripheries, whose products were largely understood (not least by their 'home' audiences) as mere copies or mildly exoticized variants, increasingly no such clear cultural geography seems to be present in the case of newer forms. Of course this is to simplify somewhat – there are forms of rock which don't fit this model (Tropicalia in Brazil during the late 1960s, for example), and techno still partially retains its privileged sites (Detroit, Chicago, Berlin). Equally, one needs to be aware of the ongoing 'disproportionate influence of the West as cultural forum ... as place of public exhibition and discussion, as place of judgement, and as market-place'. Nonetheless, music, perhaps more than any other form of cultural produc-

tion, does seem to point to a radical 'geographical' expansion of the concept of modernism's potential 'denotation'; an expansion which follows from the emergent global generalization of the temporal dynamics of 'modernity' itself, with (for better or worse) cultural effects on both non-West and West.³⁹

In *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, Max Weber relates that 'rational, harmonious music' – by which he means *tempered* music – is 'known only in the Occident'.⁴⁰ One might note, in this respect, that just as, say, La Monte Young, Ligeti or Ornette Coleman work, in the West, to open up the theoretically infinite non-identity of the nuances within the harmonic series, beyond the 'exact divisions' of tradition, so equal temperament – via the factory-installed tunings of the piano, the accordion and the commercial synthesizer, as well as globally distributed tapes and CDs – proves to be one of Western capitalism's most successful (and destructive) cultural exports into the new Empire of global capitalism, seeking to impose an effective demand that local forms undergo 'alterations' such that they may be represented in the global marketplace. Indeed, it is precisely this generalization of 'rational, harmonious music' that provides the critical social context, in some sense, for the productive logic of the artists cited, and for their own turn towards forms and practices to be found in non-Western musics.⁴¹ This is a turn which can undoubtedly work to inscribe its own contemporary forms of Orientalism, its own Rousseauian myths of an unchanging, pre-reflective voice of nature located outside the Occident – as has been expertly analysed by John Corbett.⁴² But, in its most significant forms, it can also serve to articulate the tension produced by the *non-identity* of different musical structures and conventions. Moreover, this clearly involves 'modernisms' that have emerged, uniquely, on the other side, as it were, of any traditional West/non-West divide, such as Japanese noise music (Merzbow, Keiji Haino), and that suggest theoretical and historical complexities of a genuinely unprecedented kind. This should require a reflection upon the different modalities at stake in, as Vieira de Carvalho puts it, 'structural fecundation by a musical Other', and 'collage as colonial appropriation'.⁴³ Yet, it is precisely such a distinction – never of course absolute – that dominant conceptions of 'post-modernist' eclecticism fail to reflect upon, without, at any rate, covertly resorting to an implicit concept of modernism. Moreover, the danger implicit in such unreflective conceptions of eclecticism is a familiar fantasy that art itself might overcome the contradictions and divisions of society, where an 'aesthetic

pluralism' (across a now global field) works to erase the differential musical *and* social relations that it simultaneously implies; a danger that finds its musical corollary in something like the 'utopian interzone' of Jon Hassell's 'Fourth World Music', where 'bits of non-Western music' are simply grafted onto 'Western structures' (of harmony and rhythm), burying 'the intricate hegemonic relations' that are 'inherent in such a programme'.⁴⁴

There is a great deal more that could be said at this point, but I want to come back, finally, to Adorno and to the conceptual constellation of modernism and dissonance which I have placed in question above. For it is in light of this, and of the proposed alternate concept of *nuance*, that one might return, as a last example here, to the presuppositions apparent within the much-disputed readings of jazz, particularly given the now general opinion that certain jazz works should, contra Adorno, be considered as properly 'modernist' in form. The question here becomes one of how such 'modernism' is to be understood. Once again, predominant accounts tend to approach this in terms of a periodizable 'stylistic' similarity defined in relation to a supposedly 'canonical' original. Thus, the forms or techniques of figures like Armstrong, Parker or Coltrane are 'redeemed' as 'modernist' in character through critical parallels made to the collages of Picasso, the parodies of Joyce, or the 'Africanesque' sculptures of Brancusi.⁴⁵ Yet, as I have argued, such a 'generic-periodizing' definition is itself problematic, at least with regard to its ineliminable tension with the temporal logic inscribed within the *concept* of modernism itself. At any rate, given this, it clearly cannot serve to counter Adorno's essential *musical* arguments concerning jazz. For, despite the blatant prejudices involved (and the spurious Freudianisms which often constitute their theoretical expression) these are not *simply* reflective of a contingent Arnoldian distaste. Rather they follow directly from the restrictions inherent within the conceptual identification of dissonance and modernism, in so far as it is this, it seems to me, that most clearly allowed Adorno not only to ignore the relative importance accorded to timbral and rhythmic innovations but also to *misrecognise* the very harmonic 'nuances' at stake in jazz, as nothing more than mere repetitions of developments already established in the nineteenth-century classical tradition. Thus, for example, the 'newness' of the so-called 'flattened fifth', characteristic of bebop harmonies emergent in the 1950s, can only be (mis)read by Adorno as replicating the far earlier incorporation of the 'tritone', as a 'dissonant' interval, which took

place as part of the negation of classical tonality. Yet, as Berendt points out, while these may well *look* like a process of 'what traditional European functional harmonies would call "diminution", it is, in principle, a different process'; a process relating to the immanent logic of what jazz musicians and critics call 'blue notes'.⁴⁶

Ironically, it is in fact precisely such a misreading which tends to be repeated in the work of many of those who would seek to defend the modernism of jazz against Adorno's critique. Thus, for example, Witkin writes that while 'the label "jazz" once applied to any dance-band music', today it 'encompasses' avant-garde 'composers' like Ornette Coleman who have 'assimilated many of the lessons of atonal composition'. Leaving aside the slightly dubious terminology of 'composition' employed here, the central problem with such a defence is that it concedes everything to Adorno's restricted account of modernism; placing jazz in a perpetual position of playing 'catch up' to the 'lessons' already learnt within 'art music'. Yet this simply does not correspond to the logic of non-identity that defines someone like Coleman's own relation to the jazz tradition, which, rather than marking any 'assimilation' of a model of atonality already developed elsewhere, is more akin to a turning of 'the whole scale into blue notes'.⁴⁷ My claim here is that it is this that constitutes the modernism of Coleman's work, and not any supposed stylistic proximity to canonical forms. This would go, too, for the appearance of 'imprecise pitch' in the playing of Coleman or other 'free jazz' musicians such as Albert Ayler. For such 'imprecision' is only such in relation to the 'precise' divisions codified in the instrumental technology and notational systems of 'European' music. To put it another way, what appears, in the modernist forms of jazz, as 'imprecision' is nothing less than the critical articulation of *nuance*: the production of a non-identity to received musical material which opens up to an 'infinite continuum' of such non-identical 'imprecisions'. Berendt cites Coleman's assertion that 'an F in a tune called "Peace" should not sound the same as an F in a context that is supposed to express sadness.' As Berendt comments, this is 'a blues musician's concept'. However, this is not simply a question – any more than the blues itself is – of mere 'emotional' impressionism, it relates to the historical structures and material of a quite different musical 'system'. The notion that 'all Fs ... must have an identical pitch ... merely illustrates the influence of the European tradition'.⁴⁸ At the same time, it is this which does seem to allow for a convergence with certain logics in post-serialism,

as traced above. (For example, Boulez concedes – and contrasts this, in somewhat Orientalist fashion, to the non-tempered ‘modes’ of non-Western musics – that modern Western harmony and instrumentation have tended towards a ‘standardization of intervals and of sounds in general ... If, for instance, I use a D or an E, it will be a D or an E that is absolute, not relative, and will have no individual characteristics.’⁴⁹) And it is, of course, precisely such convergences – given concrete form in many contemporary experimental musics – which allow for the suggestion that the problematic of ‘nuance’, as the ‘distress and despair of the exact division’, may (unlike, finally, dissonance) connect the modernisms of both jazz and ‘art music’ at such moments, as well as the developing interac-



tions between them (in a way that, incidentally, goes far beyond the cultural field of Lyotard’s own, fairly conventionally limited presentation). Nonetheless, one always needs, still, to register critically the different immanent logics by which different musics may appear to arrive at such similar concrete musical ‘problems’; and this as part of a more general recognition of the *tensions* (as well as connections) which persist between the ongoing formation of diverse, ‘local’ cultural forms and ultimately global processes of ‘transculturation’.

As the great Afro-American improviser Leo Smith asserts, in a self-published pamphlet from 1973, it is quite simply a mistake to imagine that the blues ‘is pitch-oriented’ in a ‘classical’ sense. ‘Rather, the blues

is determined by its sound [timbre] and its rhythm, and not by its harmonic function.’ As such, any ‘modernism’ which would develop from such ‘orientations’ – such as certain forms of jazz – should scarcely be expected to develop along the same unilinear path of ‘progression’ as modernisms developing from quite different musical ‘foundations’. What they have in common is not some set of determinate musical ‘properties’, but a certain temporal logic of negation, an affirmative articulation of the non-identity of modernity and tradition, which has historically marked their ‘belonging’ to certain (Western) societies, as well as their capacity to test its dominant forms and divisions. In failing to hear the distinct nuances of jazz, and of its *own* logics of non-identity, Adorno thus failed to recognize the way in which the ‘unresolved antagonisms of reality’ returned to it, too, ‘as immanent problems of form’. For the blue notes and ‘imprecise’ pitchings which the blues bequeaths as musical ‘problems’ to jazz (and, indeed, certain forms of rock) are themselves formed through a developing and productive cultural struggle between diasporic African forms and the ‘exact divisions’ of equal temperament which Western instruments, like the fretted guitar, work to impose. (A similar thing could be said with regard to aspects of rhythm.) This is not, of course, to imply that something like the blues itself, at least in its original ‘rural’ forms, should be understood as *modernist* (although it is certainly ‘modern’). Rather, it seems to me, jazz becomes modernist at the point at which the nuances of this non-identity come to be *critically* articulated and pursued according to its own immanent modes of negation. (Bebop, with its critical relation to the commercial imperatives of ‘swing’, would seem an obvious turning point in this respect.) It is in this sense that I think, for example, of what is indicated by Le Roi Jones’s description of the ‘wilfully harsh, anti-assimilationist *sound*’ of free jazz.⁵⁰

Contra dominant definitions of postmodernism, what is needed therefore is not so much a defence of heteronomous music, as Adorno defines it – though this is not without interest – but rather a consideration of the way in which musics, such as jazz, with roots outside of the so-called Western ‘art music’ tradition have for some time now developed their own modes of autonomy, even as they also increasingly come into contact with other ‘traditions’ and interpenetrate with them in a variety of ways. For autonomy is not identical to what is called ‘high culture’, even if Adorno’s social theory tended to promote their convergence. (This issue is particularly confused in music studies by virtue of an assumed identity between the historical

development of ‘autonomy’ and the specific ‘classical’ idea of an ‘absolute’ – non-vocalized, non-representational – music, which may also, via the fixity of the score, be abstracted from any contingencies of context.) Indeed, the ongoing *renewal* of a genuine autonomy – as opposed to what Adorno terms, in *The Philosophy of Modern Music*, a ‘hermetic’ art reified by aestheticism – is itself dependent upon a continual critical technical engagement with what is already given, as immanently registered within artistic practice; a process which is as much at work in (and between) certain forms of jazz, rock or electronica, as in the ill-named ‘classical’ tradition.⁵¹

The ‘question posed’ by every modernist artwork, Adorno suggests, ‘is how, under the domination of the universal, a particular is in any way possible’. Yet this does not point to a simple redundancy of conceptuality, but insists, all the more strongly, as a condition of drawing out its social and historical ‘substance’, upon art’s ‘elective affinity’ with concepts; ‘although admittedly’, Adorno continues, ‘to those whose telos is the particular’.⁵² It is in this vein that I posit here the concept of ‘nuance’, as a determinate theoretical negation of the historical conceptual constellation of modernism and dissonance, and, as such, a concept that might reveal ‘unknown resonances’ in the variegated historical character that defines the ongoing critical work of a musical modernism. Moreover, it is in this light that Adorno’s own conception of the productive logic of modernism, as a process at once artistic and social, is still so crucial – as a ‘starting point’ at least – because it refuses to give up on the necessity of a ‘second reflection’ through which the social substance of musical forms and practices may be theoretically registered and judged. But such reflection – the condition for a renewed philosophy of modern music today – is marked by its own radical historicity which breaks apart Adorno’s anxious restrictions of such a dynamic of non-identity. Finally, it is by music’s *own* reflection upon the material of which it is made, and the divisions that traverse it, that it confronts the compulsions of reality.

Notes

1. Theodor Adorno, *The Philosophy of Modern Music*, trans. Anne G. Mitchell and Wesley V. Blomster, Continuum, London and New York, 2003, p. 4; Theodor Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, trans. Robert Hullot-Kentor, Athlone, London, 1997, p. 341.
2. See Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, trans. Graham Burchell and Hugh Tomlinson, Verso, London and New York, 1994, p. 5.
3. See, for example, David Toop, *Ocean of Sound: Aether Talk, Ambient Sound and Imaginary Worlds*, Serpent’s

Tail, London and New York, 1995, pp. 16–22; and Paul Griffiths’s now standard account, *Modern Music*, Thames & Hudson, London and New York, 1978, pp. 7, 124.

4. For an extremely interesting intervention here, see Jann Pasler, ‘Race, Orientalism, and Distinction in the Wake of the “Yellow Peril”’, in Georgina Born and David Hesmondhalgh, eds, *Western Music and Its Others: Difference, Representation and Appropriation in Music*, University of California Press, Berkeley, Los Angeles and London, 2000, pp. 86–118.
5. Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, p. 28.
6. Francois Bayle, cited in *OHM: The Early Gurus of Electronic Music, 1948–1980*, Ellipsis Arts, New York, 2000, p. 62; Walter Benjamin, ‘A Child’s View of Colour’ (1914–15), trans. Rodney Livingstone, in *Selected Writings, Volume One, 1913–1926*, ed. Marcus Bullock and Michael W. Jennings, Harvard University Press, Cambridge MA, 1996, p. 50; Jean-François Lyotard, ‘After the Sublime, the State of Aesthetics’, in *The Inhuman: Reflections on Time*, trans. Geoffrey Bennington and Rachel Bowlby, Polity, Cambridge, 1991, p. 140. Peter Osborne has pointed out to me that the term ‘nuance’ in Lyotard, and possibly in Benjamin also, may well have a Bergsonian provenance. In the case of the former this could, one might speculate, have come via Deleuze’s 1956 essay on Bergson, which proposes ‘the logic [*raison*] of nuance’ as a means to thinking ‘internal difference as such’, ‘difference itself’, as against ‘the dialectic of contradiction’. See Gilles Deleuze, ‘Bergson’s Conception of Difference’, trans. Melissa McMahon, in John Mullarkey, ed., *The New Bergson*, Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1999, pp. 42–65.
7. Georgina Born, ‘Music, Modernism and Signification’, in Andrew Benjamin and Peter Osborne, eds, *Thinking Art: Beyond Traditional Aesthetics*, ICA, London, 1991, p. 174.
8. See, for example, Peter Osborne, ‘Adorno and the Metaphysics of Modernism: The Problem of a “Postmodern” Art’, in Andrew Benjamin, ed., *The Problem of Modernity: Adorno and Benjamin*, Routledge, London and New York, 1989; Lambert Zuidervaart, *Adorno’s Aesthetic Theory: The Redemption of Illusion*, MIT Press, Cambridge MA, 1991, esp. ch. 2; and John Roberts, ‘After Adorno: Art, Autonomy and Critique’, *Historical Materialism* 7, Winter 2000, pp. 221–39.
9. Adorno, *The Philosophy of Modern Music*, p. 4.
10. David Cunningham, ‘A Time for Dissonance and Noise: On Adorno, Music and the Concept of Modernism’, *Angelaki: Journal of the Theoretical Humanities*, vol. 8, no. 1, 2003, pp. 62–3. This first section of the present essay seeks to extend the analysis begun in this article.
11. Adorno, *The Philosophy of Modern Music*, p. 358.
12. Osborne, ‘Adorno and the Metaphysics of Modernism’, p. 37; Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 15. That this has a more general relevance for broadly ‘philosophical’ accounts of ‘modernist’ cultural production is suggested by the role that a certain concept of dissonance, explicitly drawn from Adorno’s work, plays in the readings of the visual arts to be found in the so-called ‘new aestheticism’. See, for example, the reading of Pollock’s paintings in T.J. Clark, *Farewell to an Idea: Episodes from a History of Modernism*, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1999, pp. 336–42. A tracing of this use of a concept of dissonance – abstracted be-

- yond its roots in Adorno's specific criticism of musical works – might give further substance to the critical analysis of Clark's 'historicizing' of modernism 'as a lost object' carried out in, for example, John Roberts, 'On Autonomy and the Avant-Garde', *Radical Philosophy* 103, September/October 2000, pp. 25–8.
13. Alan Dunant, *The Conditions of Music*, SUNY Press, Albany NY, 1984, p. 62 (my emphasis); Theodor Adorno, 'Vers une Musique Informelle', in *Quasi una Fantasia: Essays on Modern Music*, trans. Rodney Livingstone, Verso, London and New York, 1992, p. 281.
 14. Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 6; 'Vers une Musique Informelle', p. 281; *Aesthetic Theory*, pp. 20, 4; Theodor Adorno, *Hegel: Three Studies*, trans. Shierry Weber Nicholsen, MIT Press, Cambridge MA, 1993, p. 136.
 15. Schoenberg's theoretical works are dominated by an account of the historical development of harmony. It is against the background of this that he defines the practices of his own 'school' in terms of 'the emancipation of dissonance'. Something of Schoenberg's own essential traditionalism can be recognized, however, in the claim that dissonances 'are merely more remote consonances in the series of overtones'. Arnold Schoenberg, *Structural Functions of Harmony* (1948), ed. Leonard Stein, Faber, London, 1983, p. 193. This is a conception that, for obvious reasons (given the homology with social form he wants to maintain), Adorno goes to some lengths to counter. See *The Philosophy of Modern Music*, pp. 85–6.
 16. Georgina Born, *Rationalizing Culture: IRCAM, Boulez and the Institutionalization of the Avant-Garde*, California University Press, Berkeley, Los Angeles and London, 1995, p. 50. See also Cunningham, 'A Time for Dissonance and Noise', pp. 65–7. The term 'total serialism' relates to the theories and practices of various composers after the Second World War who sought to extend Schoenberg's use of the twelve-tone row or series to the musical dimensions of rhythm, duration, dynamics and timbre. It was the various issues surrounding this idea that were the major topics of debate at the famous summer schools at the Kranichstein Institute in Darmstadt, from the early 1950s, which Adorno attended.
 17. Gyorgy Ligeti, 'Metamorphoses of Musical Form', in Robert P. Morgan, ed., *Source Readings in Musical History: The Twentieth Century*, W.W. Norton, New York and London, 1998, p. 113; Alastair Williams, 'Mimesis and Construction in the Work of Boulez and Cage', in Benjamin and Osborne, eds, *Thinking Art*, pp. 148–9. It is this arbitrariness that is revealed, for example, in Stockhausen's *Formel* for small orchestra (1951), which simply uses a scale of twelve 'durations' scored in conventional notational forms.
 18. Adorno, 'Vers une Musique Informelle', pp. 272–5.
 19. As well as the work of Born, see also various essays in Judy Lochhead and Joseph Auner, eds, *Postmodern Music/Postmodern Thought*, Routledge, London and New York, 2002. The notion of a 'new musicology' has, more generally, tended to be closely linked to the reciprocal idea of a musical postmodernism.
 20. John Tilbury, programme notes for *Confessions of a Piano-Player*, concert at Leeds Town Hall, 10 July 2003; Karlheinz Stockhausen, *Stockhausen on Music*, ed. Robin Maconie, Marion Boyars, London, 1989, p. 52.
 21. Georgina Born, introduction to Born and Hesmondhalgh, *Western Music*, p. 15.
 22. Jean-François Lyotard, 'Obedience', in *The Inhuman*, p. 166.
 23. Ligeti, 'Metamorphoses', pp. 107, n. 2, 109.
 24. Lyotard, 'After the Sublime', p. 139.
 25. Pierre Boulez, 'Where Are We Now?', in *Orientations*, trans. Martin Cooper, Faber, London, 1986, p. 459.
 26. Lyotard, 'Obedience', p. 171. See Edgard Varèse, 'The Liberation of Sound', in Morgan, ed., *Source Readings*, pp. 69–76.
 27. Lyotard, 'After the Sublime', p. 140; 'Obedience', pp. 175–6; 'After the Sublime', p. 140.
 28. Benjamin suggests, if only figuratively, a certain basis for such a connection: 'For each basic colour there is an octave through to the ninth, and so forth on an ever more diversified scale.' Walter Benjamin, 'Aphorisms on Imagination and Colour' (1914–15), in *Selected Writings, Volume One*, p. 48. Such possible links between a philosophy of modern music and certain conceptualizations of colour might also be related to Varèse's conceptions of a musical 'prismatic deformation', as well as to the writings of the American composer Harry Partch, who constructed, from the 1930s onwards, his own instruments capable of playing a dramatically (intensively and immanently) expanded non-tempered scale: 'Consider the writer of music ... There are no shades of C-sharp, no shades of red, for him'. Harry Partch, 'Patterns of Music' (1940), in Morgan, ed., *Source Readings in Musical History*, p. 177.
 29. Keith Potter, *Four Musical Minimalists*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2000, p. 12.
 30. See Toop, *Ocean of Sound*, p. 255.
 31. Williams, 'Mimesis and Construction', p. 147. Lyotard's reference to a critical 'remainder' which would consist only of 'the material, the enigmatic presence of vibration' probably in fact relates most directly to Stockhausen's experiments at Cologne during the late 1950s, which 'revealed' to him that the 'four basic components of music – pitch, timbre, rhythm and form – could all be seen as facets of the same phenomenon, that of vibration'. See Griffiths, *Modern Music*, pp. 159–60; and Stockhausen, *Stockhausen on Music*, pp. 91–6.
 32. Boulez, 'The System Exposed', in *Orientations*, pp. 141–2.
 33. Lyotard, 'Obedience', pp. 167–8.
 34. Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness*, Verso, London and New York, 1993, p. 77.
 35. Bernard Stiegler and Jacques Derrida, *Echographies of Television*, trans. Jennifer Bajorek, Polity, Cambridge, 2002, p. 110. The piano, too, is of course a form of technology; one in fact closely linked in its development to the industrial processes made possible by the precision metal lathe, which allowed, for the first time, precision (tempered) tuning on a mass production scale.
 36. Kevin Dawe, 'The Cultural Study of Musical Instruments', in Martin Clayton, Trevor Herbert and Richard Middleton, eds, *The Cultural Study of Music*, Routledge, New York and London, 2003, p. 275; Adorno, 'Music and New Music', in *Quasi una Fantasia*, p. 266.
 37. Susan Buck-Morss, *Thinking Past Terror*, Verso, London and New York, 2003, p. 132; Georgina Born, introduction to Born and Hesmondhalgh, eds, *Western Music and its Others*, p. 44.
 38. Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic*, p. 73; Gary Tomlinson, 'Musicology, Anthropology, History', in Clayton et al.,

- eds, *Cultural Study of Music*, pp. 32, 41; Naoki Sakai, cited in Peter Osborne, *The Politics of Time: Modernity and Avant-Garde*, Verso, London and New York, 1995, p. 16.
39. Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, Routledge, London and New York, 1994, p. 21; and see Peter Osborne, 'Modernism as Translation', in *Philosophy in Cultural Theory*, Routledge, London and New York, 2000, pp. 53–62.
 40. Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, trans. Talcott Parsons, Unwin University Books, London, 1930, pp. 14–15. It is on this basis that Weber thus relates the music of the Occident to 'rational, systematic science'.
 41. See for example the account of Ornette Coleman's musical encounter with the Moroccan Master Musicians of Joujouka in John Litweiler, *Ornette Coleman: A Harmolodic Life*, William Morrow, New York, 1992, pp. 151–2.
 42. See John Corbett, 'Experimental Oriental: New Music and Other Others', in Born and Hesmondhalgh, eds, *Western Music*, pp. 163–86. Drawing on Said and Fabian, Corbett discusses the 'conceptual Orientalism' of Cage – with its reference to the 'timeless emotions' of Eastern music and thought – as well as the early minimalist work of La Monte Young, Steve Reich and others. Nonetheless, Corbett is very careful to insist upon distinctions here, between a kind of 'contemporary chinoiserie' and the ways in which composers like Young or Henry Cowell, rather than merely 'reference' Indian or African musics, work to develop their own music 'out of them, developing new instrumental techniques' and thus approaching 'certain entrenched aspects of Western harmony anew' (p. 169).
 43. Mário Vieira de Carvalho, "'New Music" between Search for Identity and Autopoiesis', *Theory, Culture and Society*, vol. 16, no. 4, 1999, p. 133 n. 6. Vieira da Carvalho cites both Debussy and Luigi Nono as representative of the 'intercultural influence' at stake in the former.
 44. Corbett, 'Experimental Oriental', pp. 175–6.
 45. See, for example, Alfred Appel, *Jazz Modernism: From Ellington and Armstrong to Matisse and Joyce*, Random House, New York, 2003.
 46. Joachim E. Berendt, *The Jazz Book*, Paladin, London, 1984, p. 160. See also Cunningham, 'A Time for Dissonance and Noise', pp. 66–7.
 47. Robert Witkin, *Adorno on Music*, Routledge, London and New York, 1998, p. 199; Berendt, *The Jazz Book*, p. 124.
 48. Berendt, *The Jazz Book*, p. 124.
 49. Boulez, 'Where Are We Now?', p. 46.
 50. Leo Smith, 'Creative Music and the AACM', in Robert Walser, ed., *Keeping Time: Readings in Jazz History*, Oxford University Press, Oxford and New York, 1999, p. 320; Le Roi Jones, *Blues People*, Morrow, New York, 1963, p. 181 (my emphasis).
 51. See, for example, the interesting argument made for a reading of contemporary electronica in terms of its autonomy – while also acknowledging the dangers of a 'hedonistic' or quasi-scientistic hermeticism – in Dave Clarke, 'Musical Autonomy Revisited', in Clayton et al., eds, *Cultural Study of Music*, pp. 169–70. I think most of all here of the nuances produced by Oval, Pole, Autechre, or the various contemporary artists gathered together on the *Clicks & Cuts* compilations, with their fascination with the 'glitches', 'flaws' and unintended design 'faults' of digital technologies. In Sascha Kösch's words, non-identity appears here in the 'movements from one to zero made audible to and from a computer-

Centre for Research in Modern European Philosophy 7th Annual Conference

Continental drift?

Modern European philosophy in Britain today

Friday and Saturday 14–15 May 2004

Gustav Tuck/A.V. Hill Lecture Theatres, UCL, Gower Street, London WC1

speakers include

Miguel de Beistegui (Warwick)
 Andrew Bowie (Royal Holloway)
 Howard Caygill (Goldsmiths)
 Simon Critchley (New School, NY)
 Peter Dews (Essex)
 Alexander García Düttmann (Goldsmiths)
 Joanna Hodge (Manchester Metropolitan)
 Stephen Houlgate (Warwick)
 Kimberly Hutchings (LSE)
 Peter Osborne (Middlesex)

What is the future for modern European (or 'continental') philosophy in Britain?

What are its projects?

What can be done with its canon today?



Middlesex University

£25 waged; £15 students/unwaged Inquiries: Ray Brassier, Centre for Research in Modern European Philosophy, Middlesex University, White Hart Lane, London N17 8HR. Email: r.brassier@mdx.ac.uk

Further details and forms for advance registration: www.mdx.ac.uk/www/crmep/events