

INFORMATION TO USERS

This manuscript has been reproduced from the microfilm master. UMI films the text directly from the original or copy submitted. Thus, some thesis and dissertation copies are in typewriter face, while others may be from any type of computer printer.

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted. Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleedthrough, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send UMI a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

Oversize materials (e.g., maps, drawings, charts) are reproduced by sectioning the original, beginning at the upper left-hand corner and continuing from left to right in equal sections with small overlaps.

Photographs included in the original manuscript have been reproduced xerographically in this copy. Higher quality 6" x 9" black and white photographic prints are available for any photographs or illustrations appearing in this copy for an additional charge. Contact UMI directly to order.

**ProQuest Information and Learning
300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346 USA
800-521-0600**

UMI[®]

Fugue States: Music, Dissociation, and Ethical Implications

Lee Mark Harris

Thesis in the Humanities Program

**Presented in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
at Concordia University
Montréal, Québec, Canada**

July 2001

© Lee Mark Harris, 2001



**National Library
of Canada**

**Acquisitions and
Bibliographic Services**

**395 Wellington Street
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4
Canada**

**Bibliothèque nationale
du Canada**

**Acquisitions et
services bibliographiques**

**395, rue Wellington
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4
Canada**

Your file Votre référence

Our file Notre référence

The author has granted a non-exclusive licence allowing the National Library of Canada to reproduce, loan, distribute or sell copies of this thesis in microform, paper or electronic formats.

The author retains ownership of the copyright in this thesis. Neither the thesis nor substantial extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without the author's permission.

L'auteur a accordé une licence non exclusive permettant à la Bibliothèque nationale du Canada de reproduire, prêter, distribuer ou vendre des copies de cette thèse sous la forme de microfiche/film, de reproduction sur papier ou sur format électronique.

L'auteur conserve la propriété du droit d'auteur qui protège cette thèse. Ni la thèse ni des extraits substantiels de celle-ci ne doivent être imprimés ou autrement reproduits sans son autorisation.

0-612-68216-1

Canada

ABSTRACT

Fugue States: Music, Dissociation, and Ethical Implications

Lee Harris, Ph.D.

Concordia University, 2001

The relation between the phenomenology of the fugue and the field of ethical behaviour was of central concern to the creative career of Glenn Gould, explored using a terminology of ecstasy, morality, and technology. This thesis attempts to further pursue the issue by moderating a conversation between dissociation theory, drawn from the cognitive sciences, and a discourse on dialogic transaction, derived from various literary and philosophical sources. Investigation of the fugal experience requires specification of the ritual context deemed to facilitate it, as well the fugue's salient structural properties. Under a regime of intense attention, it is claimed that fugal logic precipitates a perceptual "crisis" calling for a change in cognitive strategy. Practice permits the discovery of one such alternative, proposed to be an unusual, dissociated form of processing in which response set has been suspended without a corresponding loss of vigilance, allowing consciousness of a greater amount of perceptual information. The resultant phenomenology is marked by a heightened sense of temporal immediacy, spatial presence, emotional dynamism, combined with a feeling of depersonalisation.

The ethical hypothesis deals with this experience, proposed to represent, in effect, a fragile, temporary annulment of the self: those higher-level memory constructs—including language—that mediate one's reactions to the world, and dominate processes of environmental monitoring and perception. The outcome is a novel level of interoception that seems to validate the etymology of ecstasy as a liberating experience of "standing outside the self". The specifically ethical thrust concerns the application of moral discipline, defined as an attentional focus and application of energy designed to transport the fugue state outside the confines of its ritual enactment. In this way, the subject begins to gain insight into the confining nature of habitual consciousness. Such a process, it is speculated, would be dependent upon a procedural ability to auto-cue the dissociative state in absence of the external perceptual framework that initiated it. Finally, the thesis offers an extended critique of the current cultural ethos with respect to the status of language, and in particular to the debilitating effect of dualistic thought.

Acknowledgements

I wish to acknowledge my principal academic advisor and collaborator, Dr. Jacinthe Baribeau, for her insight, expertise, dedication, and patience. My gratitude also goes to Professors R. Barry Rutland and Edmund Egan for their truly invaluable contributions to this thesis. As my advisory committee, these three scholars made the journey a rewarding one both intellectually and personally. In addition, I would like to thank Prof. Tom Henighan for his continuing encouragement, as well as Dr. Alan West, Colin Mack, and Dr. Mela Sarkhar. Finally, heartfelt thanks to Chris and Elise for being an endless source of joy and inspiration.

It's only a series of vibrations,
but they have a good effect on the men.
Where does the magic lie?
In the instruments?
In the one that wrote it?
In me?
In those that hear it?
I cannot understand what they feel.
Yes, I can understand.
I just can't feel it.
Do you understand?

Man Facing Southeast (Hombre Mirando Al Sudeste)
Written and directed by Eliseo Subiela

CONTENTS

Epigram v
 List of Figures *viii*
 Tables, Lists *ix*

INTRODUCTION 1

CHAPTER I. FOCUS AND CONTEXT 21

A. SYNOPSIS 21
 1. Problem 21
 2. Problematics 22
 3. Discussion 25
 4. Speculations and Conclusion 32
 B. PROLEGOMENA 33
 1. Linguistic Over-reaching 33
 2. Ionesco's Theatre of Dissociation 40
 3. Gould 48
 4. Gould Transcribed 60

CHAPTER II. METHODOLOGY 74

A. APPROACH 74
 B. PROCEDURE 95
 1. Dialogue 96
 2. Musical Ritual 107
 3. Moral Discipline 113
 C. EPISTEMOLOGY 116

CHAPTER III. DIALECTICS 121

A. THESIS, ANTI-THESIS (1) 121
 B. THESIS, ANTI-THESIS (2) 124
 C. THESIS, ANTI-THESIS (3) 131
 D. THESIS, ANTI-THESIS (4) 148
 E. THESIS, ANTI-THESIS (5) 152

CHAPTER IV. LITERATURE REVIEW 158

A. TRANSLATION: DISSOCIATION 158
 1. Neuropsychological Perspectives 158
 A. *Power and Division in Human Thought* 158
 B. *Holiday* 166
 C. *Hierarchy* 171
 D. *Skilled Production and Naïve Reception* 177

<i>E. Laterality</i>	181
<i>F. Emotion</i>	186
2. Fugue and Meaning	196
<i>A. Language, Music and Ambiguity</i>	197
<i>B. Fugue</i>	210
<i>C. Music and Religiosity</i>	216
3. Psychodynamics	219
<i>A. Introduction</i>	219
<i>B. Mahrer's Humanistic Theory</i>	226
<i>C. Surrendering</i>	231
<i>D. Frames</i>	236
4. Hypnosis	242
<i>A. Introduction</i>	242
<i>B. Attention</i>	244
<i>C. Suggestibility</i>	245
<i>D. Active and Receptive Modes</i>	258
<i>E. Dissociative Depth: Depersonalisation and Hidden Observer</i>	260
<i>F. Cognitive Strategy</i>	264
<i>G. Dissociation and Discourse</i>	267
5. Attention	270
<i>A. Dualism</i>	270
<i>B. Ritual and Functional Systems</i>	277
<i>C. Automaticity</i>	279
<i>D. Ritual and Perception</i>	280
<i>E. Alternative to Dualism</i>	283
<i>F. Musical Isomorphism and Culture</i>	284
<i>G. Attention and Moral Discipline</i>	290
B. ETHICS AND MORAL DISCIPLINE	297
1. Evolution	297
<i>A. Introduction</i>	297
<i>B. Mimesis</i>	299
<i>C. Language</i>	308
<i>D. External Memory</i>	314
<i>E. Ethics and Integration</i>	319
2. Phenomenology of Shame	326
CHAPTER V. CONCLUSION	343
A. SUMMARY	343
B. CONCLUSIONS	344
C. PROSPECTS	352
Bibliography	358

LIST OF FIGURES

Fig. 1: Discipline, dissociation, and dialogism. 351

TABLES, LISTS

Table 1: CBC radio interview. 62

List 1: Glossary. 14

List 2: Ritual task requirements. 18

List 3: Stimulus features. 19

List 4: First-person report. 20

List 5: Postulates. 30

List 6: Thesis questions, anti-theses. 31

INTRODUCTION

A. PROBLEM AND APPROACH

Music arouses ardour, but also curiosity. Questions persist, long after the ephemeral flow has vanished in air. Can the mystery be traced to its silent berth? Such a tandem of deeply felt significance and motivated inquiry has long attended musical experience. It is not simply that our sonorous intentions provide diversion, pleasure, or heighten the meaning of an accompanied verbal utterance. Time and again, a fundamental intuition seems to crystallise into discourse, proclaiming that music can be instrumental in its exertion of a gravitational force over the poles of our **moral** being.¹

The literature is extensive. From the philosophies of Pythagoras, Plato, and Boethius, through the strictures of Calvinist doctrine and Soviet Socialist Realism, past the complex musings of Adorno, right up to the evolving field of music therapy, disparate contexts share a conviction regarding the efficacy of organised sound to influence both mind and behaviour. Insightful as even a portion of this material might prove to be, however, the present study proceeds without its benefit. In one sense, the focus here is entirely more circumscribed: of the world's vast repertoire, only fugues receive consideration, and furthermore, only those of the great baroque composer, J. S. Bach.

In addition, little will be said about the kind of formal analysis that serves to demonstrate the incomparable technical mastery of harmonic and melodic materials for which these fugues are admired; indeed, at least some of what passes for aesthetic pleasure or response will find itself excluded as well. Yet, such grossly constricted attention may be more than compensated by the contextual field into which our focal

¹Words in bold print are further elaborated in List 1, the glossary section of the present introduction, p. 14.

experience is placed, thereby justifying a decision to forego the advantages of an admittedly distinguished tradition. What concerns us here is a specific **ritualised** use of the fugue and the corresponding state of mind it is alleged to evoke. Moreover, the opportunity of exploring relations between this musically abetted consciousness and that **other fugue state**—conceived by contemporary psychology as an instance of **pathological dissociation**—begins to delimit a “thesis” task of ample enough proportions.

The reason for this stems from the enormous breadth of cognitive science, the branch of inquiry to which the conceptual apparatus for our comparative exercise is largely indebted. The virtue of such an approach lies in the novel locus of examination it affords. The very notion that linguistics, cognitive psychology, neuroscience, computational modelling, as well as theories of self-organization, complexity, human development, evolution, ethology and even archaeology can each make important contributions under the umbrella of a more comprehensive rubric speaks to the many analytical levels at play when faced with the highest complexities of human behaviour. To be sure, I am keenly aware of the limitations my background as a non-scientist imposes upon this endeavour; nonetheless, I believe the fashioning of a general roadmap of the chosen terrain remains a worthwhile undertaking.

Despite the avowed disciplinary bias, however, one notable precedent from the world of music has proven an invaluable aid. The career of Canadian pianist Glenn Gould was distinguished by its passionate advocacy of contrapuntal music, as well as an insistence that musical discussion and performance be conducted within a perspective of moral concern. This dual preoccupation was manifest—sometimes implicitly—through a wide range of creative activities. In tribute, I have labelled the elaboration of an intuitively posited link between the **phenomenology** of the fugue and the field of **ethics**

the “Gouldian problematic”. Exploring the implications of this discursive field through a variety of empirical concepts defines the basic objective of this paper.

The confluence of a number of limited but highly focused perspectives can serve to advance the emergence of an ethically situated discourse. By dividing artefact and auditor into an array of sub-processes and components without losing sight of the global need for *harmonisation within an ethos of mutual respect*, enhanced understanding of ethical process may be advanced in a manner that is denied to more traditional analytical templates. Holistic approaches imply an interpenetration of organisational levels which caution against the description of complex entities from a single disciplinary perspective, or of considering behaviour as emanating from a uniquely discrete spatio-temporal location. Habitual parsing that proceeds from a *fundamental division* into listening subject, perceived object, and receptive act may prove to be both unmanageably large and overly confining: too much is implied by the basic categories, in other words, and not enough specificity permitted at a granular level of description. Instead, we offer what is at once a highly constrained musical object, act of listening, and state of consciousness that, in some significant sense, constitutes the expression of a single, coherent global process.

What follows, then, is a brief overview of fugue and ethics as mediated by the central conceptual framework of dissociation.

B. FUGUE

Terminologically speaking, fugue in both its formal musical and psychopathological manifestations describes the perambulations of a *subject*. In a further lexical parallel, moreover, this subject is said to undergo *episodes*. But the kind of processes these temporal entities impose could not be more divergent in character.

The victim of a morbid fugue state endures a profound displacement of identity, an irruption of total discontinuity created by the force of a seemingly impenetrable amnesic barrier. The very finitude of the episode, however, eventually betrays the illusive unity of a new life; alas, the entire embodied context that “went into hiding” emerges once again into the painful light of a troubled day.

Things are not so with the *compositional* counterpart. Here, the thematic subject does not shun identity, but rather realises a series of semantic implications that the episodic contexts serve to endlessly provoke. Despite this sense of constant transformation, however, the process could be construed as the expression of an evolutionary *continuity*. Indeed, formal analysis assures us that the subject in its wholeness is never far removed; for all the apparent diversity that the episodes elicit, aspects of an enduring selfhood permeate their every narrative turn.

There is, however, another subject that enters into the semantic equation: that is to say, the listener. It is the initial quality of relation established between auditor and musical subject, as well as a critical, contrasting modality that *develops* during the course of the fugal engagement, that commands our interest here. The first is dependent upon a successful execution of specific *ritual constraints*, summarised in List 2, page 18. The second relation arises in part as a result of the particular logic by means of which a musical fugue is organised (see List 3, pg. 19). This overarching, highly specified structural coupling of listener and music precipitates a **fugal crisis** which renders the initial mode of interaction inadequate to the evolving demands of processing. Let us briefly consider these three cited elements—ritual constraint, fugal logic, and fugal crisis—again making reference to fugue state in its more traumatic manifestation.

To begin, ritual requirements aim to create a situation that facilitates attentional vigilance to the selected musical stimuli. The basic task might be expressed as a simple

edict to “follow the voices”: that is, to recognise the linear strands as sequences displaying a certain internal coherence, and to try to maintain this recognition of linear autonomy in the face of an increasingly simultaneous presentation. But the specific ritual at hand makes a further demand, thereby introducing an aspect of the persistent problem of **dualism** into our discussion. This additional obligation prompts the participant to steer clear of the Scylla and Charybdis of intellect and emotion, behavioural patterns that zealously flank the ritual passage into an altered state of consciousness.

Avoidance of the former implies a jettisoning of extended analytical templates that might be used to navigate the fugue’s complexities and which serve to make “total sense” of the musical subject’s topological exploits. Here we have a possible example of what Glenn Gould referred to as the dangers of an “overreliance upon the susceptibly positive attributes of system” (1984, p. 5). Recognition of an indispensable “naiveté” in the aesthetic moment, however, is hardly idiosyncratic. Soprano Donna Brown, for instance, differentiates the experience of performing Bach—with its particularly conspicuous level of technical monitoring—from that of listening. Similarly, pianist Dina Namer distinguishes the act of musical execution from a distinct process of “completely giving over” as audience member; finally, composer Colin Mack asserts that music acts upon many semantic levels, citing Mozart as one who rejoiced in such an eventuality.²

The second danger concerns a propensity to revel in complete empathy with the musical subject, using its repeated statement as a means of symbolising and sustaining an overriding emotional aura. Yet, these dual aspects of mastery and empathy are precisely what the fugue seems to offer—with its initial statement of a solitary, self-defining subject. The temptation to utilise them increases, moreover, as mounting polyphony makes the ritual task of democratised linear autonomy a *perceptual*

impossibility. Insistence upon this task thus leads the listener into the turbulent waters of the fugal crisis itself. How can one handle the excess of information, in other words, if not by the virtues of customarily prescribed means? By the time we reach the development section, this crisis reaches its most acute phase. It is especially here, as the musical subject undergoes a kaleidoscopic process of fragmentation and rearrangement, that the ritual ultimately *demand*s a concomitant dissolution of the listening subject.

Giving up one's habitual modes of maintaining autonomy and unity as a knowing and feeling entity is neither easily achieved nor generally lauded as the goal of an aesthetic activity. In this sense, the fugue is not so much a presentation of material to be consumed or appreciated as it is a perceptual discipline to be exercised, and this lends it a peculiarly impersonal and even dubious cast. What possible rewards could such a strange, auditory callisthenics confer if it bears no hope of reaching the goal toward which it strives?

The answer is that both the dissociated "fugue state" and its experiential benefits occur unexpectedly; one stumbles upon them whilst performing the "insoluble" ritual task. Such activity may serve as an indispensable training, but actual instantiation of the altered mindset comes in the guise of a sudden self-discovery, reached without the benefit of any overt bridge of understanding. In short, a kind of radical discontinuity or *dissociation* has occurred, and with it a noticeable alteration in the way the material appears to be processed. List 4 itemises a description of the felt characteristics that such a condition engenders (p. 20).

Critically, dissociation provides a conceptual linkage between the two fugue states. In both cases, some process has interceded to produce an unusual alteration with respect to the subject's customary sense of personal identity. Yet clearly, there are

² Brown, Namer, Mack: personal communications.

limits to the similarity. The musical participant enters through a portal of well-being and positive expectation and is neither barred from returning—indeed, the state is highly unstable and susceptible to intrusions from the “outside” world—nor from accessing recollections of the journey. The unfortunate victim of a morbid fugue state, by contrast, enters the condition unaware, presumably at the behest of an underlying dysfunction, and has no subsequent access to a larger reality until issued an involuntary release. What, then, is the salience of the dissociative connection, and how can it contribute to a process construed as “ethical”?

C. DISSOCIATION AND THE ETHICAL DYNAMICS OF INTEGRATION

Remarkably, the historical and etymological background of the musical fugue actually intimates a context through which an understanding of the perplexing status of dissociation—as both semantic facilitator and amnesic barrier—might be advanced. According to The New Grove Dictionary (2001), fugue is a term with a wide range of reference; “[i]f all pieces called fugue were collected together and compared, no single common defining characteristic would be discovered beyond that of imitation in the broadest sense” (Vol. 9, p. 318). By contrast, much of what passed for fugue in the fourteenth century, “along with its vernacular equivalents *chace* and *caccia*” (p. 318) were in fact “based on canonic imitation (i.e. one voice ‘chasing’ another; the Latin *fuga* is related to both *fugere*: ‘to flee’ and *fugare*: ‘to chase’)” (p. 318).

Fascinatingly, the very looseness of the term enables it to harbour several powerful tensions within its overall compass. The broad notion of imitation suggests an appropriation of something that does not originate with the imitator; in this sense, it could be seen to represent a kind of temporary posturing or borrowed persona. By contrast, canonic procedures are defined by the strict lawfulness of relations that preserve the

essential shape of the thematic material at hand. In other words, the history of fugue seems to embrace a dialectical resonance regarding the nature of identity. It is worth noting that, by the time of Bach, pure canonic writing had been largely displaced by a kind of hybrid form. This is not to deny that Bach composed strict canons; however, his fugal art is largely represented by works that contain canonic elements combined with a broader repertoire of imitative techniques.

The Latin etymology may also be instructive. Here we find both hunter (chase) and hunted (flight) in musicological coexistence. In light of the previous discussion, a series of intriguing questions begins to emerge. Certainly, the pathogenic fugue malady is most appropriately linked to the concept of "flight": in some dramatic sense, the victim appears to have escaped from an entire historical context, with most unfortunate consequences. Should *ritual* wandering, then, be merely assimilated as an extreme, temporally truncated instance of the former? Though listening to fugues can undoubtedly serve as recreational drug, most would acknowledge the non-aesthetic condition as indicative of a much more profound level of dysfunction. Could that not be turned to advantage? Could the largely *volitional context* of a ritual dissociation, in other words, be turned to productive use?

It is the notion of turning back toward the world at the behest of a more comprehensive understanding that marks the beginning of an ethical relation. Such a move, moreover, might indeed merit depiction as a calculated about-face from flight into chase. Before trying to identify the quarry, however, it is necessary to clarify a critical issue: from what is the listener initially fleeing? Is it, like the pathogenic caesura, a dramatic dismissal of history per se, or alternatively, a subtler form of severance from an entity by means of which such history is told? This thesis contends that habitual selfhood stands as the elusive prey of an ethical pursuit. But it is only through an act of dissociative flight that space is afforded in which to sight the target. Here we find

confirmation of a stunning symbolic prescience that the history of the fugue has managed to embody: flight and chase are but separate facets of a single developmental process.

Rephrased, the ethical dimension explored in this thesis involves the cultivation of a dialectical tension between the “everyday” and that of the aesthetic fugue state. As already suggested, however, this eventuality is dependent upon procedural learning that extends beyond the pale of a conceptual acquisition. It is therefore appropriate to speak of the present project as advocating a multi-layered discipline. A good deal of what has been discussed to date involves a twofold phenomenological investigation, concerned first with the instantiation of a special ritual consciousness, and second with an acquired sensitivity to the implications such a special state might hold for a wider field of awareness. The labour of first-person observation is indispensable. Nevertheless, this thesis also develops an ideational apparatus that attempts to lend understanding and hence encouragement to its non-linguistic practices. Accordingly, we now turn attention to the core concept and its proposed role in ethical process.

Dissociation is often associated with a number of severe psychological disorders, including the widely publicised dissociative identity disorder (DID; formerly labelled multiple personality disorder, or MPD), and lesser known conditions such as fugue state and depersonalisation disorder. The etiology of these cataclysmic disruptions often lies with a history of grievous abuse; in such a context, dissociation appears to provide a mechanism for navigating a world that is immanent with unbearable pain and arbitrariness. But dissociation is now also conceived, more benignly, as a basic feature of human consciousness and its underlying function. This means that so-called “everyday” reality is punctuated by dissociative phenomena in a number of non-pathological contexts that are manifest as temporary alterations or distortions of memory, identity, perception, etc.

The ubiquity of these events lends support to the proposition of a generalised level of dissociative function that serves to facilitate an almost imperceptible fabric of evasions. Indeed, far from exhibiting the explosive consequences of organic or psychogenic crisis, these mini-gaps may reflect a social pathology not nearly as conspicuous as that associated with the level of individual anomaly. Instead, such discord must be inferred by the gaps, silences, omissions, and forbidden zones of everyday discourse.

According to Laborit (1977), it is the pervasive operation of power in the form of abstract information, embedded in the organism, that becomes such a uniquely human problem. This powerful fusion of hierarchical value structures and biological imperatives has served to fashion a self that is incapable of effectively harmonising with larger organisational levels. The problem is not simply a question of what the individual can assimilate in the way of "better" ideas or arguments; it is, rather, the present structure of individuality itself that constitutes what Laborit refers to as an "informational closure".

Understanding dissociation helps to illuminate the importance of the biological underpinnings of the self and the intractability of trying to transform it through a process of analysis alone. Through the medium of dissociative function, power imposes a unity upon the self by making parts of experience and awareness--that is to say, the marginal and the unacceptable--*invisible*. It is therefore insufficient to adopt a course of action based upon a particular discursive understanding as to what properly constitutes the marginal; the efficacious, embodied nature of dissociation demands another approach. From this perspective, the present undertaking does not concern itself with normative ethics, or concrete examinations of behaviour with respect to right and wrong; instead, it aims to investigate what might be called *the pre-conditions of ethical discourse*.

Yet, if the invisibility of dissociative function thus stands as pre-eminent ethical challenge, it is the ecstasy of a ritually induced fugue that offers itself as corresponding

opportunity. Accordingly, this essay offers two distinct strands of analysis. One attempts to highlight certain social and discursive practices that contribute to fallacious assumptions regarding the autonomy of the human subject that simultaneously neglect the obstinacy of its embodied motivations. The other advances a hypothesis that the specific coupling of mind and music posed by the fugue ritual can realise a functional alteration that amounts to a temporary annulment of the reflexive self.

It is important to note that this process is articulated in a manner that avoids two vexing instances of self-referential circularity. Because a Bach fugue begins with the certitude of an autonomous subject and subsequently leads into a state of increasing ambiguity, the process involves a kind of perceptual *seduction* that ultimately precipitates in crisis. The demands of on-line processing produce a moment of vulnerability or loss of control that creates the opportunity for an alternative pattern of cognitive engagement; to this extent, the subject has “unwillingly” participated in a process that contains an element of “external trickery”. The second problem relates to the status of the speaking subject. By what possible hermeneutic metrics could we arrive at the determination of an ethically enhanced communicative strategy? Would we not judge a speaker, both before and after any non-linguistic rapture, by the words themselves?

Such an eventuality would not be consonant with the phenomenological character of this study. What arises during the aesthetic moment is the beginning of a sensitisation to interoceptive signalling that arises earlier in the chain of processing than the assembly of discursive sequences proper. This signalling is not itself *text*, but rather the embodied implications of an evaluative process that is perceived as either anxiety or assent. It is precisely this level from which we have been trained to dissociate, and culturally pervasive assumptions about the nature of the entity that speaks—and *the necessity of identifying with it*—form part of the social ethos that insures

the problem's entrenchment. Ethics in the sense developed here is a freeing of the meaning process from the parochial constraints of such a self, thereby opening it up to a more inclusive dynamic.

Bakhtin's (1984a; 1984b) notion of the dialogic shares this sense of communicative process as something far more complex and multi-levelled than emphasis upon either the "individual" or "society" permits. The case of a live, face to face conversation, for example, betrays how misleading it is to regard dialogue as the mere verbal volleying of unified centres of meaning, whether this self-containment is expressed in terms of person or discourse. To speak is to acknowledge a context that elicits responses; but this includes the immediate social/environmental situation and language used, applicable rules of social discourse, history of interactions, respective discursive backgrounds and conditioning, plus conversational dynamics subsuming judgements about the other, anticipation of what will be said, planning of response, as well as semiotic complexities involving posture, gesture, voice inflection and timing. All this enters the conversational mix, in addition to the dynamic character of the language system itself, with its evolving lexical nuances and inescapable ambiguities.

The complexity of this field might seem to make communication an entirely precarious affair. In a serious sense, this is true. Yet, from a more instrumental position, one must acknowledge the inverse: the business of life does seem to "get done". The question is, how well? Simple reliance upon the closure of custom and habit denies the constancy of change that gives rise to the endless potential for both semantic bounty and conflict. Bakhtin's work demonstrates that communication requires sensitivity, vigilance, and an openness that shuns the attempt to control the uncontrollable, or to impose one's own limitations upon others. In this regard, the formal organization of a Bach fugue serves as paradigmatic enactment for the conduct of an ethical life: episode flows into episode, engaging the subject in a constant process of rearrangement,

perspectival shift and simultaneous coexistence, where the boundaries of identity are but dynamic facets of a global undulation.

The present thesis also attempts to develop a broader point. The subject of the pathological fugue state returns *from* a false haven of identity that has lost its illusion of unity. In the ritual case, the sojourner returns--like Odysseus--to a home that is equally riddled with dissension. Inserted thus into a living context, the generic features of a musical fugue can offer more than clever analogy, fashioned through the exploits of a *melodic* subject. Rather, we regard this astonishing artefact as a genuine heuristic device for the enactment of dialogic behaviour. We further submit that it is the process of dissociation--understood as an integral feature of the human mind--that grants this artistic phenomenon both its distinctive pleasure and its wider utility.

LIST 1: GLOSSARY

- **Discipline:** Generally, this refers to the voluntary application of energy to a particular end, especially in the face of distraction and resistance. The discipline which this thesis poses has three aspects. One involves the demands of the fugue ritual as described in the text: creating the appropriate conditions, both externally and internally, and applying concerted effort to the difficult perceptual task that the music presents. The second sense involves the intellectual task of co-ordinating the phenomenological dimension with the disciplinary language of the academic discourses employed. Moral discipline is considered the final aspect of the overall project; it aims to integrate an element of interoceptive sensitivity gained during the aesthetic moment into the larger domain of human action. The challenge is to turn an enhanced ability to listen toward the “music of the world”, including the sound and sense of one’s own voice. Devotion to the transference of a special observer status from the confines of an aesthetic ritual to the cruelties of human life may be difficult, but this does not render it illusory on that account. The dialectic between fugue and the “everyday”, however, is an observational process that is dependent upon the disciplines previously alluded to: that is, an ability to achieve the altered state, and a conceptual understanding that clarifies or makes plausible the salutary effects of the moral pursuit.
- **Dissociation:** In its most familiar context, an alteration of perception or memory that provides a mechanism enabling survivors of extreme trauma such as physical abuse to evade circumstances that would otherwise elicit unbearable pain or anxiety. Dissociation is also used by some researchers as a means of conceptualising hypnotic phenomena (e.g. Hilgard, 1986). For neuropsychology, however, the term has broader connotations. As a discipline that attempts to make inferences of underlying structure from patterns of behavioural change emerging from brain insult, dissociation becomes a central concept whereby the interface and at least partial autonomy of functional systems of mind is elaborated. To be sure, the complex organization of the brain makes this project more difficult than may be readily apparent. Yet, the very fact that brain function cannot be simply divided into discrete spatial areas helps to support the use of dissociation employed in the present study. The need to reconfigure subsystems for the execution of constantly changing tasks implies a complementary process of disengagement that is functional in nature: that is, the diversity of tasks necessitates a comparable degree of flexibility in the arrangement of underlying systems. This general functional definition, moreover, explains why dissociation can refer to a wide range of phenomena involving various alterations in memory, identity, perception, and affect. For present purposes, dissociation is used in two related contexts. Firstly, the thesis generalises dissociation in its negative sense as a form of social pathology that serves to excise the unwanted or the undesirable that is continually required by the operation of power. Secondly, however, the concept in its larger sense is employed by asserting that certain habitual behavioural constructs are indeed decomposable. This is precisely the aim of the dissociative “fugue” ritual described herein.

- **Dualism:** A framing series of binary “oppositions” that serve to structure thought and experience, particularly in western culture. Mind/matter, spirit/flesh, self/other, subject/object, nature/culture, individual/society and reason/emotion are among the most important ones. Musical practices and experiences, as well as reflections about them, are especially implicated in these fundamental ways of structuring. On the one hand, music is linked either to a notion of spiritual nourishment or excitation of emotion; on the other hand, it is viewed by means of analysis as the enactment of the formal organization of sound, or of specific socio-historical relations or cultural rituals. Experiences such as the one under investigation here, which allegedly alters consciousness and transgresses the clear distinction between subject and object, are not even conceivable within the standard dualistic grid of explanation and practice.
- **Ethics:** For writers such as Buber (1958) and Bakhtin (1984a; 1984b), it is not possible to understand human behaviour as emanating from isolated or self-enclosed subjects. It is only through a dialogic process that meaning unfolds, and further, that an articulation of the ethical process can be envisioned. What is the role for individual volition in the communicative process, and the quality of relation through which such energy is directed? As biological organisms, we cannot dispense with a notion of individual gratification. To be sure, Laborit (1977) considers the desire for domination a powerful manifestation of this natural goal for self-preservation. Nevertheless, the human predicament is blessed with an underlying neurological plasticity that might be exploited in novel ways. The challenge is to recognise the embodied nature of the self, and then to respond in an efficacious manner. For Laborit, ethics is the project of creating an informational opening at the individual level, such that the organism can be integrated into a larger but biologically coherent motivational field. A dialogic process that is dependent upon the free flow of information, in other words, is stunted by the virulent “protectionism” of the self. In these terms, the present thesis tries to grapple with the nature of resistance, to offer a kind of aesthetic “seduction” that might temporarily pry apart the habitual unity of the self, and lastly, to suggest a disciplined approach that reinforces the disjunction in order to permit an alternative and more encompassing dynamic of “self-organisation” to take root. Such a project offers nothing in the way of normative ethics, or concrete examination of the myriad issues with which the contemporary human is faced. Instead, we have addressed ourselves to the *pre-conditions of discourse*, and the possibility of a communicative dialogue no longer plagued by the intransigence of a reflexive and often unacknowledged behavioural executor.
- **Fugal crisis:** Point in the listening experience of the fugue when the ritual task of democratising the perceptual autonomy of linear voices breaks down, especially when gestalt relations of figure/ground are no longer a viable alternative.
- **Fugue state:** Following DSM-IV, Coons describes fugue state or dissociative fugue as “characterised by amnesia coupled with sudden unexpected travel away from one’s home or place of work. There is confusion about identity and sometimes new identity formation...” (1999, p. 881).
- **Holism:** The term is being employed as part of an attempt to understand phenomena in terms of complex systems, rather than focusing upon the mechanical action of

discrete atomic components. Cilliers (1998) views any given sign, for instance, as “a node in a network of relationships. The relationships are not determined by the sign; rather, the sign is the *result* of interacting relationships” (p. 39). Any apparently bounded, self-organising ensemble of components, moreover, must be viewed as interacting with an *environment*, from which it derives energy and information. In addition, holistic thought requires sensitivity to the temporal dimension, as complex systems continuously evolve over time. These general features encourage an understanding of things in terms of dynamic global processes rather than static, autonomous, enduring objects. This is especially important with respect to the individual human mind. Apart from a conceptual attempt to deal with music and ethics, however, holism in the present study also occurs with respect to its phenomenological dimension. In this context, “the whole being” implicit in the *I-Thou* relation of which Martin Buber (1958) speaks is assumed to involve an alteration of consciousness that must, in part, be learned procedurally, rather than through declarative knowledge alone. Yet ultimately, even this can be seen as a particular functional locus of underlying biological systems, expressed in Laborit’s (1977) terms as an “informational opening”.

- **Interoception:** Perception of events occurring within the body.
- **Moral/Ethical:** The use of these terms is somewhat idiosyncratic and calls for some explanation. At the most general level, in reference to a process of *harmonisation within an ethos of mutual respect*, the concepts have been conflated. I have tended to view ethics, however, as referring to the global information process of exchange and encounter: that is, the dialogic field through which meaning evolves and in which the necessity of overcoming resistance to the freer flow of information is made manifest, particularly as it pertains to interpersonal communication. Morality is often used more in reference to the individual organism’s point of view, especially in reference to the notion of *moral discipline*. This involves an attempt to instantiate ethical process by facilitating close observation of interoceptive events not only with respect to biospheric relations, but with the universe as a whole. In this sense, morality acquires a more overtly religious cast.
- **Phenomenology:** Though it is recognised that the word has precise meanings for various practitioners within the western philosophical tradition such as Husserl, Merleau-Ponty, Heidegger, etc., employment here is in its broader use as indicative of a methodical and disciplined investigation of the structure of experience.
- **Ritual:** A formal device for structuring experience that aims to highlight a specific level or modality of meaning. The ritual acts as a means of ordering attention: that is, the entire system is designed to give vigilance to a selected locus of information within an array of control processes. The features which contribute to this outcome are many and occur at different organisational levels. In this sense, the ritual can be assimilated as a form of functional system, after Luria (1973), whereby an invariant task and result is accomplished by a complex ensemble requiring cybernetic governance. By increasing the levels of specificity with which a musical ritual is described, properties of the outcome may also be better understood, especially when compared to traditional modes of analysis, which tend to confine their focus upon circumscribed orders of phenomena. Finally, an increasingly accurate depiction of

the state of consciousness rendered by a given ritual might also serve to illuminate features that could yield functional utility in alternative contexts.

- Self:** Most briefly, the motivational locus of the individual that unmindfully develops as a result of experience; the sum of behavioural constraints imposed by conditioning. Recognition of the *bio-social* nature of this embodied construct is perhaps the best way of approaching an understanding of the current usage. Rather than considering the individual as horizontally stratified into a lower, biological field of homeostatic desires and a higher, linguistically mediated cultural self, this thesis opts for a more vertically oriented conception, wherein a bounded, multi-levelled behavioural system occupies a neural/environmental state space of vastly larger possibilities. For Laborit (1977), this underlying construct is instituted by several means. Through its attempts to achieve gratification from the environment, the infant acquires a reflexive knowledge base that is mediated by the periventricular system (PVS) and medial forebrain bundle (MFB), or pain and pleasure centres. Later, the child is trained into a given culture's symbolic domain that is saturated with hierarchical value relations. From this perspective, language is no transparent medium; the dynamics of power are inscribed at the outset. Again, the critical point concerns the systemic integration of thought into the biologically grounded, developing sense of self. Damasio's (1994) "somatic marker" hypothesis, which conceives the structuring of memory and thought with reference to an ongoing mapping of the state of the body, explicitly denies the culturally ubiquitous reason/emotion duality. Ethics is conceived as the project of overcoming the reflexive self. This does not imply the acquisition of an autonomy that is free of constraints, but rather a participation in communicative process that is no longer bound by a *specific set* of habitually operative limitations. Indeed, it is the misguided conferral of autonomy to the individual that serves to reinforce the mechanical nature of perception and behaviour. For Laborit, the entire cultural telos of ascent up a hierarchical ladder of domination, accomplished above all by means of the acquisition of abstract knowledge, serves to entrench the fundamental problem. Still, the question arises whether this depiction represents an overly reductive conception of a self that is cynically deprived of any distinguishing capacity for creativity, compassion, and grace. The response asserts that these phenomena, such as they occur, are only plausible with reference to a *different order* of process. I acknowledge that, from a lexical standpoint, the historical use of self encompasses alternative conceptions, some of which are intended to intimate a more expansive sense of growth. The current usage is favoured because the term is suggestive of something delimited by the individual level of function; in contrast, the more generic term *organism* has been applied to the brain's potential to reorder its motivational priorities through participation in more globally situated processes of meaning. The cardinal question is not what to label these contrasting arrangements, but whether their characterisation has validity. Is the individual dominated by a virulent bio-social "selfhood" that wishes to maintain its structure as an autonomous entity, nourished by a culture that views its hierarchical ascent to power as a reflection of something absolutely singular and laudatory in nature? The position adopted here stresses the "reality" of the self as a powerfully unified—though ultimately maladapted—set of material constraints, while at the same time rejecting both its metaphysical status and its substantial immutability.

LIST 2: RITUAL TASK REQUIREMENTS

- **Secure ritual space: freedom from interruption, sensory distraction**
- **Optimise acoustics**
- **Relaxation: maximise physical comfort, minimise emotional distraction and expectation**
- **Vigilance to unfolding parameters of sound, especially independence of linear voices**
- **"Solve" perceptual crisis**

LIST 3: STIMULUS FEATURES

- non-verbal
- on-line processing (real-time)
- initial presentation of solitary subject
- repeating subject with increasing polyphonic traffic (exposition)
- subject fragmentation, dynamic interplay of semantic implications (development)
- high ambiguity
- exceeds perceptual capacity
- small-scale temporal regularity (lack of rhythm, in Messiaen's terms)
- indifference to timbre
- lack of great dynamic contrast
- lack of large-scale structural development or contrast

*anti-theatricality

* establish temporal processing window, stabilisation of control processes (vigilance)

LIST 4: FIRST-PERSON REPORT

- **Enhanced sense of the present moment; perceptual acuity**
- **Enhanced spatial presence**
- **Riot of semantic implications; enhanced emotional tenor**
- **Absorption: loss of time, self-awareness**
- **Blurring of subject/object dichotomy: the music itself**
- **Depersonalisation: events objectively "witnessed" from outside**
- **Unstable state**

CHAPTER I. FOCUS AND CONTEXT

A. SYNOPSIS

1. Problem

This study focuses on a specific mental set. In brief: real-time processing of baroque polyphony—with its distinctive cognitive demands—precipitates an experience which, under a regimen of heightened attention, is at once perceived as perceptually altered, personally de-centred, and semantically intensified. Included in the foregoing is an enhanced sense of spatial presence, immediacy of the present moment, as well as a feeling of impersonality conjoined with a more "external" and seemingly potent form of emotive dynamism.

This proposal gains motivation and focus from repeated experiences attending to the sound structures of Johann Sebastian Bach. I claim that the semantic field permitting such phenomenology to arise must be considered a product of multi-layered processes (postulate 1)¹. These processes are resistant to any single order of disciplinary description. What follows is an attempt to explore these meaning zones using concepts derived from the umbrella of cognitive science, supplemented by other types of discourse: specifically, literary theory and philosophical aesthetics. Within my limitations, however, primacy will be granted to the sciences of mind.

In light of the numerous influences involved, it is necessary to acknowledge the historically situated character of inquiry. There are problems that cannot be resolved on the basis of a traditional, scientific reduction. Rather, this thesis proposes a *holistic*

¹ Postulates are listed together, p. 30.

discipline, a method that seeks multi-dimensional sympathy between empirical, analytical and experiential aspects. Such an approach is intended to accommodate the concrete particulars with which this project expressly begins. How far its logic may lead towards elucidating a relationship with music², or whether it further coheres with abstract notions of ethnographic identity, historical analysis, subjectivity, and the like, are entirely open questions. Consequently, I have tried to avoid any discursive framework that would effectively pre-judge how exportable this personal and culturally specific practice might ultimately be.

One aim of this study, then, is to examine the assumptions of a phenomenology perceived as possessing certain stable characteristics, and further bearing discernible relations to more usual states of mind. These contrasting regimes will be examined from a dual perspective, intended to elucidate not only their differences, but their potential for reciprocal influence as well. This approach implies that the concept of altered consciousness is not an essentialised distinction. Our concern with meaning, moreover, is better regarded as a heuristic rather than a hermeneutic undertaking. That is, the fundamental objective is not so much the decoding of concrete content, as it is the development of heightened sensitivity to the meaning process in general.

2. Problematics

The multi-faceted career of Glenn Gould will be exploited as a context that embodies both phenomenological and philosophical aspects pertinent to this investigation.

The cardinal postulate (postulate 2) is that a disciplined use of non-linguistic organised

²Music is a useful term delimiting a large class of practices employing organized sound. The fine granularity of the present analysis, however, may potentially reveal patterns of coherence exclusive to specific members, thereby rendering the more general concept misleading. Interdisciplinarity tends to destabilize words by acting as catalyst for the natural movement of the language system.

sound can play a significant functional role in the formation of "moral consciousness". Gould's articulation of this process was not entirely systematic or explicit. The rapid growth of cognitive science, however, provides an opportunity to fill a void left both by the exhaustion of traditional approaches, and the antipathy of much contemporary theory to his underlying project.

A casual glance at any number of current disciplinary approaches discerns a focus distinguished by its critique of subjectivity. Longstanding belief in an essential, unified selfhood has come under heavy fire, reflecting consensus as to the poverty of conventional dualism.³ Yet failure to overcome the subject-object dichotomy in more practical terms continues to manifest itself in a number of intransigent dualisms. For example, the formalist approach to musical analysis finds itself perpetually confounded by the "problem" of emotion, often contrasted with the semantically deeper and more cerebral pursuit of a unified, structural intelligibility (Kivy, 1991).

In addition, contemporary theory has decried attempts to pin down meaning on the specimen-board of de-historical abstraction (e.g. Adorno, 1981; Volosinov, 1986). Instead, we are offered an almost exclusive array of so-called social factors. This is manifest in historical studies of power, generic evolution, discourse analysis, cultural rituals, and patterns of normative behaviour (e.g. Frith, 1988; Rouget 1985). Productive as such investigations have been, their sweeping dismissal of formalist pre-occupations is an overstatement. It remains important that the physical processes to which such dissections refer be seen as bearing some intrinsic role in the overall semantic process. The tendency, however, has been to conceive anything biological as a kind of psycho-physical

³Diverse thinkers such as Derrida (1981), Bakhtin (1984a), Foucault (1970) [post-structuralism]; Giddens (1991) [sociology]; Dennett (1991) [artificial intelligence/philosophy]; Vygotsky (1986) [psychology]; Edelman (1992), Revonsuo (1994) [neuro-science] all share these broad intellectual tendencies.

common denominator that can be conveniently deleted from the more salient numeration of social "difference" (e.g. Wolff, 1992; Butler, 1990).

Unfortunately, this approach posits a radical dualism of its own. It is generally agreed that the adoption of a non-essentialist, non-unitarian position with respect to subjectivity has proven profitable. But such an investment turns sour when it grants an impermeable status to the disciplinary boundaries of biology and culture in return. The broader meaning of the practices considered by this thesis can only be broached if one ascribes to these theoretically disparate domains a certain holistic dynamism. And this, in turn, requires that epistemology be integrated into the locus of first-person experience, no longer solely confined to the analytical deployments of linguistic practice. This thesis postulates a third claim (postulate 3): it is insufficient to make subjectivity a purely reified object of scholarly examination. No matter if one speaks of "performativity", "lifeworld", "concrete historical context", "everyday experience", or any other verbal marker standing for the embedded nature of life, for we maintain that any plausible route across the dualistic divide must include a disciplined submersion in the unpredictable waters of experience itself.⁴ This does not imply there is nothing to say; it only acknowledges a commitment to embark upon a discourse that is conscious of its limitations qua discourse. From this perspective, the thesis is at once an experimental instantiation of such an introspective approach (Chapter 2, section B), and a multi-disciplinary examination of the material its observations provide. Following the Socratic model, aspects of this discipline will be defined in the section devoted to methodology.

The epistemological underpinnings of this research are also consonant with those expressed by John Dewey and Arthur Bentley (Knowing and the Known, 1949).

⁴This is not intended primarily as a critique of speech act theory, Heideggerian phenomenology, marxism or other traditions where such terminology is employed; rather, it attempts to highlight the constant need for psychological vigilance regarding the propensity of language use--in Gregory Bateson's (1979) terms--to "confuse the map with the territory".

Remarkable for its time, their collaborative opus might be characterised by three key attributes: it is holistic, non-essentialist, and process-oriented. Again, chapter 2 develops the relevance of these concepts to the present venture.

Additional background material will also be presented in section B of Chapter 1 in the form of four brief essays or prolegomena. Prolegomenon I will elaborate on the context and ramifications of what we designate a "cultural propensity for linguistic over-reaching". Prolegomenon II views the plays of Eugene Ionesco as exemplifying an artistic confrontation with the foregoing ethos that is somewhat analogous, in broad terms, to the present approach. Prolegomenon III attempts to decipher and make operational the Gouldian problematic. Finally, Prolegomenon IV further expands this exposition by employing concepts of cognitive psychology compatible with its logic.

3. Discussion

Following both the prolegomena, which elaborate features of background context, and Chapter Two, which deals with issues of methodology, the Socratic maieutic method will be employed by posing questions basic to the thesis (Chapter Three).⁵ The first query seeks to negotiate a confrontation between the Gouldian problematic and cognitive science, suggestive of the manner in which our epistemological dilemma might be successfully approached and further researched. In contrast, our first anti-thesis emerges in the form of a warning: collective failure to resolve the foregoing amounts to a veritable crisis in human semiosis. This plight in today's zeitgeist is perceived as a spiralling verbal conflict that has transformed the field of values and self-knowledge into a battle-ground of interminable analysis, argumentation, and self-assertion, all under the label of what might be termed "emancipative theory". The second fundamental question addressed in

Chapter three concerns the nature of creativity. What exactly has been gained by shifting the onus from God onto the "creative thinker"? Who is the "I"--or perhaps more accurately, the "we"--that is taking credit for creativity as a symbolic activity? The thesis postulates that this is an emergent level of nature itself (postulate 4).

The issue of dualism is a subtle one, as our third anti-thesis question indicates: is it possible we may unknowingly slip back into an essentialised, albeit *collective* selfhood by insisting upon an exclusively *human* semiosis, viewed in isolation from the fecund processes through which it arises? Creativity is intrinsically a systemic process that develops a temporal dialectics of the evolving psyche.

In a sense, dissociation stands as the arch-concept of this entire enterprise: it provides not only a theoretical perspective on the focal experience, but a means of exploring the larger context in which its utility might arise. Interestingly, the concept bears resemblance to an aspect of dualistic thought in that it foregrounds the possibility of a *separation* deemed to have profound implications. For dualism, of course, the gap is essentialised with respect to any communicative crossings: semantic content finding its way across the divide must simply be accepted as the workings of an utterly mysterious agency. What we propose, on the other hand, is not an "absolute outside", but a "functional alterity" based upon the organisational and ontogenetic plasticity of the human nervous system (Laborit, 1977). In such a scheme mystery⁶ does not *sanction* content; rather, it acts as *facilitator* in a law-abiding process of semantic potentiation and receptivity.

The thesis will discuss how psychology operationalises the concept of mystery as "subconscious" or "non-cognised" (Bassin, 1969) in a way that integrates both Freudian

⁵ For a complete list of thesis questions and anti-theses dealt with in Chapter three, see List 6, p. 31.

⁶ Mystery used in the sense of an immediately felt experience of human limitation. Any phenomenon that defies explanation not only in terms of present knowledge, but in terms of some imagined future state of learning, is likely to elicit this reaction. The object or event is often complex, but can also stem from

and physiological processes subserving mental sets about the unknown. An additional cognitive science framework for mystery refers to cognitive processes of dissociation. The notion of dissociation is postulated here to be a necessary but not sufficient cognitive prerequisite for creativity and self-awareness (postulate 5). This postulate has not to my knowledge been widely considered (postulate 6). Resistance to its dissemination is twofold. First is a recent history of influential theories of meaning emphasising the linguistically constructed nature of subjectivity and meaning. Cilliers (1998) argues that the functionalist (one could also refer to structuralism) approach to language ultimately construes meaning as something logically antecedent to syntax that becomes instantiated within a closed, rule-based system. Thinking transpires as manipulation of fixed symbols within a rule-governed, socio-historical context of language "production", or, in an anthropological setting, underlying patterns of narrativity, etc. With the advent of a post-structuralist mode of thought, however, Cilliers proposes that writers such as Derrida intuitively grasp characteristics which identify language as a member of a larger class of naturally occurring complex systems. The dynamic instability of these systems renders their development unpredictable, causing adaptive evolution within an ever-present contingency that is resistant to algorithmic description. However, Derrida's philosophical preoccupations have not promoted interest in the dynamics of subjectivity outside of a linguistic context. The present point is that recent scientific developments have now made it both possible and worthwhile to begin exploring implications stemming from the dynamic interface of language and the complex organism that is the human animal. The value of Cilliers' analysis is that such a move may be viewed as an extension of the poststructuralist endeavour rather than something inimical to its spirit.

The second factor deals with the substrate of this cultural sign-system, conceived as the purview of biologists, ethologists, and the like. Here, opposition appears tied to an

magnitudes of scale, whereby one's habitual relation to the world is suddenly disrupted.

intransigent legacy of mechanical determinism that bedevils its supporters and opponents alike. This view is prevalent among the contemporary school of socio-biology, which treats the Darwinian theory of evolution in a very linear manner, without room for historicity (Wilson, 1996).

The classical scientific tradition associated with reductionism has historically been entrenched in a kind of idealism with respect to the human mind. To the degree that large-scale events are determined by the state of the system at its most granular level of organization, causality may be said to flow "upward". Yet it is only the highest order object--i.e., the human brain--that has the capacity to acquire knowledge of "reality", expressed as the timeless laws of material interactivity. From a mechanically deterministic perspective, knowledge indeed seems to impart a kind of divinity to the mind in the form of an unbiased objectivity. Such symbolic discourse can thus acquire the psychological trappings of an absolute. This direct linkage between abstract knowledge and transcendence has lingering positivist connotations (Dennett, 1991), despite scientific evidence to the contrary. The abstract models which neuroscientists employ to represent the concrete world of the brain provide counter-examples (Donald, 1991; Kosslyn and Koenig, 1995).

These epistemological issues will be further discussed in Chapter two. Yet, the assumptions they harbour are of great importance when considering possible separations from the everyday modality of practical intelligence or the specialised rigours of academic thinking. In either case, to relinquish what might be considered "normal intentional consciousness" is to cede to the world of blind desires and forces, an indeterminacy radically incommensurable with the highest, most abstract attitude of human thought. The Freudian revolution confronts us with the irrepressible dynamism of a libidinal energetics that not only commands respect, but necessitates a painstaking hermeneutics as antidote. Further: in the work of Michel Foucault (1979), for example, darkness itself appears

increasingly rationalised, in a sense appropriating the very reason that was thought to illuminate it. Biology and its hedonic hydraulics give way to an economy of artifice, a complex network of social and discursive relations that requires a meta-theoretical perspective of even greater abstraction and erudition in order to keep the possibility of freedom alive.

It is the insufficiency of abstract knowledge (postulate 7) and human volition (postulate 8) to self-transcendence that leads us to explore the question of the phenomenology of dissociation. By postulating a rationalist Socratic approach, this thesis nonetheless seeks to accommodate a level of indeterminacy through its sanctioning of ritualised self-abandonment. Still, if knowledge is power, does it not stand to reason that our best hope against the excesses of power is an excess of knowledge? The fugal ritual depicted here claims to portend an *unexpected* form of learning, emerging through a disciplined state of denial. Is such insistence simply one more turn in the long tale of idealistic self-deception? To the contrary; we believe that moral discipline provides the means whereby a loss of control becomes integrated into a rich but nonetheless concrete modality of multi-levelled engagement (postulate 9).

LIST 5: POSTULATES

- I claim that the semantic field permitting such phenomenology to arise must be considered a product of "multi-layered" processes (postulate 1).
- The cardinal postulate (postulate 2) is that a disciplined use of non-linguistic organised sound can play a significant functional role in the formation of "moral consciousness".
- This thesis postulates a third claim (postulate 3): it is insufficient to make "subjectivity" a purely reified "object" of scholarly examination.
- Who is the "I"—or perhaps more accurately, the "we"—that is taking credit for creativity as a symbolic activity? The thesis postulates that this is an emergent level of nature itself (postulate 4).
- The notion of "dissociation" is postulated here to be a necessary but not sufficient cognitive pre-requisite for creativity and self-awareness (postulate 5).
- Postulate 5 has not been widely considered (postulate 6).
- the insufficiency of abstract knowledge (postulate 7) to self-transcendence
- the insufficiency of human volition (postulate 8) to self-transcendence
- the notion of "moral discipline" is in fact a blueprint for instantiating such regularity through a particular form of multi-level engagement (postulate 9).

LIST 6: THESIS QUESTIONS, ANTI-THESES

Q-1: The central question posed by this thesis concerns the problem of moderating a confrontation between what has been labelled the *Gouldian problematic*, and cognitive science.

AT-1: Today one encounters a social ethos that places increasing reliance upon discursive analysis: a predicament that may ultimately transform the field of values and self-knowledge into matters contested solely within the arena of political debate.

Q-2: Working to forge a critical functional link between musical activity and the broader realm of ethical behaviour stands as the crowning achievement of Glenn Gould's genius. I submit that deeper appreciation of this thesis depends upon the development of a general framework in which to view the subject of creativity.

AT-2: Various approaches to critical aesthetics refer to the moral context of the creative act, but most are largely silent with regard to the creative dimension of the moral transaction.

Q-3: How do we break out of the constraints of dualism in handling this issue of music and morality?

3a: Is the biological and social conditioning of the self co-extensive with the cognitive resources of the organism?

3b: Can the concept of a "cognitive surplus" be compatible with some form of historical understanding?

3c: What kind of volitional process could possibly subvert itself—along with its powerfully instituted constraints—so as to effect a deep (multi-levelled) transformation in the dynamics of thought?

3d: What kind of evidence would attest to a "success" in this endeavour?

AT-3: Shifting discussion about creativity from an autonomous "I" to the determinations of social power and discourse does not automatically evade the dangers of binary thinking. Consequently, I am concerned about slipping back into an essentialised albeit collective selfhood. A purely linguistic approach promoting the subject as a social entity fails to recognise the broader biological roots in which linguistic activity transpires.

Q-4: I submit that the phenomenology of dissociation provides an intriguing way of handling dualistic objections to the thesis problem.

AT-4: Dismissing the articulation of states of consciousness as a mere function of *subjective belief* poses a principal anti-thesis to our proposition.

Q-5: I contend that our survey of theoretical and empirical support for dissociation has relevance for Gould's discourse of ethical practice.

AT-5: Though often committed to underscoring the non-essential, culturally mediated nature of the creative act, critical forms of musical aesthetics rarely emphasise the opportunity for greater behavioural flexibility posed at the level of first-person experience. In short, the subject/object duality is widely reckoned as unassailable.

4. Speculations and Conclusion

Given the magnitude of recent human conflicts, it is understandable that "universal truths" have become suspect. If a level of all-embracing value exists, therefore, it seems unlikely to manifest itself as fundamentally discursive in nature. Perhaps the act of *listening* might supplant that of speaking as the basis of ethical behaviour: a process, in other words, wherein the subject cedes autonomy to a larger field of transaction. This is the function of moral discipline. In such a conception, altered identity is not envisioned as a series of social roles, granted through the aegis of self-construction; rather, the self is transformed by virtue of the listening process and the meaning that spontaneously arcs across the space of an inner silence.

It is the special structural characteristics of "attending" that are at issue. This is not to suggest that the specific ritual examined is the only method of promoting such an end; on the contrary, it no doubt shares features with a variety of strategies aimed at a better understanding of the processes involved. These reach far beyond the specific musical setting, moreover, and deal with the psychological context required to "ethically integrate" the fugue state. Is it possible, in other words, to acquire a procedural knowledge such that the dissociative modality can be auto-cued in other, non-ritual contexts?

Only such an eventuality would truly fulfil the requirements of a moral discipline as conceived above, that is to say, a form of non-repressive selflessness sustained by a motivational apparatus that is firmly anchored in the unknown. Dissociation could provide the functional opportunity of bypassing a level of conditioned expectation, provided there is sufficient resolve to allow it to override the addictive need for reassurance that the vast percentage of our symbolic environment is designed to indulge. For a very long time, religious thinkers have urged that meaning in the fullest sense is a function of innocence

and vulnerability; now, with the advent of cognitive science, we may be coming closer to an empirical demonstration of why—and how—this may be so. The newness of the present remains intractable to the metrics of our abstract narrativity. Perhaps music, in contrast, can be a valuable tool in an age of perpetual distraction. Even it, however, is but a tentative step towards the plenitude of a still greater silence.

B. PROLEGOMENA

Prolegomenon 1: Linguistic Over-reaching

Do not eavesdrop on my songs.
 I cast my eyes down
 as if caught in a misdeed.
 I cannot even trust myself
 to watch them grow.
 Your inquisitiveness is treason!
 Bees, when they build cells,
 do not let one observe them either,
 and do not observe themselves.
 When the rich honeycombs
 have been brought to daylight
 then, before anybody, you shall taste them.

Friedrich Rückert

Gustav Mahler is often considered an artist with feet in different centuries. His music seems at once a swan song to the dream of romanticism, and a fanfare for the birth of a new ethos. Heartfelt longing co-inhabits a world of grotesque irony; the disjunction bewildered his contemporaries. With hindsight, we read in this a crisis of faith: the failure of an entire civilisation, perhaps, to offer the human subject a proper habitation in either the social world or the universe at large. Yet Mahler did not lose faith in the principle of privacy

that Rückert extols. The honey may have lost its unambiguous sweetness, but a certain essential reverence for the productive process remained.

Many today have lost even a modicum of trust. Some demand admittance into the bees' cells as their political right, and once inside, pronounce with assurance upon the meaning of all that remains after their forced entry. Others pursue a more patient approach, labouring to penetrate the inner chambers through the painstaking accumulation of historical intelligence. Still others shrug their shoulders, satisfied if the honey can provide them with a certain diversionary élan.⁷ These strategies must not be mistaken for ends, however: employed myopically, they serve instead as breeding grounds for conflict. It is not that concepts of power, information, and pleasure are not deeply implicated in the reality of our lives; rather, exclusive focus upon them limits the kind of questions that need to be posed in order to advance a more dynamic understanding of human behaviour.

What is at issue is that curious gap between the artisan and the artefact, so poignantly safeguarded by the poet above. But times have changed. The notion of art's "disinterestedness" no longer conveys a sense of humility before a Nature who knows, but the fallibility of a dupe who refuses to see. If God no longer speaks through us, we had better preserve our dignity by finding out who is.

Relinquishing consensus with respect to the ultimate source of authority places a heavy burden upon us as interpretative agents. The positivity of human knowledge now seems to stand, for better or worse, as final arbiter of sense and value. The majesties of meaning no longer arrive as monarchs from on high, but languish as immigrants in "subjective" detention centres, waiting to be processed by a proper court of public disputation. In short: the gap must be closed. But this imperative could not take root as a

⁷Rather than cite specific examples at this juncture, I wish merely to suggest an ambience, a general sense of historical ethos appropriate to the secularized pursuit of a deterministic "ground".

crucial component of the human environment without exerting a selective pressure on the kinds of equipment required for success.

Consider the concept of arrogance, for instance: here is an attribute that might be seen as possessing a privileged stability due to its moral implications. In one context it augurs a resolute appeal to pre-existent authority, precluding any necessity for self-reflection. Smugness, anger, and an ability to ritually re-create the context from which one draws emotional sustenance are basic tools of the trade. Yet a process of historical mutation implies a concomitant shift in the types of skills to be cultivated. Impermeable self-certitude now demands a fund of historical knowledge, an articulation of interpretative methods, and an ability to ritually replicate their truthfulness as circumstances demand. Granted, in both cases, the moral failing betrays a lack of flexibility; in the latter case, however, the identity under siege has become externally distributed, as it were, scattered throughout a network of discursive practices that requires more intellectual apparatus on behalf of its defence. The cognitive pre-requisites for staking out a personal claim have become increasingly specialised, even though fuelled by a common desire for immutable authority. Jean Genet's play The Balcony (1958) poetically captures the flavour of this historical distinction.

One might rephrase Descartes: "I know, therefore I am." In the fictional film Man Bites Dog (Belvaux, 1992), the daily exploits of a psychopathic killer are shown being cinematically chronicled by an aspiring documentary crew, unaware that their "professional detachment" cannot absolve them of complicity in the heinous acts they witness. From a moral standpoint, knowledge not only empowers us to act, but impels us to do so. But the issue is subtler: interjected between remorseless sprees of senseless brutality, the focal character volunteers an unsettling narrative of enlightenment, calmly proffering sophisticated analyses of society and the complaint of alienation it is said to spawn. Something is awry regarding the extent to which our positive knowledge is valued,

specifically, its ability to promote an understanding of the self as constructed object. Thus, the killer symbolically embodies a powerful insight. When knowledge is indistinguishable from identity, its assertion becomes an act of pure violence.⁸

Consider now the contrast elicited by the historical vicissitudes of a notion of epistemological "humility". In the first instance, one faces a context in which inscrutability reigns supreme; the prospects for human symbolic behaviour lie forever clouded by an essential, structural insufficiency. In the second case, however, patience and diligence become distinguishing features, suggesting that merit is bound up with one's sacrifice on behalf of a slow but inevitable advancement of the social fund. Commonality between them lies with the individual's self-concept, tempered within the framework of a vast concern. But the difference in emphasis is clear: what we claim to *know*--now and in the future--has become of greater import than that which we cannot.

Abandoning its traditional self-image as a metaphysical conduit, human thought has been faced with the unenviable task of fashioning its own ground. To a certain extent, a concerted effort has been made to explore the material conditions through which our acts of meaning are claimed to arise. It is not clear, however, whether our dream of control is any nearer at hand as a result. Post-structuralist writers such as Derrida (1988) go further, asserting that there is something fundamentally misguided about the attempt. It is as if the gap of non-continuity marking a prior relation to external transcendence has somehow re-emerged, internal now to the very linguistic system we purportedly seek to harness.

Yet if the desire to be totally present to ourselves has led us astray, we might expect a theoretical reinstatement of indeterminacy to mollify somewhat the inflationary pressures of an overtaxed discourse. Is there any indication that relief from the burden of a

⁸Though framed by the mediating device of the documentary maker's camera, this film still poses the question as to whether any non-Brechtian use of graphic violence--including its own--can be justified. The solution to an over-intellectualized receptivity is not a proportional increase in the presentation of material that elicits a low-level reflexive arousal. This issue will be discussed in greater detail.

perfect accountability actually holds forth the promise of a more viable solution to our evaluative disputes and our self-ignorance? Has communication in fact become more user-friendly? The short-term answer seems negative: if anything, the growing specialisation of moral discourse seems to have become exacerbated. A few observations on this trend will be advanced.

At the heart of the problem lies the assumption that a deconstructive approach comprises a kind of negative hermeneutics, concerned with the systematic undermining of all semantic asymmetry. But such a radical relativism would simply spell the death of meaning, not promote its dynamic evolution. Sensitivity to the way a given structure achieves closure, to the subtle discrepancies at its margins, to the elements it deems inviolate and which it consequently keeps hidden: these are factors inseparable from its individuality, from its scope of autonomy, and hence from things most resistant to the crude levelling of a non-discriminative relativity. Introducing a fundamental level of contingency, however, means that no act of self-assertion can stand alone, immune to the always-present possibility of a radical reorganisation.

It is the human subject's conditioned resistance to change that unnecessarily distorts this theoretical embrace of indeterminacy. Rather than being pursued as a process of opening up in order to accommodate meaning, deconstruction is misguidedly cultivated as yet another form of positive knowledge, an opportunity to assert one's mastery over a domain, even when the discourse at stake is explicitly one of *not-knowing*. Autonomy is thus reinstated in the form of the deconstructive agent, a stable centre that takes credit for the clever feats of dismantling it performs, and to which a certain social status thereby accrues. As the structure of the world unravels into a dull mass of relativity, so the value of the self intensifies, a self that reflects in its diamond-like facets a creativity that has nowhere else to go.

The ludic element often associated with post-modernism loses its value when viewed as the generative impetus behind a process of self-creation. Moreover, the metaphysical assertion that there is nothing outside of language appears to sanction this development, irrespective of its philosophical intent. For, if the self is but a product of language, can it not claim—through its playful demonstration of the system's essential fallibility—an ontological equality with its maker, and hence a kind of redemptive victory? It is this fundamental circularity, this self-assertion by default, that so characterises a particular ethos in our culture, and further bears relation—whether coherent or not—to the theoretical discourse of the post-modern. In the end, it is this tacit notion of liberation through language that is greatly responsible for the obscurantist tendencies evident in contemporary discourse.

Even so, this does not perforce invalidate the post-structuralist conception of language, with its emphasis upon an irreducible indeterminacy. Rather, the challenge posed is to learn how a critical element of not-knowingness can be integrated into our behaviour in a more functional and productive manner. Here the notion of textuality is in need of restraint. Metaphysics aside, we are not simply faced with a question of language operating on language, but of a many-levelled, dynamic interplay that includes the miraculous complexity of the central nervous system. Perhaps, in the face of such diversity, it is fair to imagine not one but multiple modalities of linguistic engagement, differing both in their systematic employment of *non*-linguistic factors, and in the kind of semantic outcomes they are pre-disposed to generate.

What is required is a determined shift of attention from the positivity of knowledge—with its vast entanglements of lexical construction and socio-historical context—to embodied processes that are neither timeless dynamos of psychic propulsion nor cryptic encoders of fully formed text. "Play" is indeed of cardinal importance, suggesting as it does an abnegation, a degree of spontaneity inescapably bound to the dynamism of the moment.

But this teleological "innocence" does not refer to something easily or haphazardly attained. Moreover, the challenge of imaginatively conceptualising these expressions as part of a coherent and functionally differentiated state of mind cannot supplant the actual process of their implementation.

Use of heavily loaded terms demands both caution and explanation. Nonetheless, the basic perspectival shift being advocated—that is, from positive knowledge to indeterminacy—can go a long way towards systematically clarifying a sense of their present usage. Consider again the idea of humility. In a traditional context, one might speak of a quality of relation with god: god as a concept, as a list of attributes, as a set of theological principles or beliefs, etc. But what is implied, it might be asked, by diminishing this focus in favour of a more fully present experience of inscrutability? Would such a turn betoken some corresponding divergence in cognitive practice? But the question begs further refinement. An active condition of not-knowing must not be considered a discursive formulation regarding god's demise or absence, or some theoretical chain of reasoning precipitated by the "problem" of meaning. To verbalise the issue so is to short-circuit a potential instantiation of indeterminacy with a negatively phrased conceptual *content*. Our question is of a different order: can the loop of positive knowledge be broken in a fundamental way? Does the psychological propensity to open out toward the radically unknowable stand as a discrete cognitive act, dissociable from the dualistic context in which it was traditionally employed? And is there any unforeseen virtue in such a facility that might render its obsolescence undesirable?

The domain of aesthetic experience plays a unique role in these matters, but the whole notion of how one engages with creative media has been exposed to the selfsame historical pressures under discussion. To paraphrase Coleridge, we live in an era marked by a pronounced *unwillingness* to suspend disbelief. Art is foisted upon us as packets of demographic data wrapped in pleasure. We are thus granted the freedom to like whatever

we are, and—through an act of critical thinking—to justify ourselves to boot. All aspire to the role of sociologist, secular hierophant in a world choked with signs. And to a certain extent, sophisticated purveyors of much of this glut are little concerned about the kind of interpretations we care to fashion: for them, the only crime is indifference.

Such a form of control is predicated upon a general level of discursive virtuosity plus an increasing reluctance to reveal one's evaluative hand. Both, however, may be functions of an impaired ability to listen. Alternatively, is it possible to actively ignore our present blight of semiotic noise—through yet another form of not-knowing—without conjuring an exclusivity based upon the very apparatus we are seeking to limit? Perhaps it is possible to train the mind to adopt certain measures of economy, offering to itself a kind of evaluative litmus test, as well as a necessary sensitivity to the constancy of change: in short, a set of cognitive *procedural values*. Answers to such questions may not be readily forthcoming. However, given the communicative challenges that presently besiege us, their pursuit seems well justified—if merely from a palpable sense of the futility in doing otherwise.

Prolegomenon 2: Ionesco's Theatre of Dissociation

The previous essay provided historical context for our assessment of a predicament involving the status of positive knowledge and the role of language in human affairs. Nearly a half century ago, the Romanian playwright Eugene Ionesco offered essentially the same diagnosis; while his artistic "remedy" involved the use of words, his work is dependent upon the phenomenology of dissociation in a manner that invites comparison to the fugue ritual under investigation.

Initially, the theatre of Ionesco was an unsettling experience. Consider the subtitle "anti-play" affixed to his maiden effort for the stage: the play was intended to alert the viewer to the possibility of some kind of discontinuity with respect to their habitual

expectations. The warning was justified; after all, here were characters whose language was no longer amenable to the hermeneutics of motivation, either psychologically or sociologically. Here was a narrative whose meaning lay beyond the realm of everyday logic, concealed in some alternative field of relation, or—perhaps—even non-existent. Indeed, it was this apparent dissociation of word and context that prompted the critical perception of an irresponsible turning from history, an ill-fated rejection of the material world whose only recourse was a puerile pronouncement upon the "absurdity of modern life".

However this consternation did not pose an immediate obstacle to the enjoyment of the sly spectacle Ionesco had contrived. Blindfolded by laughter, unwary patrons of The Bald Soprano (1958) were seductively lured to the brink of a private abyss. Appreciation of the overall achievement would seem to entail an appreciation of not only the humour and the dread, but their intimate connection. Curiously, what seemed like nonsense on the stage appeared to have the capacity to trigger a reaction that was anything but detached tomfoolery. Is it possible that the discomfort this work evoked—and against which the self-righteous wrath of a "social concern" was summoned—was itself the symptom of a more fundamental malaise, no less *historical* for its extended duration?

The utility of causal modelling is not necessarily at issue; what concerns us is the sovereignty of a *specific* logic of connection and its relation to human self-understanding. Ionesco's primary objective was to provoke insight through *art*, not *sociological discourse*, a crucial distinction that remains a locus of cultural misapprehension. According to the author, unless we are prepared to enter the ritual framework on its own terms, art has little distinctive or worthwhile to offer.

The problem is not simply one of ethnographic knowledge, but of psychological openness. The "play" is not simply a disembodied meeting of discourses, but a set of events that includes the workings of the nervous system in all its complexity. Serious discussion must accommodate this reality. Those who witnessed The Bald Soprano's

debut, for example, began their night with laughter; consequently, we should be alerted that the ritual semantics presupposes a specific psycho-physiological condition. In other words, laughter is not merely conceived as the pleasurable epiphenomenon of a social critique, but rather becomes the functional pre-requisite *through* which a level of meaning is revealed.

It is important to examine the means by which this hilarity is provoked. Ionesco presents the viewer with a domestic after-dinner scene in which the conversation is comprised entirely of banalities. One is immediately struck by the relationship of speaker to speech, the utter lack of awareness with which the language is being employed. And it is precisely this mechanistic temper that initially elicits laughter: there is simply no context, in either action or setting, to which their speech is vitally connected, nothing suggestive of any plausible motivation save the notion of social convention itself. They are people without ideas or thoughts of their own, pure unadulterated products of discourse, and we guffaw at their stupidity.

And yet, as sentient beings, we are driven to seek a deeper meaning in the drama intentionally set before us. Liberated from attending to the lexical content of the empty gestures, we are driven to engage in the game of literary hermeneutics. Pre-eminently, the question arises: what is the function of these characters' language? Why do they feel the need to speak at all? Are they so entirely a product of their conditions that in merely performing an utterance they have exercised their only possible expression, the one whereby their very existence is attained? Do we not differentiate ourselves, and our own expanded horizon, through the psychic space bestowed by an ability to manipulate language in a complex way denied these poor unfortunate automatons?

Surely the inhibition of a fundamental human capacity is being dramatised, and educated theatre goers can deftly summon a surprising number of historical insights regarding the mental lethargy before them. There are technological and economic imperatives, bureaucratisation, secularisation, war, and diverse forms of social,

psychological, and spiritual alienation: all legitimate contributors to the ultimate coherence of social theory. The function as critical observers, consequently, consists in monitoring the unfolding events in order to ascertain what additional causes or ameliorating responses this particular "text" implies. But such a function demands a degree of honesty as well. Only when we see in these farcical robots a reflection of our *own* ennui and distress will we realise the urgency of marshalling those distinguishing faculties that constitute our only hope.

Unfortunately, such an analysis of The Bald Soprano cannot be sustained; Ionesco, we must recall, has written an *anti-play*. Thus the tables are about to be turned: in assuming an unassailable, essential link between the "everyday" setting and the "banality" of the discourse, have we possibly fallen prey to our own, more sophisticated brand of habituated thinking? This becomes a possibility because, in the throes of our laughter, Ionesco begins to slowly manipulate the dialogue. The speech is still entirely puppet-like, but now it begins to veer off the rails, as it were; a peculiar vertigo takes over, creating an ever-widening gap between our assumptions about the domestic scene, and the apparently unrelated platitudes being uttered. But things will get worse. The further their statements depart from the normative social context, the more they become imbued with a kind of self-conscious logical consistency. Not only has all possibility of coherent analysis ceased for the viewer; the characters on stage have suddenly acquired the audience's linguistic "privilege" with no apparent benefit to their sense of awareness.

The Bald Soprano generally inspires two divergent reactions. In the first, Ionesco is basically accused of cheating. The people we encounter in our lives *do* speak in a manner that seems to reflect their social situation and its implicit norms; otherwise, communication would not be possible. In creating characters whose language seems at best a ludicrous joke and at worst a mask for aggression, we are abandoned to a grotesque, irrational world where self-understanding and communication are virtually non-existent. These are not

historical beings, but timeless proto-types that exist outside the concrete situations they inhabit, and in the end, we judge the *artwork* reflective of an unpardonable moral lassitude.

But there lies a contrasting experience of The Bald Soprano. In certain witnesses, the play's deliberate frustration of the analytical process does not lead to an irrevocable rupture, a critical refusal of participation on the part of the viewer. Instead, one goes along for the ride, suspends one's habitual modality of thought, implicitly accepting the possibility of another logic, another style of linguistic employment. The play, after all, is a *ritual*, and as such, demands the adoption of a set of rules that operate in contradistinction to those defining alternative contexts. Why not simply relax and permit oneself to be bombarded with these strange cacophonous sights and sounds, if for no other reason than a desire to prolong the hilarity? We thus intimate a level of meaning whose initial access is *state dependent*, that is, predicated on an acceptance of the cognitive imperatives of a ritual seduction.

Indeed, in this second scenario, the initial disjunction between speech and context serves only to intensify the laughter's convulsiveness. It is as if a terrible burden has been lifted. Ionesco succeeds in granting a freedom of which we had never even dreamed of desiring: freedom, that is, from the incessant, relentless duty of believing in our own language, and in our ability to harmonise it both with the world, and with ourselves. For only the tiniest moment, the invisible shackles that bind us to the impossible task of controlling meaning are irresponsibly unlocked, and the stage becomes a tangible representation of the intellect, continuing its spasmodic motions à la Charlie Chaplin's factory worker when the conveyor belts of Modern Times come unexpectedly to a halt. Having been placed in this situation of giddy euphoria, however, Ionesco's victims soon become privy to the true gravity of his prank. What was perceived on a level of intuitive processing gradually becomes explicit; what was hitherto a purely ritualistic use of language is now tinged with the overtones of didactic purpose.

The comic window is in reality a mirror, and the question "why do they speak?" comes home with an intensity that verges on terror. It is the emotional valence that demands clarification. Others regularly broach the subject of our loss of control, after all, without provoking a similar distress. Yet whatever else is intended, this much is clear: the plausible *reinstatement* of control would hardly elicit such a negative reaction from his audience.

It may therefore be useful to review this question of subjectivity in the context of those most eager to assert their opposition to the "absurdist" alternative. Is there really an essential distinction, we are led to ask, between the speaker—the entity who intends—and the extended social context in which the "chosen" words transpire? Perhaps not. But the consequences arising from this negative response are divergent. The most specious line of descent promotes the vagaries of "self-creation", the enactment of a genre one might describe as "philosophical finger-painting". A more stringent approach, however, is to be found in the formal pursuit of *historical conditions*: here we find a discipline that seeks public consensus, and what is more, a greater consistency within the underlying logic of identity. Do we not attain self-knowledge, after all, in the act of critically examining that of which we are allegedly comprised?

By severing the connection between his characters' speech and their social context, Ionesco appears to deprive us of even this hard-earned dignity. But the question must again be posed: why should the mad-cap dramatisation of such a patently absurd world become so profoundly disturbing? By what conjuring has uproarious laughter unlocked the flood-gates of an even deeper anxiety? The point is that few—even for a brief moment—can live with the conviction that life is truly absurd. If Ionesco really believed this, moreover (whatever that could mean), would it merit convincing others of the insight? My hypothesis is that the notion of absurdity stands as a critical evasion from a far more difficult pursuit.

Why, for all our analytical bravado, do we assume a greater degree of awareness than that which we ascribe to the mindless puppets on stage?

There is a crucial distinction to be made here, with reference to our attitude towards history. It is not simply that we utilise the content of historical knowledge as an efficacious tool in our struggle with nature, or as a means of providing a necessary order in human affairs. Rather, in rightfully questioning our status as autonomous psychic entities, we seem to exhibit a concomitant need to anchor ourselves in the social dimension of our language and our knowledge. But while that may be biologically *useful*, Ionesco argues, it is not a *ground*. The dramaturgical ritual provides us with a set of conditions that promotes an *embodied* insight, however; it does not present itself in the habitual manner of a conceptual self-reflection. Instead, a deeper lacuna appears between the organism and its own language, momentarily revealing the close proximity of what was once an invisible menace in the psychic sky: the tragic black-hole of linguistic self-creation. Or, in somewhat different terms, the threat of philosophical solipsism, leading to a condition of existential solitude, along with its accompanying angst.

The ability to plan, execute, and monitor lengthy strings of abstract signifiers in either auditory or visual form may not be co-extensive with embodied processes of conscious awareness. This possibility enables a perspectival switch from critical apprehensions of a-historicism to a more constructive focus, whereby the organism is sensitised to the conditioned urgency of its linguistic motivation. Opening the self to a more dynamic level of historical contingency requires participation of a broader range of biological capabilities. Said another way, it is precisely the historical self that is the purveyor of stasis, attempting to preserve its narrative contours from the corrosive action of a surrounding indeterminacy. The danger of equating social knowledge and self-awareness is thus the assumption it makes about the status of the entity being informed. Yet neither the rigours of knowledge nor the revels of Dionysus are sufficient arbiters of a

truly functional meta-cognition; it is only when we are face to face with the terror of their inadequacy that a more productive mode of engagement can take root. This is not a function of erudition, but an awareness of the embodied principle by which our knowledge is habitually sought and employed. In recognising the *choice* inherent to this pursuit of futility, however, the possibility opens out to a world of deeper meaning. Is it proper that the artistic vehicle of such an insight should be deemed "absurdist"? The brilliance of Ionesco's achievement lay in the way he enabled language to subvert itself, thereby facilitating a non-discursive level of insight. Because humour is particularly predicated on an element of surprise, however, it may be that even his critical allies will end up accelerating a demise of the work's utility. On the other hand, *music* can dispense with language altogether, a fact that seems to favour its use as a means of provoking the kind of bottom-up processes that are pre-requisite to a notion of holistic dialogue. But this virtue in no way insures the desired end. The cultural imperative is so powerful, our use of language so overlearned, that many deny even the functional possibility of loosening the straight-jacket of discursive mediation. Indeed, it is necessary to appreciate the difficulties inherent to the task; more often than not, reception of music *is* coloured by the hues of a high-level conditioned filtration. This thesis attempts to deal with this matter.

The issue at hand, however, is Ionesco's response to the crisis in language, as elaborated in the previous section. Whatever the vicissitudes of his canonical status as a writer, I believe his central insight remains acute: in short, that we as a species cannot *talk* ourselves out of the dark predicament we currently inhabit. The problem, simply put, is the imminent possibility of extinction. Seen from this perspective, however, the so-called "environmental" mess is far more complex than any litany of toxic pollutants or gas emissions suggests; it is—perhaps pre-eminently—a *semiotic* disaster.

This diagnosis is based upon the hypothesis that language use is no longer controlled by the same concatenation of factors that made it an evolutionary tool of survival.

What Ionesco's work demonstrates is that the possibility of creative, self-reflexive awareness is not simply a function of the language system per se. Promotion of music in this context is intended as a means of stressing an alternative modality of cognitive engagement, with the potential to alter the seemingly unassailable functional position of language within the current regime of practice. In so doing, it will be repeatedly urged that such an approach is not an attempt to return to some earlier form of "natural" being. What we are promoting, rather, is the self-conscious employment of music *in order to provoke a level of historical insight*. Accordingly, we now turn our attention to a musician whose creative life was dedicated to precisely such a project.

Prolegomenon 3: Gould

During his lifetime, Glenn Gould was best known as a pianist in the western "classical" tradition. His efforts in other media, however, are also worthy of public attention. Numerous published articles, interviews, as well as a series of innovative radio documentaries reveal considerable depth and breadth of knowledge. Along with such diversity, Gould's oeuvre is distinguished by the intensity of a global concern: specifically, the issue of morality. On a general level, this is an acknowledgement that the question of how one should behave is necessarily all encompassing. Accordingly, no human actions—not even aesthetic ones—can escape the over-riding demands of accommodation to a larger framework.

But what does it mean to engage in a process labelled "moral", and how can involvement with music be seen as facilitating its ends? These are decisive questions, though they are far from novel. Each epoch must respond to the mystery of existence, employing its practical wisdom and strength of imagination to offer meaningful hope for the temperamental wellsprings of human motivation. Indeed, music is perennially summoned

to contribute to a *harmonisation* that addresses the need to belong not only at the level of tribal cohesion, but within a field fashioned by the intrinsic curiosity of the human mind. Here we feel acutely the limitations of our language. “Swept away”, “put under a spell”, “transported”: archaic terms that manage to approximate something in the quality of our felt experience, but offer little in the way of deeper explanation.

The trouble begins when we profess to having travelled to the source, attaining a state of moral elevation on account of our journey. Were there not nazi partisans of high cultivation, who insisted on precisely that? Would it not be wiser to entrust the trancy of rapture to the security of a “subjective” enclosure, safe from the ambiguities of evaluative judgement? But there is another side to the issue. The claim that music incites us in a deleterious manner has an equally illustrious past, from ancient Greece to sundry exhortations of contemporary culture. Surely it behoves us to determine the character of an influence deemed so pervasive, in ways both good and bad. In short, we can ill afford to leave ecstasy to its own devices, convinced it remains but a mystifying pageant of sheer subjectivity.

This was the stance adopted by Glenn Gould. Though displaying the outward signs of a “control freak”, his advocacy of musical ecstasy was adamant, finding in it the singularly redeeming feature of artistic experience. Something in this seemingly paradoxical blend of mastery and abandonment is telling about the man and his proclaimed emphasis upon the moral, which precludes escapism into pleasures either “intellectual” or “hedonic” in the customary sense.⁹ Instead, the ecstatic state creates conditions for a *moral opportunity*, whose fulfilment can only be understood with reference to factors operating on a variety of analytical levels. Holism in this context can be understood in two

⁹ Dr. Tim Maloney, who oversees the Gould archives at the National Library of Canada, is currently writing a book proposing that the pianist strongly exhibited a behavioural profile consistent with Asperger’s syndrome: an interesting possibility when pondering the interface between personality and creativity, with ramifications for the present thesis. (personal communication)

senses. First, it refers to the fact that the altered state must be seen as *contributing partner* in the moral process, offering something that cannot be reduced to discourse without irreparable loss. Second, however, it reaffirms a complexity that stands outside traditional disciplinary means of approach, necessitating a kind of dedicated groping that scans for an emergent *gestalt* rather than local details of logical consistency.

Gould's work finds its greatest distinction in the coherence of his response to the question of music's role in the *overall* communicative process. But one must look at the diversity of his output to appreciate this alleged unity. From this perspective, his creative corpus was a truly interdisciplinary endeavour whose various elements were drawn together through a process of intuition; when one loses sight of this gravitational pull, however, individual components tend to revert to the orbits of habitual discourse, losing their potential for novel behaviour. His forthright rejection of hedonism stands as a case in point. "The purpose of art is not the release of a momentary ejection of adrenaline but is, rather, the gradual, lifelong construction of a state of wonder and serenity" (1984, p. 246). As an isolated bit of discourse, this statement might well be interpreted as promoting the timelessness of the spirit—or at any rate the mind—over the transience of the material world.

Greater familiarity with the Gouldian worldview does not support such a position, or the ready-made baggage it implies. The tremendous importance that *tactility* plays in Gould's art and thought, for example, should alert us that the standard "opposition" between matter and spirit is invalid here; neither should his statement be taken as indicative of an attempted escape into pure formalism, eschewing the body and the historical conditions in which it partakes. Again, such an exegesis overlooks another critical aspect of Gould's thinking, which specifically delimits the formal element of music without sacrificing its indispensability to the larger process of meaning being advanced. This boundary on the efficacy of pure form manifests itself as a discourse on the dangers of

professionalism, wherein the notion of abstract knowledge excessively mediates the musical experience. Thus, the most important level of meaning cannot be reduced to a known set of fixed relations that comes to utterly dominate the perceptual process. Such is the open-endedness of meaning: there is always a "more", if one is prepared to orient one's existence toward its space of emergence. At the same time, however, the physical characteristics to which such constructs refer must be acknowledged as playing a critical role as well.

Returning to Gould's statement, we can now state that his reference to adrenaline is not a dismissal of the biological *per se*, but rather a disapproval of art that exploits certain low levels of reflexivity. Triggering meaning that is immediately accessible, repeatable, and psychologically isolated is not the kind of practice that can ally aesthetic experience with the pursuit of virtuous living. It is the very degree of autonomy of such reflexive activity that allows it to become partitioned, to function as a kind of pseudo-sacred space *in opposition to*, rather than *in dialogue with* the totality of one's experience. In such a ritual, the so-called historical body seeks its own immutable divinity by undertaking an "eternal return" to the security of its own conditioned reactions; however, this form of self-reliance is nothing but a form of addiction, and so devolves into a sequence of ever-diminishing returns.

Consider now the other side of the equation: "lifelong construction of a state of wonder and serenity". Here, even the conceptual juxtaposition suggests a possible departure from the kind of spiritual repose that forsakes the responsibilities of practical power. Rather, serenity's calm acceptance of wonder's unmanageable excess suggests a kind of *dynamic* harmony that is far removed from the contemporary cliché of repressive religious faith. Again, we find a particular alliance between discipline and release that requires significant elaboration. Suffice it for the moment to note that "construction" implies a degree of volition and discipline as a dedicated activity. However, the indeterminacy symbolised by "wonder" is also necessary if we are to avoid the tyranny of a particular logic.

Ultimately, the goal of the moral is not escape from the realm of the everyday, but its material transformation.

The point is not to attain some impossible vantage point outside history, but rather to engage dialogically in a process that contains a concrete mechanism of disengagement as part of its functional organisation. The insight is distilled in the admonition to be “in the world, but not of the world”, a motto that plays a pivotal role in The Quiet in the Land (1992b), Gould’s radio documentary examining a contemporary Mennonite community and its struggle for cultural survival. Similarly, both “solitude” and the notion of “the negative”—frequently used concepts in the Gouldian lexicon—refer to the fundamental moral requisite of mollifying one’s habitual reactivity to an environment polluted by symbolic overload. In an earlier radio opus The Idea of North (1992a), Gould’s sense of the “negative” is metaphorically captured by the image of the arctic, with its physical isolation and unbroken whiteness. In these terms the most pressing moral challenge is not an encounter between specific strands of linguistic conditioning, or between the self and its other; rather, it is the task of becoming sensitised to the *embodied* constraints comprising the core of one’s resistance to growth, both emotionally and discursively. Although the present study attempts to explore the dynamics of negativity in a more concrete way, the metaphor remains a useful tool of approximation. For example, John Cage was once perplexed at his ability to detect a pair of sounds while experiencing the supposed nullity of an anechoic chamber. Writing in Silence (1961), he relates: “[w]hen I described them to the engineer in charge, he informed me that the high one was my nervous system in operation, the low one my blood in circulation” (p. 8). In a similar way, Gould’s mythical “trip north” enables him to talk about the virtues of a confrontation with nothingness, and hence of a potentially altered relationship to the “low-amplitude” signals of one’s own conditioning.

In order to illuminate the role that *music* can play in this process of self-awareness, however, it serves to stress once again the implicit holism underlying Gould’s oeuvre. It is

the overall process—music as moral facilitator—that unites the many levels of description necessary and relevant to an understanding of his artistic activity. Social criticism, musicology, anthropology, historical analysis, as well as first-person introspection each provide, among others, a useful but limited point of view. Theorists wedded to one particular mode of analysis will consequently be disillusioned, finding in Gould only a partial and hence somewhat suspect ally. What follows is a brief survey of some of the notable lights in this functional constellation, well documented in the pianist's writings and multi-media productions. Indeed, the very fact he consumed such energy elaborating upon his production methods indicates how integral they were to his communication as an artist. That so much intellectual effort should be expended to remedy an overemphasis on positive knowledge, however, appears somewhat paradoxical. Nonetheless, the paradox may be only superficial, if one can demonstrate pragmatic means for overcoming it. Consequently, it is insufficient to expound upon the limitations of language; one must concretely envisage how such language can function within a larger domain of communicative processes.

The difficulty in realising a musical contribution to this field is reflected in Gould's dissatisfaction with the kinds of ritual usage that had evolved in western culture. As a result, it became necessary to advocate re-conceptualising the seemingly "extra-musical" factors involved in the performance, presentation and reception of works of organised sound. A large part of Gould's discourse was dedicated to a critique of the social context in which his chosen profession was—and largely remains—entrenched. The staged theatricality and supposed authenticity of the "live" event, its focus upon a cult of personality, its mass behavioural dynamics, its inadequate acoustics and countless distractions, all discourage the quality of attention he deemed so essential to the productive artistic experience. Thus for Gould, the virtue of "attending" a performance was not in the nature of the values shared through public display, but in the kind and intensity of cognitive

attributes exercised. In these terms, he found in contemporary aesthetic culture a loss of moral commitment, a lax abandonment of the role for which it was most advantageously suited: that is, the task of facilitating a deeply individual and hence profoundly social process of development.

Some of these concerns fall under the rubric of what might be termed traditional morality, designed to subdue a natural propensity for self-aggrandisement. But in the context of a rising number of thinkers disaffected with popular notions of selfhood, the familiar paean might also be seen as insurance against the subtle temptations of a virtuosic nihilism. Pride in the sophistication of our not-knowing: a novel ruse that stands as impedance to a more genuine kind of experience. Indeed, it may be part of Gould's distinctiveness that he finds the question of authenticity an intelligible one, an attitude not readily shared by certain theoreticians of deconstructionist ilk. Yet, the fact remains that Gould's thought does challenge the notion of essential, autonomous agency so integral to our present culture. Above all, his work attempts to discredit a whole stockpile of binary oppositions from which this customary image of selfhood is constructed.

One such adversarial pair bearing special relation to the field of music is that of "improvised/preconceived". A darling of mass media iconography, this dualism often pits the spontaneity, freedom, and historical relevance of oral musical culture against the predetermination, restraint, and elitist nostalgia of literate musical forms. We find here, in effect, a fundamental stronghold of selfhood; an inviolate field of subjectivity within which are postulated the creative virtues of life; a sanctuary against the machinations and restrictions of a hostile world of external power. By contrast, Gould pointed out that this kind of musical "liberation" depends upon the duress of a real-time situation, and the severe constraints it places upon the decision-making process. "Being in a groove" stands as effective metaphor for both a space of psychic exhilaration and a confining trap of habituation. There is nothing intrinsic to the oral format that can justify its status within the

specific evaluative hierarchy under scrutiny. Conversely, the notion of total *mastery* through a rationalisation of musical materials is by no means the inescapable outcome of a literate construction.

To be sure, we *do* find a level of temporally extended organisation in more fully notated music, but its effectiveness still remains largely predicated on the listener's ability to process it "on-line". This last attribute has implications for all forms of music, and clearly constrains the extent to which "abstract form" can be seen to dominate the process of meaning. Furthermore, the notion of multiple time frames applies to so-called improvisational music as well. First, its performance is based upon a stock of structural raw materials that must be internalised through an extended process of rehearsal; and second, the frequent use of electronic recording technology offers a form of external memory that provides a level of forethought previously the prerogative of the literate composer. The salient point is that these exclusionary dichotomies serve to obscure a level of analysis that suggests a multiplicity of meanings, each emerging from a different type of global structuring. Above all, what these clumsy thought-patterns deny is complexity, the existence of modes of being that simply defy analysis within the schematic language of self/other, individual/social, biological/cultural, subjective/objective, romantic/classical, mind/matter and the like.

The question of technology mentioned above is cardinal. New devices for sound storage and manipulation became an integral part of Gould's activity; their usefulness seemed to portend profound changes for the basic conduct of human affairs. Indeed, he is often identified with that intellectual ferment—signally defined by fellow Torontonians Marshall McLuhan—that seeks to understand the implications of our species' accelerated cultural evolution. And yet any attempt to assess Gould's contribution to this general inquiry must be sensitive to the nature of the project through which his interest was mediated. Foremost is the question of how new technologies can be used to advance the

cause of psychic growth and self-awareness. The emphasis is not only upon gauging the social and institutional effects of the nascent media, but also with trying to define a context in which a novel regime of personal experimentation can effectively proceed. More accurately, the nature of technological intervention *confounds* what is distinctly psychological or social; its effects are situated at an interface that tends to reconfigure experience itself, affecting both inside and outside in untold ways.

In a sense, what could be considered "technological" about these transactions is not simply the tools employed, but rather the entire field of couplings, including social context, sound event, electronic media, and human physiology. Such conceptual elasticity rests upon a conviction that subjectivity is both complex and mutable. The possibility thus arises for a typology of being, and with it the more unsettling thought that selfhood arises as a distinct form of organisation within a larger ecology of cognitive processes. A very critical moral debate concerns this very possibility or lack thereof: is there a context that is able to override the self, to institute its values in a manner that can—with some plausibility—transcend the inherent limitations of a *self-discipline*? Holding in abeyance for the moment any attempt to answer such a question, there is in Gould's work the distinct impression that it is being posed. In the most general way, the problem is manifest through his use of recording, which permits one to re-view the ecstatic moment of performance and hence to form insights and critical judgements from a perspective never before possible. The opportunity that artistic experience affords—and technological intervention helps exploit—is on the order of a self-seduction, a prolonged state of vulnerability thereby rendered susceptible to further development.

But such a discourse of *technique* must rest upon an objective basis. One invites a degree of "mechanical process" because the brain itself reflects a law-abiding character, enabling it to be manipulated—even tricked, if you will—into transgressing boundaries that are vigilantly safeguarded in both the state of normal self-consciousness and the more

rarefied air of aesthetic ecstasy. Those who hold to the notion of an essential self may find in this intrusion of mechanism a serious threat to the integrity of the artistic act. In such a view, the umbilical connection that is formed between self and its spiritual source is, by its very nature, something indivisible, totally impervious to further analysis. Against this particular notion of unity, Gould advocated a multiplicity of perspectives. The music of Bach he so admired is above all else an expression of simultaneous voices, a ceaseless examination and conversation fashioned from the concrete character of its musical raw materials.

As a performer, Gould presents his audience with a prodigious multiplicity of standpoints. Polyphonic writing is articulated with unsurpassed clarity; so-called “subsidiary” material breaks unexpectedly into the foreground with a revelatory force that betrays an uncanny sense for the opportunities of the present moment. Close monitoring of intricate motor skills and larger temporal components of musical design proceed at the highest level of expertise. Yet, beyond these fundamental elements of musicianship, Gould adds his own idiosyncratic level of pluralism, conducting himself whenever a hand is temporarily freed from the keyboard and incessantly vocalising along with his instrument.

But is there any special virtue in this strange profligacy of “subject positions”? Does it augur anything beyond well-meaning pleas for multi-cultural tolerance that have circulated in recent years? To begin, we might note that the real-time demands of music making occasion a complex *simultaneity* that seems a departure from the discursive situation: points of view transpire jointly both in time, and in the mind of a single individual.¹⁰ Language, in other words, imparts to the subject the quality of its own linearity, bestowing existence through an act of categorisation that logically excludes through the expediency of a temporal suspension. Do we not find in the “live” dynamics of oral experience, however,

¹⁰Here, I am referring to the level of discourse *per se*. In M. M. Bakhtin’s sophisticated conception of dialogue, for example, the discussion is pushed into the realm of cognitive considerations, where the

the precise form of diversity that Gould was intent upon seeking? The answer is no—at least not necessarily. As mentioned above, the concept of orality was found too coarse to account for the kind of experience that resonated with his moral intuition. Consequently, the possibility must be entertained that a more refined measure of diversity exists, within which a number of non-discursive factors will be seen to participate.

To this extent, the traditional path of “objectivity” reaches its end; beyond lie the turbulent waters of value, with their unfathomable depths. Subjectivity no longer stands as a compound construction whose differences can be neatly sorted within a petri dish of sociological analysis; rather, it lies as a vast, undulating medium in which we must irrevocably and personally learn to navigate. Such a process implies procedural knowledge whose implementation can only be accomplished through an essential component of self-discovered technique. The difficulty conveying it to others is a consequence of this ipsative character. But above all, the endless onslaught of the present demands an adequacy of choice and accountability that cannot be left to the infinite peregrinations of the analytical mind. In short, it *matters* how the dynamic convergence of systems, sub-systems, information, and transactions comprising a human organism is organised on a global scale.

There is scope for volition here. By this, I mean a conscious investment of energy and attention dedicated to a particular *agenda*. But what is this overarching plan? The challenge is to conceive how a first-person perspective, firmly rooted in the concreteness of an embodied existence, can actually *contribute* to the objectivity of one's behavioural transactions. Such a search is inspired by the hypothesis that there exist particular types of coherent organization that bear closer relation to a state of “authenticity” than others. Gould felt that art had a critical role to play in the formation of such a mode of being. The ultimate goal is to make the aesthetic experience a

individual is indeed the locus of such complex concurrence.

psychologically transformational one, challenging the individual to take responsibility for a more active participation in the communicative exchange.

Art aims to institute a more impersonal and emotionally flexible embrace of the world through its processes of perceptual engagement. This implied over-riding of the self is what constitutes the moral dimension, a dynamic movement that cannot be reduced to the structure of the artwork, the personal narrative, or the social context in question. Gould sought to supersede the entire entrenched edifice of musical tradition, with its dangerous narratives of self-edification, on the one hand, and a disabling scalpel of sociological discourse on the other. Instead, he offered detailed descriptions of his creative encounters with music and technology, not in order to convince others of his own moral accomplishment, but to advertise the opportunities for exploration now open to great masses of people, regardless of their level of professional involvement. This democratisation of musical art is conceivable because the process Gould envisages is not essentially dependent upon the kinds of technical information traditionally associated with a state of "appreciation". The challenge, however, is to articulate a notion of aesthetic engagement that is plausibly distinct from the whole pervasive discourse of psychological addiction, promoted by "an increasingly coercive cultural milieu" (1984, p. 395).

It might be useful to consider Gould's creative activity as ultimately posing a paradox of self-deconstruction: how can an entity whose very *raison d'être* is fortification, in other words, oversee its own subordination? It is the state of musical ecstasy, moreover—the very bastion of private experience—that seems to promise the greatest hope for a resolution. Let me intimate the tenor of the present approach by revisiting our description of Gould as performer. To the inventory of cognitive prospects elaborated above, let us add now the final perspective of the rapt *listener*, a silent overseer who does not execute but watchfully marvels at the cosmic flow of meaning in motion. The image is meant to anticipate an interesting possibility, namely, that the

“centre” of all this activity is of a very special order. Could there be a “view” that emerges from *the state of multiplicity itself*, such that it has neither the status of an objective observation, nor that of a subjective participation? Perhaps, like consciousness itself, there is no single, undivided, uniform state of beatitude but instead a number of discrete configurations, each offering its corresponding field of semantic potential. Such a situation might hold the key to the paradox of self-reference that has long bedevilled the discipline of ethical inquiry. Surely it is time to heal the rift in the mind of humanity between the known and the unknown, thereby eliminating the need to conduct our affairs—in Gould’s words—“as though concerned that clarity could be an enemy of mystery...” (1984, p. 337).

Prolegomenon 4: Gould Transcribed

A. Merits of Holistic Analysis

Inspired by the creative legacy of Glenn Gould, the previous essay attempts to present a number of issues in familiar parlance. The present task of translating this material into the more specialised language of cognitive science serves a number of related objectives. First, it helps to reinforce the holistic dimension of Gould’s thought by providing a common denominator through which the disparate elements can converse. Second, it offers empirical and theoretical perspectives capable of sensitivity both to the dangers of scientific reductionism and the opportunities of indeterminacy. Such awareness is vital to any holism that wishes to avoid running headlong into its own nemesis. Third, the proposed translation re-formulates disciplinary contributions in a manner that inhibits certain habitual thought patterns, while simultaneously encouraging the emergence of novelty.

Take the issue of repertoire. Gould's favourite music was highly contrapuntal. Given the context of use that he elaborates, can we say this predilection is merely subjective in nature? The importance of *attention* provides a lead. Is there something about the organisation of this music—and the specific kinds of cognitive demands it makes upon the listener—that make it well suited to the task at hand? We need to reflect upon an overall ecology that can provide the basis for evaluative decisions based on ritual objectives and their requirements. Eventually, we hope to demonstrate that the choice of fugue as a dialogic tool is not an arbitrary one. Scientific material is not being summoned to assign precise meaning, but rather illuminate features of the context in which meaning arises. The cognitive emphasis predisposes inquiry to a holistic approach. For example, any consideration of the organisational characteristics of a particular music will necessarily make reference to the cognitive structure and capacities of perception, attention, and memory processes involved. And these in turn cannot be considered in isolation from cultural or historical factors. In short, it is clear that no plausible attempt can be made to dominate a dynamic situation by reducing it to a static discourse of biological universals.

The same can be said for the ritual context that Gould encouraged. To interpret his shunning of public performance as solipsistic, or indicative of a lack of social consciousness, for instance, is to conceive collectivity in a literal and simplistic manner. Or rather: such negative conclusions are indeed possible, but they are by no means the necessary outcome of the kind of privacy being cultivated. That determination must defer to a more detailed level of analysis than the "society/individual" dichotomy permits. The question of technology presents a similar predicament. To what advantage is external memory being employed? How is it co-ordinated with elements of biological memory, attention, volition and motivation? Thought patterns accruing to the concepts of "live" and "recorded" music make their use of limited practical value.

B. Gouldian Ecstasy: Genesis and Use

Table 1 contains an autobiographical narrative—recounted in a CBC radio interview—that does manage, despite its brevity, to encapsulate many critical relationships in the Gouldian creed.

TABLE 1: Glenn Gould, CBC Radio Interview (emphasis added)¹¹

I was definitely *homophonically inclined until* the age of about ten and then suddenly I *got the message* and Bach began to emerge into my world and has never altogether left it. . . .

Of course *one of the great moments of my life*—and it was not with a Bach fugue but it was *with a fugue, and its relevance is entirely fugal*—was when I was *exposed to my own performance* of the Mozart fugue K. 394, the C-major one, the [sings]...which is a wonderful *academic study* in how to write a fugue and obey the textbook and never quite get it off the ground—but I do like it—and I was learning it—I was an early teenager, I don't remember exactly how old—and suddenly *a vacuum cleaner was struck up* beside the piano and I *couldn't quite hear myself play*—I was *having a feud* with the housekeeper at this particular time and it was done on purpose—but I couldn't quite hear myself; *I began to feel what I was doing, the whole tactile presence of that fugue as represented by finger positions* and as represented also by the *kind of sound* that you might get if you stood in the bathtub and in a shower and shook your head—you know, with *water coming out of both ears*—and it was the most *luminously exciting* thing you can imagine, the most glorious sound, *it took off*, all of the things Mozart didn't quite manage to do I was doing for him and I suddenly realized that that *particular screen through which I was viewing* this and which *I had erected between myself and Mozart* and his fugue was *exactly what I needed* to do and exactly

¹¹ Though I have been unable to find the exact date of broadcast (the material may have been re-broadcast in 1985 as part of CBC's tribute for the Bach tri-centenary), a printed version exists in Glenn Gould Variations, 1983, pp. 275-6.

why, as I later understood, a certain mechanical process could indeed come between myself and the work of art that I was involved with.

Most significant is the prominence of "ecstatic" experience, and the detailed context that Gould provides through his rhetorically dense presentation. The material hearkens back to a personal experience that seems to stand as the great cosmogonic event of Gould's artistic universe. Although his remembrance betrays the effect of subsequent growth upon his thinking, the suddenness and force of the original incident must have been very considerable. Note, for instance, that his gravitation toward polyphonic music is strongly linked to a chance occurrence bearing little relation to musical pedagogy. The "insight" is not concerned with the physical mechanics of piano playing, or with the particular aesthetic qualities of music as revealed by analysis. Instead, we are presented with an experience that is basically *perceptual* in nature, a "glorious sound" that "took off" independent of the merits of the piece at hand—disparagingly described as "academic" in nature.

If there is a musical significance here, it lies predominantly at the level of genre: "a relevance", as Gould puts it, that is "entirely fugal". He thus claims to have experienced something that fundamentally altered his relation not merely to sound, but more specifically to the contrapuntal style of musical organisation. So great was its import, Gould referred to this "luminously exciting" event as "one of the great moments of my life": language more appropriate to an evangelical rebirth, some would argue, than an artistic epiphany. Yet consequences lend credence to what might otherwise be dismissed as hyperbole. As Gould's extraordinary aptitude for multi-voiced music seems to attest, the effects of the incident endured, even in the absence of the stimulus that provoked it. From this perspective, his anecdote serves to telescope an extended developmental sequence. Departing from an initial sense of fortuitousness, Gould begins to *take responsibility* for the

interposition of a "screen" between himself and Mozart; in so doing, he implies an acquired ability to recreate the appropriate internal conditions without the original agency of extraneous noise.

By the end of the excerpt, Gould explicitly acknowledges a period of maturation: "I later understood [that] a certain mechanical process could indeed come between myself and the work of art that I was involved with." This final statement is remarkable for the complexities it manages to foreshadow. On a general level, one is struck by the image of a *broken unity*. But note that this hiatus is not portrayed as a sudden suspension of everyday consciousness so much as it is a normative condition of musical experience. A series of questions arise: what is the nature of the initial fusion between musician and work, and how is it breached? In what sense, furthermore, are we to understand the "mechanical" character of the intervention? Do these matters really have bearing upon the field of ethical conduct? The primary assumption here is that Gould's self-initiated research reflects important functional characteristics of human psychology that are best framed under the aegis of cognitive science. To this extent, the misconstrued "unity" of the subject is not simply an issue of language, whereby subjectivity is regarded as the interior of a psychic bubble enclosed by a kaleidoscopic film of discourse. From this latter viewpoint, Gould's experiences must necessarily devolve into floating fancies of "romantic" sensibility.

Let us more closely examine the aesthetic unity to which the pianist's account alludes. As a first approximation, it might serve to imagine the original aesthetic plenitude as a total empathy that the musician feels for the piece in progress, a kind of "flow" situation—to use M. Csikszentmihalyi's (1991) term—in which the present is free from inhibitory intrusions of self-consciousness. From this point of view, the conscious intelligence seems to be narrowly focused upon a particular set of skills and problems defined by the coherence of an autonomous activity; therefore, one's emotionally salient monitoring of the larger environment—at least on a conscious level—seems temporarily

suspended. This sense of complete emotional identification, of absorption by the focal task, thus constrains the operation of consciousness within the parameters of the current "game".

In Csikszentmihalyi's conception, there is great productive benefit in being able to temporarily bracket out perspectives that are emotionally unsettling, and which consequently break the psychic unity of the flow state. The notion of flow suggests that all types of creative activity are facilitated by a suspension of one's normal self-consciousness, a form of thought that seems both constrained and enabled by the logic of its accumulated experience. In other words, in much of so-called "everyday" existence the conscious attention is busy with tasks of an executive order: deciding which stock solution to apply, overseeing its execution, and monitoring the results. The thrust of these activities is survival as an entity within a profoundly socialised environment. In certain situations of novelty, however, it might be advantageous to forgo this kind of thought for what is felt a deeper level of involvement, wherein the reality of the "problem" takes precedence over the awareness of a "self". Indeed, one *becomes* the problem, and only afterward--when the solution has arisen, or exhaustion sets in--does one "return" to the familiarity of a more habitual mode of being.

Aesthetic and practical experience seem to present a similar dichotomy between a process that both reveals and indulges, and an abstract critical faculty that imposes judgement from its privileged perspective beyond the subjective pale. Creativity and critical analysis thus face each other as two alienated modes of being: one producing, one pronouncing, and both co-existing through the constancy of an oscillation between inviolate poles of insufficiency. There is nonetheless an interesting commonality between these states that Csikszentmihalyi's work on "flow" illuminates. In the normal mode, one acknowledges that self-consciousness is functioning at the disposal of a constant level of emotional surveillance. Downgrading this vigilant watch during flow, however, is only

undertaken with the proviso that a reasonable degree of safety has been previously secured, and will remain operative during one's "absence". Whatever can be said regarding the contrast between the optimal and the everyday, consequently, *both are constrained by a common baseline of acceptability.*

Nonetheless, we suppose the differences are meaningful. It is not merely a question of a greater or lesser band of attentive focus, but an altered threshold of permissibility as well. Take the example of a person who, after concentrated effort, attains what appears to be a novel perspective on a long-standing problem within a particular discipline. It is a matter of common experience that the emotions accompanying such an insight are not always indicative of its subsequent value. That is, a process of consideration and reconsideration ensues after the initial discovery, when the "critical" mind will either accept or reject the new, as the case may be. Of course this secondary work can pose its own peculiar problems, especially when a conflict develops between the potential value of the insight as disciplinary knowledge, and its repercussions upon the emotional system into which it is trying to gain acceptance.

The resolution of such conflict might seem to be a function of the kind of material in question. For example, Gottlob Frege's stoic acceptance of one of Bertrand Russell's paradoxes—vis-à-vis its negative implications for his life's work—is germane to the extent it illuminates an inherent notion of self-sacrifice in devotion to the ideal of logic. By contrast, the Pythagoreans' violent rejection of irrational numbers shows the situation is more complicated; even if outright murder is apocryphal, their story demonstrates the absence of an essential, clear-cut boundary between belief and rationality.¹² Inescapably, we are ethical creatures first, and pure logicians later.

¹² Thanks to Professor Philip Scott, University of Ottawa, for relating these two anecdotes from the history of mathematics.

How much cloudier the issues must become, when turning to the emotionally laden field of music. Some, of course, would prefer that even here—perhaps *especially* here—the analytical mind remain the final arbiter of value. After all, what else is there to fall back upon? Such is the crux of the matter. The ethical challenge is the realisation that affective aspects of cognition cannot be dominated by discursive or logical constructs. One may wish to reduce the semantic field of music to either the level of the formal organisation of sound, or the socio-economic analysis of its ritual context, but in so doing, one is merely side-stepping the greater epistemological import of musical engagement: the process, that is, of self-awareness.

This poses a difficult dilemma for our reflexive patterns of thought. Indeed, a traditional view contends that in relinquishing ultimate control by the rational mind, any ethical substance is simply swept away by a tide of subjectivism. Accordingly, unless we can effect some reconstitution, some hermeneutic program that will recoup for public viewing a tangible object of value, communicative process is considered doomed. In the “flow” of mathematical creativity, self-consciousness is absorbed by an activity yielding results that are nonetheless on equal terms with the everyday modality, and hence subject to the same court of objective appeal. Yet, if we insist that music can only fully exist “on-line”, partaking of some *extra* ingredient that defies discursive realisation, it seems that this particular aspect of its meaning must be consigned to the subjectivity of a mutually shared pleasure, or some such construct. In other words, we seem to lack in the musical context that ability to appeal to the same objective factors through which the moral dimension of mathematical activity is purportedly mediated.

The difficulties dramatised by the Pythagorean crisis in fact ordains the search for a fundamentally different approach to the field of ethics, one not reduced to a conceptual mediation between confronting discourses, largely incumbent upon logical processes of public disputation. The focus of the latter lies chiefly with a co-ordination of linguistic

content and as such remains firmly anchored to a traditional pursuit of consensus. The quest to enhance communication, however, must not be sought solely within the abstract domain of verbal thinking. One of the underlying premises of the present work holds that a deeper examination of our behaviour is plausible only if it encompasses a turn toward the concrete: that is to say, toward the organism in which our acts of speech and thought are embedded. Still, this preoccupation with the non-linguistic is itself intelligible only if we entertain the possibility of an entirely new and fertile frontier, full of complex natural processes that cannot be fully delineated by notions of conscious volition, on the one hand, or vegetative and hedonic desires on the other.

In practical terms, it means that the creative process as defined by any given activity is vulnerable to affective constraints that underlie both "flow" and "everyday" modalities. Even within an activity such as mathematics, there are only a limited number of situations where the logic of the activity can unambiguously settle a conflict on this level. And, since we have gone out of the way to downplay the ultimate authority of any such "objective" factors with respect to a "flow" state of music, it may be hard to imagine how questions of an ethical nature can arise at all. On the contrary, an experience of musical immersion that escapes the purview of any familiar formalist analysis seems to represent a quintessential realm of subjectivity.

What is so intriguing about Gould's experience is the intimation of a modality that abolishes the integrity of these mutually exclusive states: in short, an apprehension of multiple perspectives that is not grounded in self-consciousness. Something else has interceded, other than the context which oversees and organises the production of logical discourse, and yet in this shattered unity, this violation of the sacred inner identification that distinguishes the "flow" of artistic experience, there is a sense of perceptual liberation and heightened emotion. When Gould claims that he can't quite hear himself play, he is in effect expressing consciousness of a rupture in the habitual unity of the artistic "game". But

in this particular case it may not be the "everyday" fragmented consciousness--i.e., the one that abstracts off a "self" to view objectively--that is producing an alternative viewpoint, but rather the music as independently processed by the embodied brain: for example, "the whole tactile presence of that fugue as represented by finger positions...." Once disrupted by the serendipitous voice of a household appliance, however, Gould was inspired to experiment with other forms of mechanical intervention, and ultimately, the vacuum cleaner was dropped in favour of the microphone.

This chronology is of utmost importance. Primacy must be given to the *special discovery*, which subsequently sanctions the employment of technology because it has already begun to demonstrate a value that supersedes the traditional unity of flow. Gould in fact gave many interesting reasons for preferring the recording process to live performance, but the benefits that technology affords ultimately originate with the fortuitous event he has described, and not visa versa. In other words, it is not simply a question of being able to exploit external memory by capturing a live event for "sober" reconsideration. Rather, *the ability to utilise technology to its maximum effect is itself a function of the original on-line experience*. All this implies the necessity of being able to discriminate between various "inner" states, of elucidating contrasting patterns of cognition that might be suggestive of a level of qualitative difference. If what is called "flow" represents one form of temporary inhibition, it is possible there are yet other types of altered experience in which a deep inhibition of emotional context transpires, liberating the mind not from emotion per se, but from emotive structures that constitute rigid patterns of habitual function. Does the baroque genre mean anything here? Is there, moreover, a unique form of discipline that seeks to abandon the borders defining all other types of self-control, thus opening out to a more unexpected and dynamic level of meaning? In other words, could the "discovery" be cultivated, and ultimately integrated into aspects of function that lay outside the ritual domain of aesthetic experience?

C. Ecstasy as Dissociation

We turn to cognitive science in search of a theoretical model that could account for these phenomena by means of some concrete mechanism. First, however, it is appropriate to pause and consider the special significance of "mechanism" within the Gouldian narrative. The term seems to apply equally to the technological paraphernalia of recording that became such an intimate and indispensable part of the musical practice, and to the critical, mediated disruption of phenomenological experience that was ultimately so inspiring. For Gould, in other words, music, biology, and technology had melded into a great transactional field that eventually took precedence over any of the pre-ordained values and ontological distinctions normally ascribed to its individual components.

The critical mechanism proposed as subserving this global process is *dissociation*, which provides a functional means of achieving behavioural flexibility in a system with distinct capacity limitations vis-à-vis the demands that are made upon it. Cognition, in such a scenario, is regarded as a constant process of switching between relatively coherent patterns of organization that is vitally dependent upon the activities of disengagement, inhibition, and competitive selection. As we will attempt to demonstrate throughout the course of this endeavour, moral discipline is a means of exploiting this situation by self-consciously aiding and training disengagement in order to create a temporal space in which the assertion of *well-established* competitive hierarchies are overturned.

All this can well accommodate the discourse about the merits of solitude, Puritanism, and the evils of competitiveness that Gould so ardently espoused. The beauty of it is the empirical basis it lends to the works of a thinker whose personal

idiosyncrasies and iconoclastic gestures threatened to undermine the seriousness and effectiveness of his undertaking. Curiously, it is in an awareness of the vast underpinnings of *mechanism* that the unexpected is given its greatest opportunity. Creativity, in other words, lies both with the realisation of the futility of self-control, and the arduousness of actually giving it up.

The great human invention is not simply the voluntary cueing and execution of lengthy, complex behavioural sequences--including symbolic ones; it is also the power of not-knowing, of facing the present moment in a state of suspended knowledge that is rife with untold implication. Without this feature of our cognitive makeup, we would lose both our practical flexibility, and our greatest source of motivation. From an executive standpoint, ant societies are incredibly complex organisms; but to our minds, at least, the harmony between their goals and their collective knowledge appears an abhorrent kind of perfection.

This is not to revile the notion of automaticity. Indeed, within the realities of our cognitive economy, the notion of "self"-driven routines is one of the great enabling capacities of higher function. Alternatively, however, we do not transcend the realm of mechanism, as is often asserted, through the exercise of a higher volition and the linguistic activities that it initiates. The truly wondrous and puzzling aspect of awareness lies in its relation to something far more dynamic, a quality not co-extensive with the abstract relations of our symbolic artefacts but rather emerging from the transactional depths of the mind. It is only when we give to the notion of *content* our undivided attention that we allow ourselves in turn to be fragmented by the movement of an underlying automaticity.

However, failure to be aware of a certain level of automaticity is an issue both of mental health and interpersonal ethics. This translates into the need to consciously *cultivate* dissociative experience with the aim of allowing an essential element of indeterminacy into the process of living. By such means an opportunity is created to loosen

the dominance of habitual, non-volitional patterns, and to further develop a field of motivation that can permanently override the desire for control. Ritual reaffirmation of the certain; endless *re*-production and *self*-justification; the quest for objective status: these are the exploits of Sisyphus, the mechanical dealings of meaninglessness against which the human mind rebels, but at the same time is deeply conditioned to desire. But when absolute power is treasured above uncertainty, godliness becomes but a symbol of universal boredom. The more actively we pursue our own identities, the more we appear like a flurry of snowflake crystals, adhering into monolithic drifts of infinite and minuscule difference.

I believe that Glenn Gould's experience with music led him to stumble upon—and then to gain a certain control over—an invaluable mechanism of disengagement. Ultimately, he became motivated to inquire into its use beyond the traditional and comfortable boundaries of the aesthetic tradition in which his professional conduct was situated. His was not the prevailing alternative, to hide behind a mask of irony, content to flaunt his awareness of the problem while deferring its solution. Yet, irony finds its own way notwithstanding. Here was a man who performed the highly structured music of other people; who sought with unflagging energy to control his personal environment and all his communicative transactions; who remained deeply attached to all manner of objects and places; who lived obsessively in the shadow of his own impending demise. Can these be the traits of an inveterate adventurer? Perhaps, in fact, it was out of an acute sense of the poverty of his own addictions that the need—and hence the possibility—of an alternative became most apparent. Perhaps, over time, a realisation developed that the most profound and necessary function of control was insuring conditions for an even greater non-control to transpire. But such a discipline is unique, in that its mastery is dependent upon an ability to cede control to the mechanism itself. Freedom only ensues from an

acceptance of its impossibility. With the help of some recent science, this project will attempt to gain a closer view of what lies behind this paradox.

CHAPTER II. METHODOLOGY

A. APPROACH

The practice of formalising procedures of inquiry is deemed essential to the university's mandate of purging the arbitrary from its products. The existence of specialised disciplines suggests that approaches have evolved in a manner appropriate to their respective domains of knowledge. With many now peering curiously over their longstanding office dividers, however, refashioning the academic workplace has become a pressing intellectual concern. Can an interior decorator be found with diplomacy enough to satisfy the concerns of a diverse, strongly opinionated community? More fundamentally: is this really a matter of *aesthetics*? This thesis responds in the affirmative. Due to accelerated changes in knowledge, issues of methodology and epistemology have been thrust into unusual proximity to the hitherto exotic realm of creativity.

The present work involves a procedural task that seeks conceptual bearings through a co-ordination of aesthetic, philosophical and semiotic discourses, along with selected elements of evolutionary thought, psychology and neuroscience. Our methodological challenge stems from the alleged complexity and diversity of the material at hand. From an academic standpoint, these obstacles are subsumed under the growing field of inter-disciplinary studies. How can successful approaches to circumscribed problems be joined in fruitful dialogue? Why is it necessary that they do so? Such an inquiry into the possibilities of communication has ethical overtones. In this view, ethics is pre-eminently concerned with the process of relationship, of attending to the changing spaces inside things and between things. Exclusive focus upon identity and the concrete content of thought is antithetical to the dynamics of ethical relations.

The field of value is never simply about what is defined, but the context in which such concepts occur: a context whose potential can never be exhausted by even the most rigorous of analyses.

How does one become sensitised to the unforeseen? The task at hand is not to merely develop the groundwork for a new set of specialised conglomerates, but to understand how a functional fluidity can be achieved that defies fixity of articulation without sacrificing imperatives of value. This need not deny potential gains by any given combination of disciplines; instead, it suggests that their quest might share certain facets of creative process with the more holistic aim of ethical behaviour.

Disciplines speak their own languages, but the problem is not simply one of translation, in the sense of sharing a common sentiment through appropriate correspondence. More fundamentally, how does one arrive at the proper questions, and to whom are they put? How is it possible to frame a context that seems to be without a coherent space of mutuality? Clearly, the solution to these problems must be defined as creative, when seen from any particular disciplinary perspective. To what context, then, does one defer in order to seek both the question and the mode of resolution? The proposed answer has already been intimated: the inner workings of the nervous system. Through the magnitude of its connectivity, the brain represents an associative device before which the constrained patterns of language pale. It is this underlying proliferation of possibilities, this dynamic background of concurrent perspectives that is the real immediate context to communication. History exists here, not as a linguistic narrative, but as a set of operative constraints. The point being made is simple: the generation of alternatives must come from somewhere, and the neural architecture of the brain seems a reasonable candidate for consideration.

Yet the specifically ethical dimension is not easily mastered: to a greater extent than ordinary pursuits of knowledge, it concerns processes that do not abide by the

territorial divisions of thought. Thus the nature of the value sphere that such non-observance portends is critical. The blind force of lower functions is commonly credited with the sabotage of intentional behaviour, unless painstakingly decoded by the hermeneutic mind. But does this adversarial conception serve to plumb the positive dimensions of non-conscious intelligence? Granted, the "dark" hypothesis intimates certain functional relationships in its mapping of the psyche. The question is whether it provides a useful prospectus for further travels. The model seems to presuppose an essential gulf between nature and culture, yet nonetheless requires the analytical mind to subordinate the inaccessible by subsuming it on its own linguistic terms. Might we not equally entertain the notion of *co-operation* as a productive alternative to the metaphor of *mastery*? Perhaps it is not a question of dominating entities, but of contributing to an overriding goal in which *all* agents cede some autonomy. Social interaction, language, and conscious thought are vital, but the signals announcing the achievement of a well adjusted organism are seen to arise as emergent properties of a bio-social harmonisation. In this sense, human values are not simply cultural constructs imposed upon a primitive natural base, but are themselves dependent upon biology in a more substantive way.

It is important to attempt to clarify the roles of both intuition and empirical science with respect to the present approach. To the extent that research involves more than rote adherence to a priori procedures, intuition must be considered an operative factor. While it may be useful to investigate this covert generative function, however, academic work carries on regardless, relying upon the evaluative use of logical consistency and coherence, verification through replication, predictive power, and similar objectifying measures. But things in the ethical realm are of a different order. Here, intuition is of *focal* importance, discharging its duty as a sentry of change, surveying the mental horizon for blockages of informational movement. Consequently, the status of what is

considered a more instinctive mode of processing passes from operative aid to moral imperative.

What exactly does this mean? The basic goal of disciplinary study is the construction of conceptual maps that have relatively invariant features. The fact that this "fixing" is a reduction of the dynamic world is no problem, for only by virtue of such careful control are intricate relations apprehended. Granted, there are times when particular areas of knowledge undergo abrupt changes, and old pillars give way to newer structural supports. Even so, there is no pretence to any holistic reflection of reality. Let the world be carved up in any number of ways: the measure of success is utility, not compatibility.

And yet there is one particular apportioning which a scientific heuristics has long held in contempt: the domain of subjective experience. Such a context is deemed too ephemeral and idiosyncratic to partake of the transpersonal structures that constitute the edifice of knowledge, or, at any rate, subjectivity's role in the genesis of thought operates only to the extent it threatens to undermine the coherence of the disciplinary perspective. Thus, the total field of a researcher's experience is irrelevant, and the means by which its exclusion is enforced is deemed a measure of self-discipline. With respect to values of an ethical order, however, the status of the individual acquires a central significance: the kind of knowledge being sought cannot be obtained without reference to the whole organism in its specificity. The embodied person has now become a locus of both behavioural agency and responsibility.

Notions of mutual co-existence and total context are seen to replace the pursuit of an isolated excellence. In other words, exclusions can no longer be defended solely on the basis of discursive constructs or intellectual principles. The jury that sits on the court of values must be drawn from a broader spectrum of cognitive society. The notion of the whole and its parts is too dynamic, and the necessity to act too urgent to be amenable to

the ponderous mechanics of conceptual analysis. Deference to the latter by default is doomed to circularity; the attempt to somehow get beyond the control of an “external” causality, to acquire sovereignty into the genesis of its own conditions, merely breeds increasing complexity. Self-sufficiency by means of analysis can never succeed.

Clearly, the notion of responsibility must refer to autonomy of a different order. This means that ethical engagement must rely on the cultivation of skills capable of redressing the deficiency. The multi-layered nature of ethical process thus stands both as object of intellectual inquiry and underlying practice. Such a predicament helps define the present approach. Any attempt to determine what constitutes success in the domain of human action is itself an evaluative deed to which one is already committed. The inner dynamics of such a commitment may be modified, but the marks of its allegiance must make themselves visible. If the following entails a personal search to better conceptualise how to go about the business of living, it also takes a stand against that which apparently leads it astray.

Non-linguistic practices constitute an express part of the overall process promoted here. A central component of this activity involves the use of music, to be discussed in the ensuing section. The role of intuition will likewise be examined, insofar as it helps to clarify interpersonal processes through which this study has evolved. Furthermore, intuition has bearing upon the elucidation of commitments and analyses perceived as antecedent to the work at hand. This is the function of the prolegomena: to present that indistinct context of values from which our questions emerge, of events on the periphery that nonetheless bias the direction of thought. The career of Glenn Gould has been cited as an embodiment of just such a motivational field, providing tantalising glimpses of what seems a grander coherence. Yet by what means is such a perspective gained? It begins, I submit, with little more than a feeling of dissatisfaction: in this instance, with culturally prevalent discourses of music and meaning.

Such a tandem of attraction and aversion amounts to a methodological principle. The point is important, because it overtly acknowledges that the adequacy of a particular language is not apprehended on the level of discourse alone. In the present case, something in my experience of music appears to have eluded the conversation of the culture. Despite an abundance of erudite, insightful analysis, most writing on the subject seems plagued by omissions that could potentially clarify the outlines of a vague divination. The problem is in part systemic, related to the specificity of the various disciplinary approaches. As discussed, the need to constrain enables knowledge to advance in a particular direction; but it also acts as an impediment when inflexibly or unmindfully enforced.

Of course, the compass needle of intuition does not replace a keen eye for external observation and verification. Any journey relying solely upon the guidance of "hunch" is doomed to wander in a netherworld of unfulfilled promise. Nevertheless, the necessity of this dimension requires emphasis as a focal concern. From an ethical perspective, the attempt to pin down discursive procedures in order to ensure objectivity is unacceptable. Again, this is not a denial of the pragmatic benefits of doing so, but rather an appreciation of the all-inclusive character of an imperative that recognises no absolute boundaries. Evading subjectivity—in the sense of one's total domain of experience—must not be the aim of a legalistic bypass; instead, a disciplined interior life must sanction the temporary expedience of a scientific control. As an organised assemblage of various bio-social systems, the composed mind may have access to greater flexibility and associative diversity than that afforded by the logic of formal disciplines, and *it is this sensitivity to the unforeseen and the concurrent that lends it a potentially ethical cast.*

Yet, subjectivity is customarily defined by a focus upon the isolated individual. Further, it is often the most vociferous advocates of "transcendence" that readily betray their parochialism. If the inner mind promises great rewards, it is clearly fraught with

pitfalls. Only the institution of safeguards can render communication that is both effective and ethically advantageous. From a procedural point of view, however, it is necessary to draw a distinction between a disciplined mind, and *self-discipline*. In the latter, instrumentality is the presiding overseer: no matter what the guise, any given activity seeks to fulfil its mandate of protecting and advancing the various interests of a coherent, stable system of functions. The former notion, however, has as its goal a reorganisation of one's mental hierarchy, wherein a stable context is created in order to facilitate succession of power from a dominant executive to that of a dynamic consortium of processes. A critical task is conceptualising how a measure of necessary discipline can be applied that is functionally distinct from the habitual situation.

The traditional pursuit of objectivity must give way to a broader disciplinary field, embracing elements previously banished from the rigors of knowledge. One characteristic of such a special discipline has already been broached: the lack of total reliance upon linguistic constructs. No amount of knowledge or verbal instruction can suffice to impart the necessary skills, for a totally efficacious language would be inconsistent with the concept of procedural learning. This notion of a gap between verbal and non-verbal competence suggests a form of holism that involves a conscious appreciation of the limits of language; consequently, some form of abdication is implied.

The procedural significance of "letting go" can be pleaded from a number of perspectives. Venerable traditions of philosophy, spirituality, aesthetics, competitive athletics, and aspects of practical living all suggest the need to yield psychologically when appropriate circumstances arise. *Dissociation* will be used here as a means of developing a conceptual framework in which these diverse contexts can converse. But in general terms, a degree of common sense speaks to the issue as well. Learning in a complex, ever-changing environment bound by discrete temporal constraints cannot be conceived as simply additive in nature. Perhaps there exists a certain compromise

between the ability to automatise, with its virtues of economy and speed, and the need for flexibility in the face of novelty. Due to the demands of time, however, situations will arise that require at least a temporary inhibition of certain previously established patterns of association. In other words, the predicament of life argues the advantages of a modality specialised for the making of hypotheses: an evolutionary game of semantic "play".

There are limits to every system. Perhaps the emergence of a specifically human domain of intelligence requires a specifically human response. Ethical thinking ups the ante, charging the individual with responsibility to reach out beyond its own isolated needs and defend the concept of individuality at large: that is, to create a mutually supportive movement of self-transgression that is neither destructive or repressive, but *transformational*. Such a process cannot be reduced to a conceptual form of self-consciousness. Rather, discourse is entrusted to nurture a *self-conscious use of the play modality* in order to expand its orbit of influence to the more intransigent of our automatised behaviours. The use of this framework applies a level of discipline and direction that ultimately co-opts lower functions on behalf an ethical context that is larger than all the separate elements.

Yet, if aspects of subjectivity are now invited into the process of knowledge, a corresponding degree of empiricism must take hold in the ferment of feeling. Disciplined observation takes the form of interoceptive sensitivity, whereby awareness of certain internal events is accomplished through a regimen of practice. The central assertion concerns the degree to which such a process deserves attention as a branch of formal knowledge. But the fundamental methodological question remains to be posed: how does this project relate to activities that are strictly considered scientific? The relevance of this query is twofold. First, I make no pretence to having attained a professional level of competence within the specific areas of research consulted. Second, the kinds of issues

considered here are too complex to be directly addressed by our current body of knowledge, with its patient, incremental advancements.

Thus a second question obviously arises: what purpose can be served by promoting what is admittedly little more than "informed speculation"? Would it not be more prudent to use scientific discourse for matters in which a greater degree of certainty—as well as expertise—applied? The response to this plea for caution finds its rationale in a notion of ethics and the nature of the imperative that it poses. If the present moment does indeed force itself upon us as an unyielding field of discontinuity, were it not better to abandon the task of seeking repose in the instability of an always inadequate knowledge? And yet it is most difficult to imagine any plausible alternative to the relative verities of disciplinary knowledge. What better divining tool could we acquire? Such a question is founded on the assumption that "control" is the underlying objective of communicative behaviour. "How better to align our mutual interests, and avert the undesirable consequences of our actions?" it asks rhetorically. A response lies in the radical thrust of a truly ethical interest. Systematised knowledge carries the price of its own logic of expectation, further inflated by hidden functions of personal self-interest; a more global process of transaction thus implies their dual override. The critical point of contention concerns the degree to which such transgression is both possible and desirable, in either theoretical or practical terms.

The goal is neither a state of omniscience, at one extreme, or recklessness at the other. Nor is it a question of denying the obvious import of memory and its acquired patterns of association. The difficulty lies with the kind of habits that the quest for knowledge engenders. Excellence in the pursuit of specificity qualitatively differs from free traversal of the mind's internal boundaries; unfortunately, when knowledge acts as a "press secretary" for personal identity, these two endeavours come into serious functional conflict. Any point of view seeks to maintain its productivity as a coherent entity; its

individuality, in other words, requires *justification*. The human mind is not like that; its uniqueness is simply given, inspiring us to *celebration* for the natural expression of the universe it reflects.

Consequently, the corresponding value-spheres seem of a different order. As Kuhn (1970) has pointed out, stable foundations underwrite the utility of disciplinary work in its normative phases. But the ethical imperative has as its ideal the vigilant disabling of the everyday: whatever is conceived as such holds potential as a liability. *Sacredness*¹ abhors stability and stasis, not because it expresses that which is completely other, but because it *manifests a dynamic quality* about the nature of existence.

The cardinal distinction gravitates around two contrasting perceptions about the constitution of *ground*. The sacred foundation requires no sequestering, as if unfit to withstand the world's jarring onslaught. What cries out most for vigilant protection and patient cultivation is the psychological space that permits a dynamic challenge to self-sufficiency to transpire. This is precisely what is demanded of us from an ethical perspective. The sacred exists as a multileveled mode of transaction, not as a static blueprint. Nor is it within the compass of knowledge to create it, or authoritatively pronounce upon its occurrence. The wisdom and intuitive insight of practical experience asserts this credo in the face of the most accomplished erudition; it is the point of embarkation for every ethical journey. There is an undoubted if circumscribed utility in the cultivation of a disciplinary focus, abetted by the temporary assumption of a stable base. But prolonged concentration can ultimately impair one's sensitivity to the overriding reality of irresistible motion.

¹ The sacred provides an interesting contrast to shame (see chapter four, section B-2). Whereas shame is distinguished by the powerful revelation of an insight concerning one's negative relation to the world, sacredness is the manifestation of the positive character of the world. In both cases the content is imposed with such authority that the recipient feels it could only have been withheld by some active process—which, in terms of the present thesis—is deemed to be the self-construct.

If we reject all forms of conceptual dominance and fundamentalist dogma, however, it becomes incumbent upon us to offer a means of prohibiting total conquest by the very levels of automatism we are seeking to disengage. Once again it must be stressed that what is being advanced is not simply recognition of the limitations of discursive understanding with respect to our awareness. This is merely a starting point. More fundamentally, I maintain that a functional abdication is the pre-eminent ethical imperative that humans are called upon to discharge. What is presently at issue is the form that such practical action should take.

Continuity and discontinuity are ambiguous concepts. It may be helpful to change tack for a moment, and view the desired end, not as an ethically driven demotion of science, but rather as an expansion of its purview. Two points support an interpretation whose ultimate aim might be seen as the elaboration of a "science of ethics". First, the subjective, first-person dimension of the undertaking is rigorous to the extent it involves the cultivation of close observation in controlled circumstances. Like any discipline, mastery involves a dedicated commitment of energy, open-mindedness as to the outcome, and accumulation of skill over an extended period of time.

But a certain primacy afforded the first-person perspective represents a turn that has implications for the pursuit of consciousness in general. Reducing the human mind to an abstract conceptual scheme becomes a self-fulfilling manoeuvre that is ethically problematic. As a dynamic process from which we cannot stand completely detached, consciousness is inevitably approached with presuppositions as to its fundamental nature. Consequently, there must be a willingness to engage as scientific participants in an exploration of the phenomenon's potentialities. Without such a concurrent level of free experimentation, we risk merely cherishing a theoretical gospel fashioned out of our own experiential limitations. In this way, one's openness to the potential of others is unduly closed, and communication devolves into a sordid calculus that is devoid of adventure.

The second point with reference to a formal research program for ethics concerns the collected “data”, for it too is subject to the prohibition against self-sufficiency being espoused. Appraisal must therefore proceed in a dialogic context that includes a developing theoretical framework, and additional constraints in the form of disciplinary knowledge. In short, the goal is to fashion an interdisciplinary *gestalt* appropriate to the questions posed. In this sense, we are attempting to suggest a research agenda rather than conduct work that is strictly scientific in its own right.

Nonetheless, this circumscribed use of science has merit. Such knowledge can lend credibility to the overall conception, thereby fostering consensus in an age of fundamentalist schisms. Indeed, pervasive disagreement about human values emboldens this work to run the risk of dilettantism that it genuinely faces. Combating relativism without recourse to dogma requires the impetuosity of speculation. It is only by pulling back from the specifics of a given logic that new configurations—especially global ones—are permitted to arise. In addition, setting a coherent agenda within the discourse of science represents an investment that can capitalise in unexpected ways upon the evolutionary dynamic of empirical thought.

The notion of a *gestalt* also has implications for the present methodology and its relationship to the discourse known as Socratic. Accordingly, the overall pattern of activities attributed to Socrates is of special interest here. The Oxford Classical Dictionary notes there is general agreement amongst scholars that the famous Greek philosopher “had no positive set of doctrines to teach” (1970, p. 998). The kind of wisdom thus associated with a successful “inquiry into the right conduct of life” (p. 997) is not knowledge in the customary sense. However, the phrase “no man sins wittingly” (Russell, 1979, p. 109) is an equally familiar facet of the Socratic repertoire. The implication here is that “ignorance” lies at the root of moral depravity: in Russell’s words, “[t]he close connection between virtue and knowledge is characteristic of Socrates and Plato” (p. 109).

Apparently what can be “known” in the ethical realm has a peculiar status. Indeed, Russell goes on to say that Socrates “pretends that he is only eliciting knowledge already possessed by the man he is questioning; on this ground he compares himself to a midwife” (110). Russell makes no attempt to clarify the ambiguities that his use of “pretends” entails. Is Socrates merely being devious, or is it possible the dialectic process could generate insight that was both novel and yet somehow prepossessed? Interestingly, the latter is not incongruent with the model of inner fragmentation being espoused here: that is to say, the cultivated linkage of previously segregated activities would pose just such a “paradoxical” insight.

But the charge of disingenuousness may in one sense be legitimately applied to the Socratic methodology. The gist is that psychological growth is better conceived as a form of seduction rather than one of confrontation. If the self is a complex system dedicated to its own preservation, then any perceived threat will have the effect of mobilising considerable resources in defence of its integrity. Creating a movement of assent, however, means that future contradictions can be experienced as *internal* events that demand reorganisation rather than sheer determination for their successful resolution. In other words, the initial consonance creates a greater sense of personal participation in the matters at hand, and hence diminishes the stultifying possibility of abstract objectification at the outset.

By what means is this process of change elicited? For Russell, the dialectic of question and answer allegedly employed is useful because it “tends to promote logical consistency” (p. 111). The Oxford Classical Dictionary, moreover, cites Socrates as “the first to lay stress on the importance of systematic definition of the general terms used in discussion” (p. 998). Hence it is important to consider the role that such logical processes are seen to play within the developing pattern of Socratic activities. It is necessary to keep in mind the ethical objective of self-knowledge that drives the dialogue. In reference to the

diverse themes of Plato's early works, Russell asserts that "[i]n all of these, no conclusion is arrived at, but Socrates makes it clear that he thinks it important to examine such questions" (p. 109).

Again, the idea of *process* takes precedence over specific content; but this raises the question as to the nature of Socrates' wisdom. From what has been discussed, his talent for "showing up pretenders" through the use of "logical consistency" appears to be the chief asset. A further consequence of this, one would suppose, is the exceptional coherence of Socrates' own ideas, from which others could benefit. However, the fact he "consistently maintains that he knows nothing," as Russell (p. 109) relates, serves to render the function of his logic problematic. Though apparently useful for undermining the complacent belief of others in the soundness of their assumptions, this skill at verbal precision seems unable to convey in what the philosopher's virtue precisely consists.

This shortcoming is interesting in light of the fact that Socrates "worked in an age of widespread criticism and discussion which was beginning to produce a sceptical attitude about the foundations of morality and the possibility of knowledge alike" (The Oxford Classical Dictionary, 1970, p.998). Such a depiction could well apply to the present historical situation. And yet by all accounts, Socrates' reaction to the particularity of his epoch was anything but nihilistic. Logical consistency, in other words, was in the service of something positive. Russell cites the Socrates of Plato's Apology: "God orders me to fulfil the philosopher's mission of searching into myself and other men" (p. 105).

Apart from this notion of obedience, however, the tradition seems mute with respect to any specific role the absolute might play. Further, Socrates occupies a peculiar status within the philosophical tradition that heralds him as a founding figure: his interest is exclusively ethical in scope, and he shuns the medium of the written word. These facts suggest that the oral situation might hold a certain functional advantage with respect to the

objective of ethical growth. But before considering what this could possibly entail, I wish to consider the perspective of Derrida, whose work focuses intensely upon these issues.

In his book Dissemination (1981), the French philosopher is concerned to critically examine the cult of "presence" he claims permeates the western tradition's bias toward the spoken word, the "originary" and hence more metaphysically grounded expression that philosophy claims for the relation of speaker and verbal gesture. Derrida proceeds to trace this attitude back to the Platonic Socrates; the fact that the historical person apparently left no written documents, moreover, seems to support this contention. But the paucity of information also provides the opportunity for an alternative view. As an agent of ethical change, perhaps what attracted Socrates to the oral situation is the relatively "on-line" character of the interpersonal transaction: that is, the particular dynamic of cognitive tasks and temporal constraints that it imposes enables him to precipitate a crisis more easily than that which reading affords. Indeed, far from representing some transcendent manifestation, language in the oral interaction is constantly revealed by Socrates as an inadequate ground of enlightened action, a functional system of reflexes to which the subject is inordinately attached.

In other words, the thrust of the Socratic encounter could be seen as deconstructive in character. And yet the attitude towards writing begs further elaboration. Above all, why is speech not simply assimilated into the more general framework of writing, as in the case of Derrida? I think the case could be made that for Socrates, the issue was a pragmatic one: his particular role as catalyst was better served by the "hands on" nature of the oral exchange. It is not necessary to evade the notion of *deferral* by postulating a salient difference between the two modalities. In the so-called "live" setting, a certain agonistic dynamic is in force which imposes a foreshortened time frame on the interlocutors, as well as distinguishing tasks requiring the use of attentive resources. This would be magnified in the group setting in which Socrates operated. Not only are there

socially operative temporal constraints that shape the oral interchange, but in addition, emotionally charged codes that refer to notions of personal image, authority, respect of one's peers, and the like.

One is thus placed in the position of *defending oneself*, of attempting to maintain allegiance to and be consistent with a certain mediating set of linguistic structures; in such a situation, the extra pressures of monitoring reactions and responding in an appropriate manner increases the chances of "slipping up". These are the characteristics that Socrates wishes to exploit. By the same token, one might assert that the prolonged time frame afforded by external symbolic storage also imposes an added burden of responsibility, forcing the user into the role of both speaker *and* provocateur. This is not to deny the capacity for self-motivation in this regard; what concerns us here is a functional contrast between the two linguistic forms that might have been germane to Socrates' preference.

But these facts do not render visible the ethical dimension of the dialectic process. To be sure, the features of orality thus described are as much an ally of the sophist, the nihilist, the cunning lawyer. To make the presumption of ethical agency, are we not simply shifting the problem of presence onto the language of a person who has cleverly refused to bequeath his words to posterity? Alternatively: if Socrates knowledge is the result of long reflection, conducted outside the combative stage of his "live" theatre, is he not in the end a clandestine playwright nonetheless? Surely the latter embodies a truth about the process of a mature thinker. Still, this does not negate the possibility that part of the talent of the western world's pre-eminent sage was also related to features specific to the oral predicament.

In this context, one might summarise competence under the rubric of *listening*. The term is not chosen merely to emphasise the auditory nature of the spoken word; rather, it expresses a kind of concentration from which the monitoring of a multiplicity of

simultaneous levels is carried out. Special sensitivity to language in all its historical and rhetorical complexity is not enough. In addition, there is the nuance of prosody, of physical gesture, of pauses and hesitations, all requiring vigilance for short-term changes that are lacking in the solitary act of reading.

Once again, however, the intransigent fact remains that, even with a firm command of all these matters, we have still not revealed the ethical watermark of Socrates' discursive activity. Let us concede him the ability to combine the right gesture at just the right moment in the dynamic flow of events in order to maximise an effect upon his listener. However, the best that can be said of such manipulation is that it serves to undermine the pupil's self-complacency. This may have positive implications, but only through a process of doubt; how the language itself could be anchored in some positive ground does not appear susceptible to proof. By thus eschewing the written word, has Socrates simply created conditions for the perpetuation of a personal myth, safely entrenched behind a veil of silence?

We can never know for sure. The aim here, however, is not to reconstitute an essential subject whose presence issues forth in linguistic form. Words cannot stand as unambiguous representatives of an ethical gesture, maintaining their essential identity across the communicative exchange. Rather, the issue concerns the degree to which the search for wisdom should be confined to the linguistic system per se. If indeed there is only language—whose most basic expression lies in the written word—then communication is entirely a function of hermeneutic analysis, regardless of metaphysics. This focus has been enforced in recent years with the widely circulated dictum that "the subject is constructed in language". But are such linguistic artefacts co-extensive with the organism as a whole? Is it not possible that unconditional belief in language—even a chastened one, unable to confer any essential being—will serve to constrain the use of cognitive resources in an unfavourable and ultimately self-fulfilling way? It may not be

simply that what is gratuitously termed *the* subject is an historical product of discourse: in other words, it may further be the case that *that particular historical conception of subjectivity* is itself a contingent product of a larger historical process.

The point being made is that Socrates' rejection of literacy does not necessarily imply an essential quarrel with the Derridean concept of language. What it might further imply, however, is a conviction that the basis for ethical behaviour lies in skills that are non-linguistic in nature. To be sure, the danger here is to imagine that the conditioned entity of the subject can simply bypass language in its quest to access "the absolute". But there is a possible alternative: that is, a disciplinary process whose aim is to functionally relinquish intentionality to a level of embodied *indeterminacy*. Such an exposure to the forbidding uncertainty of the moment is a far different affair from the smug comforts of a dualistic "spirituality". It is the ability to include this level of function in the dynamic listening process described above that brings one's communicative interactions into the sphere of ethical behaviour and fuller self-knowledge.

Is there any justification, however, for using the name "Socrates" as representative of this method? If so, I believe it lies in an archetypal pattern of activities rather than a particular formal discourse. Mention has already been made of "god's will" in connection with the Socratic tradition; at this point, two other aspects deserve mention as well. The first concerns accounts of the philosopher undergoing prolonged, trance-like states; the second refers to his marked indifference to physical discomfort. What is the extent to which these are integral components of his activity as an ethical agent?

The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy states that "[f]or Socrates, being virtuous is a purely intellectual matter: it simply involves knowing what is good for human beings; once we master this subject, we will act as we should" (1995, p. 750). One might assume that "a purely intellectual matter" refers neither to god, trances, or asceticism. Perhaps it would even be fair to say that their very irrelevance earns Socrates his status as a founder

of philosophy. But why should these recorded elements of the Socratic tradition necessarily be excluded from the process of knowing? Are they perhaps construed as the irrelevant, archaic vestiges of an otherwise “modern” thinker? Is it possible that the contradiction between “virtue as knowledge” and “knowing nothing” owes its existence to the fact that an important component of “knowing” includes non-linguistic monitoring processes intimately bound up with a compressed time-frame, relative to that of language? From an ethical perspective, in other words, the analytical manipulation of language—even that deemed deconstructive in character—must be embedded in certain kinds of underlying practices, without which it gains excessive autonomy as an abstract, disembodied “cultural” activity.

Socratic tradition presents us with a gestalt in reference to the concept of wisdom: a kind of intellectualism, if you will, in which the practice of trance and asceticism can be understood as essential components. Trance refers to a narrowing of focus with respect to everyday self-consciousness, often appearing to curtail the subject’s conscious monitoring of the environment. To this extent, anecdotal evidence suggests that Socrates was prone to intense and prolonged episodes of such states. And stories relating his indifference to physical distress might serve a complementary role here, indicating that the loss of control concomitant to the trance condition is operating within the context of a mental discipline that precludes domination by hedonistic desires. This juxtaposition thus elaborates an image of the west’s exemplary sage, distinguished by an integrated practice that is neither undisciplined nor self-controlled: in short, it does not conform to the common distinction between subjective and objective modalities.

A protracted controversy over the concept of hypnotic trance demonstrates how habitual categories shape investigation. As Dixon and Laurence (1992) explain, research has tended to fall into two opposing camps. A “special process” view holds that “normal cognitive functioning is actually modified” and hence reflective of a physiologically discrete

“state” (p. 42). Alternatively, “the social-psychological position postulates that hypnotic phenomena are the end result of subjects using goal-directed strategies to appear hypnotised...” (p. 42).

This dichotomy echoes the exclusivity of positions supporting either nature or culture as prime determinants of human behaviour. But as is often the case, such “opposition” rests upon a level of shared assumption: in this instance, an ascribed unity to a reference state that may not bear closer scrutiny. For special process advocates, to be sure, the challenge is to delineate not one but two discrete patterns of signature function; nonetheless, “normality” is construed as exhibiting a global coherence that can be differentiated from its hypnotic counterpart. Apart from the danger of ignoring a possible role for ritual factors in the phenomena, such a view might even undercut its own objectives to the extent its search is biased toward a particular macro-level of organisation.

But the social view’s denial of a distinct level of hypnotic function also neglects to address the possibility that the everyday—far from being monolithic—might exhibit biologically salient differences with implications for research into both hypnosis, and consciousness in general. Furthermore, it is the validation of this normative background that sanctions the use of terminology such as “appearance” and “simulation” with respect to hypnotic susceptibility. Three extremely important areas of inquiry stem from this challenge to the apparent homogeneity of so-called normal function. First: is it possible that—far from expressing a biological baseline—the everyday state might be profitably considered as diverse, fragmented, and chaotic? Second: what would be the ramifications of being able to constrain such diversity within a narrower but more coherent field of conscious intention, especially with respect to possibilities for self-knowledge? Third: is there an alternative method of integrating cognitive resources that does not rely so heavily upon this kind of subject and its field of rationalised expectation?

In terms of the first question, the Freudian revolution has contributed to the view that the subject is influenced by factors outside the orbit of its awareness. The solution, however, has been to recoup these vagrant motivations by means of a hermeneutic method that in large part reinforces the identity between knowledge and self-understanding. Yet a decline in the authority of Freudian orthodoxy has merely served to proliferate the range of knowledge required, rather than to question the soundness of the approach. This background from which the subject attempts to gain insight into itself is not a foundation from which all reality is refereed, but a contingent, transactional product that serves a highly practical purpose. The question is whether the understanding of this essential inadequacy leads to a kind of tragic treadmill of self-interpretation, or causes a more radical shift in thinking with potential for a deeper alteration in cognitive performance and ultimately in one's relationship to the world.

In response to a personal question posed during a recent television interview, a certain celebrity answered: "like everyone else, I invent myself each day". The remark was offered as a self-evident platitude, but its implications are anything but transparent. What is the nature of that which is being invented, and what is the context or entity that is doing the inventing? Statements such as the one just cited often refer to the necessity of playing roles in order to navigate the complexities of human power. Indeed, the image of life as an endless hall of mirrors is a highly compelling one. Conceivably, our present cultural obsession with professional actors betrays a conviction that within their creative capacity they are exercising the most gratifying—and perhaps the only possible—species of human agency.

Such a view is seductive, but ultimately shallow: while it questions the absolute status of knowledge, it tacitly glorifies the intentional subject. It is hard to believe that a figure such as Socrates would condone this. If no process exists whereby the human organism can effect more fundamental changes in its conditioning, the generation of self-

invented persona—in spite of an endless potential for superficial “difference”—lapses into arid uniformity. Such a scenario seems to imply that one pre-requisite for change should involve a mutation in fundamental beliefs regarding the current norms of cognitive strategy: i.e., the ground of intentionality itself.

Relinquishing this form of self-mastery may permit forms of cognitive activity that can facilitate alternative modes of understanding. Thus in a sense, the so-called social position does not go far enough: it must be willing to explore the limits of its own alleged foundation. The real must be continuously tested through an open-ended process containing expectation as a dynamic condition that is no longer shackled to knowledge. In the end, the value of hypnosis may not lie in its status as a discrete entity or process; the intriguing evidence it offers, however, should not be thereby assimilated into a normative framework on theoretical grounds alone. Indeed, from the present point of view, it may be more to the point to assimilate the domain of the everyday into the general field of hypnotic phenomena. But such an evaluation is not a linguistic matter. It is thus to matters of procedure that we now turn our attention.

B. PROCEDURE

Section B contains a discussion of several pertinent procedural issues. First, I will discuss the dialogic manner in which the present research evolved, emphasising the intuitive aspect of the working relationship between student and advisor. Next follows an outline of the musical practice that forms the procedural core of this study. Finally, I suggest that for ethical purposes this experience must be integrated into a broader range of communicative behaviours. In all three cases the need for appreciating and facilitating the non-linguistic aspect of these activities is stressed.

1. *Dialogue*

It is tempting to imagine the crux of interdisciplinary research as posing a question about the incommensurable nature of discourses. How, this line of reasoning asks, can mature, independent, rigorously reasoned, functionally productive domains of knowledge face each other and penetrate their respective veils of mystification? Whose rules are chosen, and how is one to apply them? In short: how can separate discourses insightfully communicate? The reply is surprisingly succinct: they can't.

The question is simply inappropriate. Strictly speaking, discourses do not engage in communication: that is the province of the brains that employ them. However banal (or misguided) this may appear on the surface, the observation deserves a measure of reflection. Indeed, the fact our question has any plausibility at all suggests the depth of presupposition it conceals. Critically, discursive interaction occurs on a linguistic level. That is to say, the kinds of constraints that operate at any given time have to do--discursively speaking--with the nature of the linguistic codes and conventions that are employed.

Moving "off the printed page" does not alter this basic situation: enriching the social fund with constructs about the so-called life-world, the contextual realms of social and personal history, the norms of ritual, the minutiae of power's operations, etc., still seeks to shape behaviour through a process of conceptual understanding. However, operating exclusively on such a level does not address the manner in which the linguistic process is concretely embodied by the organism. The implications of the brain's complexities cannot be reduced to a set of biological imperatives or narrative structures. Though most underlying activity appears to operate without conscious consequence, this does not rule out the possibility that certain non-linguistic practices can harbour profound significance for linguistic behaviour.

It is unlikely that words issue forth at the behest of a unified agent so entirely unknowable and non-material that they must bear its authority entirely on their own. The contention here, however, is that discourse retains its absolute status if it is employed to negotiate as seeing-eye dog through an equally invisible traffic of *power*. Such an attitude implies that enlightened communication can only be a function of analysis. The salient point is that no amount of discursive mastery can provide a methodological approach adequate to the present moment and its inescapable contingencies. Consequently, periods of high historical ferment place added evolutionary pressure on the ability to *listen*, rendering greater autonomy to the act of reception as a discrete form of cognitive activity. But the hypothesised space from which it emerges does not necessarily reassert the autonomous subject: on the contrary, it may also imply a disciplined reordering of mental habits aimed at *demoting* the narrow focus of intentional action.

The first step towards the development of what shall ultimately be labelled “moral consciousness” involves a loosening of linguistic control over one’s psychic universe. Engaging in productive communicative dialogue implies a process that is neither purely psychological nor discursive in nature: it proceeds simultaneously on multiple levels, surrendering to processes beyond the purview of any individual self. However—and this is critical—such a dialogue must rely on procedures of intuitive thinking that do not exist apart from the dynamic complexities of biological function. Thus, a major obstacle for symbolically elaborating the notion of methodology lies in its embodied aspect.

A chance remark to my principal supervisor, Dr. Jacinthe Baribeau, helped to underscore this dimension. I had spontaneously observed, during a meeting, how much pleasure the collaborative nature of my project afforded; she replied: “perhaps this is a methodological point.” In time, the procedural ramifications of her comment have become apparent: to some extent, the notion of “acknowledgement” belongs in the body of the thesis itself. What this implies is a more holistic concept of the communicative transaction,

replete with motivational factors that are neither purely subjective, nor entirely social in nature: in short, the "personal" dynamics of our interactions cannot be formally excluded from the methodological picture. What follows, then, is a brief account of the origin of this project as a co-operative venture, and an indication of the dialogic process that has informed its evolution.

The composer Ligeti states that "the initial impulses that set the act of composition going tend to be naive in character" (1983, p. 124). The same might be said for motivations underlying the composition of a research proposal, that formal point of embarkation for the process of obtaining a Ph.D. It seems important to point out, however, that this "naive" material is very poorly "represented" in the document itself; it exists, rather, as a vague but motivated concatenation of ideas or images in the *brain*. As well, we know that these "impulses" do not arise from "thin air", as Ligeti's further remarks make clear:

the naiveté of the raw state is itself not untarnished. It is already interlaced with a series of preferences, and within its amorphousness lie traces of the as yet undiscovered crystal. Music one thinks to be naive is in fact infected with preconceived likes and dislikes... (p. 124)

Some kind of structural process is unfolding; one, consequently, that has a history. What is most germane to the present objective, however, is the non-discursive nature of the perceived potential. In other words, the discursive system may ultimately yield an explicit field of novel relations, but at their moment of inception they only exist in the form of a dynamically experienced psychological condition. To be sure, this may be easier to imagine in the case of Ligeti's materials, but even when *words* are involved, they do not function in their normal discursive capacity, but rather as *poetic* objects bearing a much denser and less linear load of symbolic resonance. Identifying this underlying web of connections with brain function in no way negates the historical nature of the process; what it does imply, however, is that discourse per se has no direct access to the level on which this creative connectivity transpires.

A further point that this conception of generative behaviour suggests deals with the status of non-conscious cognition. In brief, the Freudian paradigm has placed too exclusive an emphasis upon this domain as the harbinger of morbidity. Should the inner workings of the brain not also betray, as a sophisticated organ of survival, the symptoms of a profoundly *reasonable* disposition? Perhaps there is an element of misplaced paternalism in promoting the intentional subject's duty to protect the fragile forces of reason from the "mindless" depravities of a "lower" nature. From another perspective, "naive" material may also harbour the "pre-dispositions" of an entirely *sensible* bias, the nascent workings of a process that is extraordinarily attuned to the manifold contingencies of a dynamic world.

As discussed earlier, the present research stems from a tangle of motivated impulses that were shaped, in part, by an earlier examination of the career of pianist Glenn Gould conducted under the academic auspices of literary theory. My initial proposal at the doctoral level was an attempt to symbolise the disparate elements that now seemed to plead for inclusion into some rough coherence. It was not at all clear, however, which disciplinary alliances would best serve the explication of this basic stratum of vital impulse; clearly the brain, in the depths of its dynamism, is somewhat innocent of the politics of formal knowledge. By the same token, no *absolute* division stands between the objective and the pathological: that determination, in other words, occurs at a more global level of context. If this is the case, however, creative activity always runs the risk of encountering the deeply personal at a place where it is inextricably intertwined.

For these reasons, the search for an appropriate advisor implicates matters that go beyond the pale of what is customarily considered academic discourse. At this stage particularly, the process is guided by an intuitive sense of direction. My initial meeting with Dr. Baribeau, for example, was framed by the necessity of suggesting landmarks that might highlight possible connections between my own uncertain journey and that of a cognitive

neuropsychologist, an occupation, moreover, about which I knew almost nothing. I therefore responded in the manner to which human beings resort when faced with a communicative impasse: the use of gesture. Unable to specify what was only a hunch, I was compelled to *show* something, in this case, a little excerpt from the writings of Gould.² Placed on the desk, the photocopy lay as a silent invitation, a symbol of potential connection that made no demand for an immediate or fully articulate response: in short, it allowed for a respectful space in which to mutually manoeuvre.

In retrospect, the gesture was effective; what seems remarkable is the naivete in which it was offered: as an experiment, perhaps, prompted only by a feeling for the curiosity it might pique. But the reply was somehow deeply resonant. "Ah, what a wonderful self-description of a dissociative episode!" In a literal sense, the words meant practically nothing to me; what was crucial, however, was the immediate recognition of a sense of *relation*, based on the mutual motivational import of this particular object that was communicated.

Let me justify inclusion of this personal narrative by summarising its methodological implications. First, the newly formed relation can be seen as largely non-linguistic. Granted, words were spoken; but the *depth* of implication was not, at this particular stage, concretely rooted in discursive understanding. That is the second point: the strength of connection was forged by virtue of this very verbal imprecision, to the extent it represented a kind of pact, an agreement to mutually pursue what such words might be able to mean. There should always be an element of diplomacy in dialogue, a reticence that begins with a shared understanding that is suggestive of potential productivity, but simultaneously respectful of the dangers posed by a more abstract level of thinking.

The foregoing also recommends why the establishment of trust should be deemed a methodological pre-occupation. To the degree that interdisciplinary work demands

² Unfortunately, I can no longer remember the specific passage chosen.

creativity of a global order, the threat it poses to our attachments deepens in kind. And since there is no way to attain a priori knowledge as to which pillars of support will become vulnerable, the resultant uncertainty tends to be experienced as something personal in nature. The scientific conception of objectivity that simply *excludes* by methodically dividing the world into neat epistemological categories loses its effectiveness in such an environment.

A bond of enduring solidarity between people cannot be forged in the crucible of rational consensus alone; rather, it rests upon the mutually experienced fallibility of knowledge as an exclusive tool of mediation. In this situation, the pursuit of knowledge begins to acquire an ethical cast, requiring not so much self-discipline as moral discipline. Put another way: if we are to shift the emphasis from a process of co-ordinating positive structures to journeying together into the unknown, the trust upon which the latter rests must not simply be the product of a *mutual self-indulgence*. The epistemological dilemma lies in the fact that the time-honoured commitment to logical coherence and methodological rigour is not adequate to the task. Abstract thought can proceed in an almost infinite number of directions, based on the generative bounty of its syntactic and lexical constraints; we experience this continuously in the painful and protracted agonies of our propensity to "rationalise".

It is here, precisely, that the aesthetic domain may have a unique contribution to make. In general terms, it is widely accepted that artistic activity lies closer to the "subjective" than does that of science. Indeed, the bulk of our aesthetic expectations and ritual practices are deeply imbued with this conception. But there is no compelling reason to accept or reject it as an inviolate *gestalt*. There may exist aspects of artistic endeavour that can be cognitively differentiated from those familiarly associated with science, but nonetheless can be exploited in ways that lay outside the customary orbit of aesthetic behaviour. How might we approximate the salient differences here? Basically, the artistic

game allows greater latitude of operation, in that it does not operate within such a tightly bound, abstract conceptual structure as its scientific counterpart. As a result, there is a greater profligacy of connections to be made, as well as a greater deferral of meaning. In other words, the relative lack of conceptual specificity in the process of artistic inception causes a greater temporal gap between the emergence of structure and the conscious appreciation of its semantic utility.

Undoubtedly, there are times when the organisational impetus can be said to reflect a context of psychological conflict. Such discord is not necessarily confined to individual members of a society, however. Works of art may harbour a fascination that stems from an as yet undetermined collective pathology, in which case the period of deferral can be much more protracted. Alternatively, the underlying web of relations symbolically embodied by a work of art may reflect profound ambiguities in the conceptual structures of social discourse that the complexities of historical movement have strained but not yet broken. Finally, aesthetic objects can yield immensely positive or beneficial reactions that might not be further integrated into explicate levels of understanding for hundreds of years. This is not to render meaning absolute, but rather to note that the notion of deferral is complex and works on a number of temporal frames. Most importantly, reflecting upon these artefacts of the imagination can be immensely productive in furthering the development of thought.

Productivity is dependent upon engaging in the aesthetic transaction in an open-ended way, without unduly mediating it through highly specific conceptual schemata. Fascination with the art object, however, is not always the disguised expression of something hedonic in character. Admittedly, adoption of the aesthetic modality as a communicative tool risks an encounter with the emotionally undesirable, and as a result, the notion of trust must be predicated on the practice of welcoming such negativity with the open arms of compassion. The goal of aesthetic activity is not an elucidation of the pathological per se; the latter is simply a by-product of a larger realm of unfettered creativity

that includes both the business of science and interpersonal communication as well. Or, if you will, it is possible to hypothesise a broader, *emergent domain of desire* that reflects the integrated participation of higher level processes more accurately than a reductive model of psychodynamics allows.

Given the nature of interdisciplinary research, then, it is crucial that a motivational field be cultivated in which a confrontation with the undesirable is subsumed as an integrated component of a more general process. It is the mutual acceptance of this prerequisite that in part defines the activity of "trust". From a methodological standpoint, this process cannot be assimilated to discourse. Trust is emblematic of a shared commitment to move forward in a compassionate manner, but it is not realised through linguistic assertions about the future; rather, it must be procedurally demonstrated in the dynamism of the moment. As such it stands as an ongoing test of the participants, the nature of their relationship to power, and their ability to discern its ever-evolving challenges. Most of all, trust implies the cultivation of a *space* granting conversation an autonomy that exceeds the intentions of its individual players. Perspective is a function of space, which is the element necessary to bring things into new relation. Phrasing the matter in this way clarifies why its development cannot be an issue of discursive subtlety or erudition.

The "ritual offering" described above—which eventually resolved my search for an advisor—had forged a significant if largely unspoken connection. In spite of its brevity, it temporarily linked two motivational structures of sizeable intensity and proximity. It is worth mentioning that the discursive aspect of the initial gesture was as effective as it was because of this proximity, which certainly contained a large discursive element. But this language operated at the poetic level, or, in Vygotsky's (1986) terms, as a form of "inner speech" that greatly compresses its semantic material. In other words, Gould's little description of a particular experience was important not by itself, but because of vast conceptual and experiential networks that afforded it a very high status. Nor is this

shorthand indicative of a fully explicate composition that has been systematically reduced as a sign; that is the significant point: these kind of symbolic structures are *partially* linguistic, but cannot exist outside of their concrete biological settings. In this case, the entire painstaking process of elaborating a more detailed verbal context lay entirely in the future. This "academic" task would involve a coming together of cognitive neuropsychology, aesthetics, and literary theory, as well as myriad contexts of belief, culture and experience that are necessarily interwoven into the fabric of our interactions. The space required to have this heterogeneity effectively interact is a psychological objective advanced by musical activities that will be described later.

The above might be said to comprise the methodological origins of the present project. What follows is a brief description of general procedures that were instituted in order to unfold the ramifications of our initial encounter. As discussed earlier, the success of academic disciplines can in part be attributed to their isolation. A fundamental historical movement is now posing limits to their autonomy through the application of concepts and critiques that are unusually holistic in implication. In general terms, this evolutionary process has a twofold dynamic. On the one hand, a certain number of constraints must be lifted from the pattern of activities that defines any given specialisation; on the other hand, new kinds of controls must be instituted to lend coherence to the new global environment. These needs were addressed by a working method that was established from the outset.

Basically, what transpired was a dialogue in which the advisor's "statements"—offered in the form of directed readings—were modulated by the feedback of "response" papers. A number of points can be made here. To begin, the literature was strategically directed, moving from material with a preponderantly philosophical or theoretical orientation, to that containing a higher quotient of empirical research. Such a strategy served the pedagogical imperative of embarking from an appropriate level of knowledge—my background was primarily in literary studies—without adopting the usual expedient of

proceeding from scratch within a strictly enforced "disciplinary vacuum". Consequently, the objective of interaction was built into the process at the start, prompting replies that would yield a level of discursive complexity even as the task of rudimentary acquisition proceeded. In other words, this procedure meant that the scientific material was developing in a grey zone, "tainted" by perspectives normally considered external to it.

But the institution of dynamic *mutual* feedback imparted necessary governance without succumbing to rigid preconceptions regarding method or destination. Such flexibility allowed a constant tailoring of the scientific material to an unfolding context that was itself being shaped by the customised input. Above all, it was a sense of cognitive *space* that defined the indispensable condition in which the paper evolved. Student responses were methodologically bound, at the outset, by little else than an assumed obligation to try and preserve the basic integrity of the information they appropriated. Put somewhat differently, the acquisition of knowledge was committed to a principle of coherence as it entered the unpredictable zone of creative interaction; thus, an element of indeterminacy underlay the transposition of specialised material into unfamiliar contexts. Pedagogical selections needed to be highly sensitive to the developing meta-narrative, but they were never spelled out or contextualised in advance, in order to facilitate a normally desirable focus of skills known as neuropsychology. Instead, information was allowed to wander a little, to intermingle in corridors with cognitive inhabitants somewhat removed from the focused spotlights of the lab. In this manner, a level of *speculative* thinking provided a stay against the radical foreclosure of potential meaning by the limitations of a particular logic; it assumed a more holistic domain of relation, necessary to overcome the inherent inadequacies of both a "conceptual" and a "personal" level of being.

There are two aspects of the process of loosening constraints that deserve mention with respect to the non-verbal. First, the initiation of indeterminacy can be expressed by the concept of *play* that is inherent to the activity just depicted. This also bears

resemblance to the notion of “flow” (Csikszentmihalyi, 1991), insofar as it implies both an increased absorption in the current “game”, and a concomitant reduction in environmental monitoring. In the case at hand, these characteristics were manifested by an academically uncharacteristic loosening of disciplinary boundaries and expectations. Second--and somewhat contrary to “flow” theory--it is necessary to take into account constraints that operate on a more personal level. Addressing these is accomplished through awareness of embodied signals that accompany the experience of *psychological resistance*. Without an ability to consciously monitor these non-discursive manifestations of negative emotion, discourse itself remains hampered by structures that remain outside its purview.

Having briefly alluded to certain non-linguistic factors involved in promoting the generative aspect of thought, it remains to suggest the manner in which a new element of discipline can be imposed upon the general situation. Once the limits to freer association have been relaxed, in other words, what can be implemented to prevent a profligacy of connections that might lead to arbitrariness and unrestrained relativity? To a degree, the same skill that affords insight into the operation of negative emotion might serve as watchdog to its positive counterpart. This implies that learned sensitivity to a *discrete context* of “peripherally broadcast” threat could be enhanced to an extent that *positive* emotions might also be seen as watermarked with the self-same place of origin. Lending credibility to this speculative idea will require extended development; nonetheless, it seems appropriate to introduce it here, in its capacity as a potential methodological tool.

If the above does represent a genuine developmental process, its virtue would stem from an ability to insulate against relativism and extreme forms of “constructionist” thinking. For the truly relative applies to a situation in which abstract thinking becomes a system of self-motivated promiscuity, a condition wherein “success” becomes its own reward. Heightened awareness of this motivational context could serve to undermine its autonomy, and highlight the arbitrary nature of its dedicated organisation and expenditure of energy.

In the normative situation, in other words, both the “bad” and the “good” are products of the same overall context; consequently, resistance has its complementary aura accompanying the process of habitual *attraction*. Watchfulness to the emergence of global pattern provides an alternative approach to a world that spontaneously generates meaning. To the extent it can generate potential patterns of coherence, attention to multiple constraints becomes a concrete way of curbing self-indulgence. For example, abstract conceptualisations of the human mind will become increasingly plausible if they satisfy constraints represented by first person accounts, computer models, multiple levels of physical organisation, as well as socio-historical and evolutionary perspectives.

This holistic pursuit commends itself as a critical player in the process of scientific growth. Knowledge acquisition geared to a *human* conception of survival must endeavour to understand the natural order at all conceivable levels of organisation, *including its own*. From a monist perspective, human intelligence and behaviour need not be reduced to—or inexorably set apart from—our current conception of a lawful universe. Instead, we should respectfully honour a small but functional space of uncertainty, encouraging the kind of speculation that exalts the creative capacity of the imagination, while simultaneously remaining faithful to the proven merits of incremental progress. Dream and discipline are complementary components of the human dialogue, and it is only when one or the other is conceived as primary that the process seems most capable of going awry. The multi-faceted “quilt” that comprises the large-scale pattern of relations presented here is one attempt to pursue a speculative level of thinking that nonetheless constrains itself through a series of reinforcing repetitions: compelling enough, hopefully, to merit attention in the on-going search for a more satisfying and stable paradigm of human knowledge.

2. *Musical Ritual*

The creation of psychological space relies upon the discipline of non-linguistic practise. In order to interrupt the seamless transition between perception and verbal reaction that comes about as a result of immense training and encouragement, repeated immersion in non-verbal activities seems a plausible starting point. With respect to the use of music, this logic dictates the exclusion of songs, media such as cinema or theatre, or public rituals employing music as a means of facilitating various semantic objectives. In these cases, attention to the non-verbal features of sound must be shared either with the processing of language itself, or dynamically unfolding narratives that compete for cognitive resources.

The initial task is simply one of isolation, of clearing the environment of any possible distraction other than the focal task at hand. This in no way implies denial of the social dimension of musical behaviour; it is simply an expedient design for the stated objective. The social relevance of any given activity is not a simple function of either the number of persons that observe it, or of some discrete unit of time. As Gould stressed, the advent of recording technology facilitated new vistas for ritual experience by affording the participant an unparalleled degree of control over a range of variables. It is not surprising that such a novel situation would be exploited in ways that could potentially alter the musical landscape. No doubt solipsism is one of the opportunities that such technology affords, but evaluative pronouncements as to its incidence must be made on the basis of a context that is considerably larger and more complex than that posed by the immediate discussion.

New external storage media allows the listener to effect a spatial isolation in which the elicitation of conceptual responses or those that are dependent upon the presence of others are minimised. Absence of the latter alleviates the need for social monitoring processes, and the self-consciousness that often accompanies social exchange. These factors are not sufficient--nor in all instances even necessary--for the kind of experience sought, but in probabilistic terms they create a setting that is more conducive to the learning

required. The initial goal is total immersion in a world of musical sound, attending exclusively to the perception of its physical characteristics and its dynamic evolution. To that end, an extended state of well-being must be secured, safe from extraneous or unexpected demands.

The safety and control that spatial isolation affords can also be enhanced by the temporal flexibility inherent to recording technology. The ritual event can now be conducted at an optimal moment in time, not only with respect to external factors, but also to one's own responsiveness and ability to focus. With such a level of determination, the subject is able to lend total commitment to the ritual task, which is in effect a practical disengagement from processes of self-preservation. Closing one's eyes—literally—is a valuable means of achieving this end. The impulse toward conceptual categorisation is extremely powerful, and denying visual input by this simple expedient effectively increases a developing sense of isolation and vulnerability.

Foregoing the sense of sight also serves to further specify the practice being promoted. Following along with a musical score is an interesting practice, but it tends to draw attention to the piece of music as abstract structure, rather than exerting emphasis on the perceptual process per se. If for no other reason, the phenomenon of visual scanning causes a degree of "looking ahead" that implies the gradual revelation of a pre-existent artefact, rather than an unpredictable unfolding in real time. This is not to imply that the kind of listening being advocated does not utilise memory of past events, or anticipation of future ones. The point is that such an experience of temporality is dictated spontaneously by the perceptual process itself, and not by any higher level of memory and structural organisation. There is thus achieved, along with spatial isolation, a degree of temporal isolation as well, to the extent that time has been constricted to a small and dynamic window of perception.

The context that organises understanding of these diverse ritual controls is that of attention: a design, in short, that facilitates and extends the constancy of a particular focus of mental activities. And as Gould advocated, recording technology affords yet another advantage over the “live” situation by virtue of the control it gives over a range of acoustic variables, an issue of particular relevance in the case of baroque polyphony. The virtues of this genre will be discussed in some detail later; the present point merely asserts that the task of attending to relevant stimuli is simplified in the context of electronic reproduction.

Nonetheless, attainment of the express purpose is no simple matter. Constancy of attention requires discipline, the exertion of energy aimed at overriding the effects of competing stimuli and their consequent patterns of reaction. We tend to think of discipline in the context of deferred reward: that is, our conceptual understanding creates a context that allows us to inhibit “distractions”, and ultimately attain the results of our intentional behaviour. Yet, evaluation of such “self-control” is in part a function of the desired end, and in part a reflection of the biological status of the means. In other words, sustained attentiveness to activity that is pleasurable—especially that which is deemed the product of homeostatic “drives”—is generally considered less impressive than other disciplinary pursuits.

Listening to music is often identified as a hedonistic pastime; the process itself is considered its own reward. Such a generalisation, however, conceals an untold diversity of practices and beliefs. “Music” embraces a vast array of organisational techniques and methods of engagement. These, in turn, relate to the various kinds of values that music is said to foster. Hedonism that aims to be non-reductive will eventually lose all utility. To the extent that any outcome of usage is seen as desirable, the concept of pleasure can be appropriately applied to the context from whence that desire emerges. Self-gratification in such a scenario becomes both universally true and meaningless.

In this sense, pleasure is entirely too crude a concept to be of use. What is required is an understanding at once more global in scope and finer-grained in composition. The question may be posed: what is the large-scale context in which the use of music occurs, and what is the nature of the participating entities? Perhaps more to the point: is there a way to strictly characterise the notion of attention, as advocated here, as a form of discipline? Habitual generalities are of no help. The plain notion of "listening to music" cannot begin to elaborate the desired effect. The object of our game is to consciously apprehend the largest amount of perceptual detail possible: complete attention, in other words, to the physical characteristics of the evolving sound.

There is thus an element of difficulty involved, such that success is not insured; "easier" forms of pleasure must be deferred in order to attain it. Synchronising body movements to the regularity of meter may yield pleasure, while even the most casual discernment of music "in the background" can create mood by eliciting memories, or generic auras of peacefulness, elation, or even spirituality. Closer attention to the contours of melody seems to induce more concrete emotional hues; in addition, one's choice of repertoire may be coloured by specific contexts of emotional need. Alternatively, pleasure can be derived as music becomes the concrete realisation of an abstract structure of relations.

In all these cases, however, the process of gratification involves a discrete, pre-existent context from which the subject responds: that is, the *response* becomes the focus of meaning, rather than the sounds themselves. This is not to imply that sounds could mean entirely on their own; rather, they mean at the level of a perceptual process that is distinct from the complexities of volition and its own co-opting of the material at hand. Setting aside any validation of this conception of differing levels of processing, the present topic is one of procedure. Apart from the organisation of the environment, including security and acoustic aspects, what are the psychological strategies that can

be employed to assist in the ritual objective? In addition to the general concept of relaxation, there remains to describe a first-person account of the specific technique of listening.

Above all, the method involves what might be called an attitude of defocalisation. In order to relinquish control to the exigencies of a dynamic external environment, to allow this incoming array of sounds to totally dominate the field of conscious attention, there is a concomitant *turning away* from the field of personal expectation that habitually mediates one's social experience. Despite the fact this represents a relinquishment of control, however, it must be *initiated* by a conscious act of volition; in this sense, the apparent paradox of involuntary discipline is resolved in that the process of temporary "succession to the external" cannot transpire without the contrivance of consent. The subject is prepared to intentionally limit attention to one specific context of the environment, but this is only sanctioned because the conceptual intelligence has been able, through its symbolic processes, to provide for a period of relative security in advance. One is *playing* at being a small, furtive mammal in an open field, completely and utterly attuned to the world of sound, but human understanding has been able to wrest the process of expectation away from the psychological context of self-preservation. This, we assert, is the most potentially productive dimension of the aesthetic game.

After the inaugural decision to concentrate has been made and the monitoring process is actively under way, volition reaches the limit of its efficacy. There now appears to be a gap between the desire to attain a specific state, and the ability to fulfil it through intentional means. How is an extraordinary level of vigilance to be maintained in the absence of self-consciousness? The response, from a procedural viewpoint, is "training". There comes a transitional moment when the desired outcome begins to

happen as if “on its own”; some critical point of learning has occurred which triggers a self-sustaining pattern that is no longer in need of conscious observation.

This alleged automatisisation of a specific modality of listening is accompanied by a number of subjective changes. Given the lack of precision with which the term “pleasure” is generally used, moreover, there is no compelling reason to resist (or adopt) its application here. What is most crucial to grasp is that this *particular* pleasure is marked by a feeling of alterity, experienced, that is, as a species of elation quite distinct from other types of subjective encounter. Two fascinating aspects of this “inner” differentiation will be noted here. First, a feeling of externality: events appear to occur not simply outside the self, but beyond the framework of a subjective-objective dichotomy as well. Second, the state is highly fragile. From an evolutionary perspective, this instability is plausible, in that the slightest environmental perturbation—whether conceived as originating from “inside” or “out”—will cause an override by the context of survival. It is ultimately this precariousness that may well hold the key to the modality’s greatest utility.

3. Moral Discipline

Despite the particularity of the multi-levelled process described above, with its demanding constellation of musical genre, ritual constraint, psychological expectation and functional instability, we have not refrained from depicting such a state as pleasurable. In order for such activity to transcend the domain of enjoyment and attain the status of moral transaction, however, a larger behavioural prospect must be sought. Similarly, the notion of self-discipline falls short as an indicator of ethical intent; as with any instance of human self-gratification, the motivational impetus provided by the result can effect a degree of control over underlying systems.

When aesthetic activity is simply viewed as “an end in itself”, its greatest potential remains unrealised. In order for the ritual in question to acquire a more global value, a functional separation from the world must eventually return to that which has been jettisoned. What is critical here is the heightened consciousness of a *relation*, and the subtle transitional process by means of which that relation is illuminated. The ecstatic time, the space of otherness—however one wishes to characterise the dissociated experience—must not merely function as the self-justifying consummation of an “aesthetic” appetite. Rather, it is necessary to suggest how musical ritual can legitimately contribute to a larger field of lived experience without reducing the dynamic relation it portends to verbal formulae.

The final aim of this section is thus to outline procedures for transposing an aesthetic process into one with ethical focus. This developmental sequence can be summarised in six basic steps. The first—already discussed in general terms—involves the disciplined use of music in order to attain a mental state marked by a group of subjective attributes. When such a manner of processing has been achieved, the focus shifts from techniques of facilitation to the experience itself. This second stage presents the dynamic enactment of a relation that is established through the simultaneous monitoring of sound and body, a sensitivity to interoceptive events that are elicited by the perceptual organisation of auditory stimuli.

A third, *post-ritual* phase inaugurates a new relation that is created by attending to the transition between the ecstatic and the everyday. Important as it is to master techniques of ritual engagement, awareness of the subtleties of “re-entry” into the world of political being is a matter of equal concern. The latter serves to provide a comparative measure for the normal modality,³ and in particular, undermines the binary opposition which

³This is not ascribing coherence to the “everyday” that I have previously questioned; instead, the contrast is between a highly focused state and one that is highly eclectic and undisciplined. The implied “negative”

these contrasting states are traditionally said to express. Ultimately, this is accomplished by detecting a level of function that is habitually obscured in the noise of daily life; it spells the beginning of a separation between the special state and the ritual circumstances that were initially employed to evoke it. Thus the fourth leg of this developmental process is hypothesised as an ability to autocue the aesthetic reaction.

Yet another acquired relation forms the basis of the fifth milepost. As in the second, interoceptive stimuli are monitored in concert with an external source; in this case, however, the music of sound has been replaced by that of the self: a stable complex of encoded reactions reflecting a history of organism-environment transactions. Finally, it is envisaged that a period of training reaches a critical point whereby the rewards are able to effect the emergence of an autopoietic pattern, thereby permanently altering behaviour. In such a scenario, the larger motivational field would be able to override the context of the self, thereby removing the sense of conflict that arises from the disciplinary notion of self-policing.

Development of a sense of moral consciousness, from this point of view, requires that power relinquished during the aesthetic moment be handed over on a more permanent basis. This does not imply a negation of the context of self-preservation. What it does insist upon, however, is an altered context from which the operation of language proceeds. That is why the issue is ultimately non-linguistic, for the added feature is not an enhanced self-control over the discursive system that a more powerful body of discursive knowledge affords; rather, we envisage a new set of constraints that come about as a result of a more sensitive and empirically grounded process of *listening*, from which a degree of autonomy has been removed. The intentional has not so much

unity stems from a habitual disregard for a multiplicity of shifting controls and contexts that is subsumed under an allegedly unified mode of "intentional" being.

been undermined as relegated to a level of function that is more appropriate to its capabilities.

C. EPISTEMOLOGY

Dewey and Bentley (1949) expressed the core epistemological commitments adopted here over half a century ago. That their general acceptance remains wanting is an issue that needs to be addressed; indeed, providing historical context is an important objective of Knowing and the Known. The authors elaborate upon the transition from a mechanically deterministic view of reality to one embodied by the new physics. The latter is marked by a style of thought dubbed “transactional”, and “brought in contrast with the antique view of self-actions and with the presentation of classical mechanics in terms of interactions” (p. 103).

Interaction implies the mutual influence of fixed entities upon one another; transaction, alternatively, refers to a dynamic field wherein a population of atomic units has been supplanted by more mutable actors. To this extent even the word “actor” is misleading, suggesting as it does a given structure adequately circumscribing a specific sphere of action. In the transactional view, action is often seen as a property of the system as a whole rather than something reflective of an underlying set of immutable local relations. But the larger point for Dewey/Bentley is the general epistemological implications that the field of physics affords. In other words, at the scale of human behaviour, similar principles apply; consequently, the human actor as individual is not an indivisible and therefore primary unit of analysis.

The broad cultural problem posed by this revolution involves acceptance of new levels of indeterminacy. It is not that chance *per se* is novel. However much the image of a universal clockwork dominated theory, humans have surely always recognised the

contingencies of everyday life. By the same token, theoretical reality's rigid determinism still exerts itself as an ideal to which the human mind can aspire, particularly within the realm of discourse. A significant part of Knowing and the Known thus examines the operation of language, both as a tool employed by agents, and as a means of establishing an epistemological ground on which to build.

The authors claim that for many of their colleagues, "words are dealt with in the logics as if they were a new and third kind of fact lying between man as a speaker and things as spoken of" (p. 50). This has the effect of both reifying language and implying an autonomous, abstracted agency for its "users". Elimination of the hypothesised "middle" serves to abolish the special status of the linguistic mind by assimilating its activities to a biological continuum of semiotic behaviour. "Identifying behavior in general with organic-environmental sign-process, transactionally viewed, we have noted the perceptive-manipulative activities at one end of the range, and then three stages of the designating use of language, followed by another type of use in symbolization" (p. 199).

Emphasis upon language as situated action stresses realities of process that mechanical determinism overlooks. Anticipating Bohm's (1983) experiments with a language that foregrounds verbs, Dewey and Bentley point out that "Designations, as designatings, are themselves Events" (p. 62). Again: "knowing and identifying, as ways of acting, are as much ways of doing, of making" (p. 54). And later they note that the act of "[n]aming selects, discriminates, identifies, locates, orders, arranges, systematizes" (147). This insistence upon language as embedded behaviour dissuades attempts to erect a firm foundation through the arduous precision of definition.

Contingency is borne upon the temporal flow. In the authors' words, "[t]ransaction regards extension in time as indispensable as extension in space..." (p. 123). Acknowledgement of ceaseless change inhibits the acceptance of absolutes.

Instead, “[t]ransaction is inquiry of a type in which existing descriptions of events are accepted only as tentative and preliminary...” (p. 122). As a result, there is no finality, no foundation from which one can simply proceed in a purely logical manner. That is, the “names we need have to do with knowings and knowns in and by means of continuous operation and test in work...” (p. 49).

The restless dialectic between linguistic behaviour and the world at large is not futile, however, simply because it does not rest upon an imperturbable edifice. For Dewey and Bentley, epistemologically sound practices fall under the general rubric of Specification, understood as “the type of naming that develops when inquiry gets down to close hard work, concentrates experimentally on its own subject matters, and acquires the combination of firmness and flexibility in naming that consolidates the advances of the past and opens the way to the advances of the future” (p. 162). Most importantly, it is *flexibility* that differentiates “consolidation” from that rigid base that the quest for definitional purity implies.

Language, in this view, must not be abstracted as an autonomous entity, manipulated by an equally autonomous component of mind. Amongst its many merits, Knowing and the Known foreshadows McLuhan's concern with the unconscious effects of literacy upon thought. “One may go so far as to doubt whether the distorted theory would have arisen if it had not been for the development of written documents with their increasing remoteness from determination by a directly observed situation” (p. 160). The problem is compounded when the theoretical milieu fixes attention upon a detached language, allowing other communicative skills to atrophy. By contrast, James (1984) stressed that every thought is accompanied by a “halo of obscure relations” (p. 72), suggesting that a good deal more semiosis transpires than that to which our attention is habitually directed.

More generally, holistic vision needs to be vigilant in preventing any act of division, undertaken for the sake of expedience or utility, from becoming part of a naturalised framework. Much of the present project deals with the ill effects of dualism--the most virulent form of enforced partitioning--and once again, Dewey and Bentley have managed to give the diagnosis advance notice. Accordingly, they "employ no basic differentiation of subject vs. object, any more than of soul vs. body, of mind vs. matter, or of self vs. not-self" (p. 120). The complexities of underlying reality are simply too dynamic to conform to the symbolic capacities of abstract discourse alone. A better approximation requires a subtle, ongoing process of observation for multiple events, ceaselessly occurring both within and without the human organism.

Of course, even the latter distinction cannot be spelled without ambiguity. Ultimately, all knowledge is beset with the problem of self-reference. Stated in the authors' memorable terms: "Fact is notoriously two-faced. It is cosmos as noted by a speck of cosmos. Competent appraisal takes this into account" (p. 74). We can never be autonomous, set over against "all the rest"; we both act and are acted upon as part of the same, undivided transactional field. This does not mean that knowledge cannot be seen as making gains in accuracy and coherence. However, it does foreclose the possibility of eliminating the tireless need for perennial, open-ended observation.

Yet, in a sense, science--very much like the aesthetic rite being advocated--provides a rewarding respite from the encroachment of dangerous contingency. The "knowing" of common sense insures "that the necessary affairs of everyday life be carried on" (p. 281); that is, it serves the immediate needs created by the constant duress of survival. By contrast, "[t]he relation is reversed in science as a concern. As already emphasized, doing and making are as necessarily involved as in any industrial technology. But they are carried on for the sake of advancing the system of knowings and knowns" (p. 281). This temporary suspension of the instrumental is an integral part

of the knowledge process, and implies an altered state of mind as prerequisite for participation.

In this context, Dewey and Bentley demonstrate that a conscious “turning away” is neither anti-social nor escapist, but occurs, rather, as a distinguishing functional feature of the capacity for human growth. Hence there appear no *a priori* grounds for discouraging the epistemological claims of the fugal ritual, purely on the basis of the temporary disengagement it demands. This, along with the fundamental tenets of transactionalism, lends support to the nature of an approach that will hopefully be further vindicated by the details about to unfold.

CHAPTER III. DIALECTICS

***A. THESIS, ANTI-THESIS (1)*¹**

The preceding material has been assembled with the goal of providing context for a central set of questions—presented in List 6—comprising the logical skeleton upon which all subsequent work will be borne. First and foremost stands the general problem of moderating a confrontation between what has been labelled the “Gouldian problematic”, and cognitive science (Q-1). In basic terms, this task involves an attempt to conceptualise the turbulent, age-old relationship between music and ethics in a language that might cast new light upon familiar objects. The origins of this project are twofold: my own experience of music, and an extended involvement with the creative legacy of Glenn Gould. The latter was inspired by the striking power of his piano recordings, and evolved into an interest for productions in other media. In this regard, an early intuition—namely, that the relationship between his musical performances and those in radio and print was far from arbitrary—was eventually explored in my master’s thesis at Carleton University, entitled “Fighting Duel-ism: A Glenn Gould Context” (1993).

Underlying this interest in Gould is an affinity for certain forms of music, and a mutual belief in their potential significance for human life. Musical genres have long intrigued me, not merely as subjective expressions of personal or cultural difference, but as possible manifestations of contrasting states of consciousness harbouring largely unappreciated—but perhaps generally applicable—implications. For me, the puzzle of Bach’s highly contrapuntal music has been most persistent. What makes it such a singular experience, and what allows Gould’s renditions to heighten this specificity?

¹ For a complete itemization of theses and anti-theses, see List 6, page 31.

I submit that the broad field of cognitive science can help address these questions; further, I believe it holds promise as a means to clarify Gould's cardinal insight that music can—and thus should—contribute to a process of moral discipline. I am aware that certain contemporary perspectives regard such a discourse as inherently untenable. In order to advocate wider acceptance of this thesis, then, it will be helpful to demonstrate the limitations of sundry approaches to the problem. This is not necessarily due to any lack of logical consistency or scholarship on the part of those that adopt them; instead, it suggests that a multi-levelled style of encounter may be better suited to address the many salient aspects of a complex issue.

For example: early on I became aware that receptivity to Bach's music seemed less constrained by personal factors such as mood than that of other styles. This could be explained as a function of the abstract, almost mathematical transparency of its organisation, a point which numerous commentators have addressed over the years. But overt resonance with a certain kind of formal coherence must not be used as sole source for exploring the meaning such music is capable of generating. Consideration of a host of other equally important factors, such as the nature of human perceptual and attentional apparatuses, cultural conditioning, ritual context and the like need to be considered as well. From this perspective, the problem of meaning is still a formal one, but one that does not reside at one specific level of analysis.

Still, acknowledgement of these elements poses an intractable challenge: the strength of the prevailing zeitgeist can summarily disqualify specific avenues of exploration from serious consideration. Today one encounters a social ethos that places increasing reliance upon discursive analysis, a predicament that may ultimately transform the field of values and self-knowledge into matters contested solely within the arena of political debate (AT-1). Alas, any attempt to pose the problem of communication in a manner that does not readily conform to the discourse of "empowerment" is discredited in the most trenchant

manner possible: it is deemed an escape from “the real”.

But just as the notion of musical form need not be limited to certain levels of analysis, so a concern with power, history, and identity can become more productive when recognised as transcending any narrow disciplinary focus. The purposeful bonding and utilisation of energy, the effect of past conditions, and the relative fixity of certain orders of relation are phenomena with application far beyond the arena of discursive behaviour. Indeed, unless it can be demonstrated that more general aspects of such processes are irrelevant to human behaviour, their exclusion from our discussion must be judged as arbitrary.

The examination of a specific musical ritual and its relationship to ethics can benefit from the sensitisation to systemic and hierarchical complexity that cognitive science affords. A single human organism has numerous modalities of functioning, is susceptible to multiple influences, and can undergo varying degrees of dynamic transformation. The point is not that conversance with brain science or any other branch of empirical study is essential to the task of effective communication and self-knowledge, but even casual familiarity with these fields helps to illuminate the shortcomings of approaches that systematically exclude a vast range of pertinent detail and complexity from their deterministic calculations.

Psychology’s distinction between declarative and procedural knowledge may be significant here, for if ethical practice is more a procedural matter than the current ethos admits, the conceptual intricacies to which we have alluded need not be universally mastered. Their ethical value lies in an ability to sanction certain non-verbal activities, and further, to increase understanding of the ends that such activities may assist: in short, they serve an important pedagogical function.

Examining the relationship between music and ethics requires confronting a crisis in our civilisation: an inability to adequately articulate and effectuate a constructive place for non-verbal dimensions of human experience. Dualistic thinking about this problem

abounds, but by its very nature fails to offer insight into the genuinely integrative process that ethical practice demands.

B. THESIS, ANTI-THESIS (2)

Working to forge a critical functional link between musical activity and the broader realm of ethical behaviour stands as the crowning achievement of Glenn Gould's genius. I submit that deeper appreciation of this thesis depends upon the development of a general framework in which to view the subject of creativity (Q-2). To this end, it is useful to consider the present work as a kind of extended meditation on the concepts of continuity and discontinuity. Such an approach carries the virtue of eliminating absolute terminology from the discussion. The reason for this is simple: as a temporal construct, creativity is only comprehensible as a partial departure from that which precedes it.

Stating the problem in broad terms helps to secure a holistic approach. All kinds of information, for example, fall within the general evaluative criterion provided: that is to say, any "difference that makes a difference" inherently expresses some form of discontinuity. This may seem trivial, but it warns against regarding creativity in a manner that seals activities—along with their causes and effects—within isolated levels of analysis. While it may be useful to acknowledge any given instance of discontinuity as meaningful, it is also the case that such an evaluation will only apply to a limited number of contexts. Because there is no *a priori* method of determining the effects that ripple across various analytical boundaries, however, the very act of observing creativity can be deemed a creative act in its own right.

This is not to say that thinking about various levels of cause and effect must sink into a quagmire of relativity; indeed, we necessarily rely on a great deal of continuity to make sense of things. Nonetheless, maintaining the most all-encompassing definition

serves useful purposes. Making mention of the realm of aesthetic creation, for instance, immediately conjures up various discourses, often contrasted with parallel activity conducted under the auspices of empirical science. Despite a long tradition that stresses the differences between these areas of endeavour, the question as to what they may have in common is now a legitimate one, at least in certain quarters. And understanding these shared attributes may alter the way that the individual areas of focus are perceived.

Likewise, confining creativity to any group of analytical variables concerned with the nature of human society or collective behaviour may harbour significant shortcomings. Do we know *a priori* that the cordoning of *human* creativity from more general investigative conceptions is the soundest methodological approach? For example, Kauffman (1995) does not attribute biological evolution solely to effects of natural selection operating upon the whims of random occurrence. Instead, he is convinced that self-organization plays a crucial role in the entire cosmic pageant of diversification and rising complexity. Yet the spontaneous flowering of order that his theories purport to describe also carries implications for the way we view our "own" creative actions. In other words, assignment of humanity's greatest achievements to a species-specific agency is at best misleading. Overcoming this false ascription of autonomy over the creative act is one of the central critical objectives of the present work.

Despite this caveat, there is no need to deny any number of circumscribed jurisdictions permission to fly the banner of creation. Again, this is the virtue of a generic approach: the generality with which creativity is being defined allows us to bestow authorship upon any number of distinct entities, despite their limitations. The behaviour of any solitary individual, cultural group or discursive repertoire may be in some sense viewed as the structural expression of whatever analytical regime they are seen to embody. Still, this way of thinking is just a kind of shorthand that bypasses the actual complexity of either genesis or effect. Whether behaviour is judged "discontinuous" or otherwise, for instance,

ultimately depends upon the particular evaluative perspective employed.

Seeing things in this way at least acknowledges the possibility of complex discontinuities, dependent upon the activity of numerous levels of organization. Thus, for example, the simple dichotomy between intentional and unintentional cannot represent instances where intention has been purposively integrated into a larger context. It is not simply a matter of itemising what is attributable to intention, and what is otherwise; rather, the outcome varies as a function of the way these diverse contexts interact.

The richness of natural creativity has to date eluded attempts at basic conceptual description. This situation is changing, however, with the emergence of new kinds of non-linear logic. While there is no question of wresting total control of the creative process, I believe that greater understanding will help effect a more responsible use of human agency. Responsibility in this sense is not mastery; it is, instead, the willingness and ability to adapt to a richer and more dynamic reality than that which we habitually conceive. Imposed isolation from the kinds of general laws of creativity that researchers like Kauffman are attempting to uncover contributes to the creation of authorial illusion, and stunts the potential for deeper levels of discontinuous evolution.

The image of creativity as a vast continuum, punctuated by diverse functional entities exhibiting differential fields of possibility, lies at the heart of this theoretical proposal. At one end, the creative act is seen as monologic in origin, dominated by few elements, and susceptible to interpretative procedures that are relatively algorithmic in nature. At the other extreme stands the dialogic realm of moral creativity, distinguished by the highest manifestation of what might be labelled the "discipline of non-interference". What must be overcome are not simply the obstacles posed by the acquisition of skill or knowledge in the customary sense. Above all, it is the organism's embodied refusal to relinquish ultimate veto-power over the meaning-making process that poses the most intractable challenge. It is only when intense concentration, knowledgeable commitment to self-understanding, and

faith in a more complex consortium of cognitive processes combine that creativity can rise to the level of a spontaneous moral perception.

Because this form of organization implies an override of intransigent aspects of conditioning, it embodies a radical departure from habitual practices. The envisioned dialogic regime is comprised of a multiplicity of cognitive processes whose unity is not imposed through the dictates of some centralised command centre. The discipline imposed at a level of conscious, executive function is ultimately designed to diminish certain activities in order to draw attention to more complex, multi-faceted events possessed of their own, spontaneous organisational dynamic. From this perspective, the individual is not the creative agent per se, but rather a facilitator device with privileged links to one concrete embodiment of the human nervous apparatus.

In order to approach the problem of creativity, we are obliged to take a stand on the nature of subjectivity. To this extent, the present thesis is part of a very active field of inquiry. Yet admitting that the subject is not unified--as either a non-material entity or a fully autonomous agent--is only a first step; however much the insight departs from longstanding tradition, it leaves the entire issue of the nature of discontinuity and potential for change open to question. Such a question is inescapably moral in tenor. It is this confluence of factors that requires examination. Various approaches to critical aesthetics refer to the moral context of the creative act, but most are largely silent with regard to the creative dimension of the moral transaction (AT-2).

This basic predicament can be summarised with reference to a general hermeneutic ethos. As briefly noted in the first section of this chapter, theoretical discourse often discredits competitors by claiming superior fortitude in facing uncomfortable, hard-nosed realities of power. The manoeuvre resonates with dualistic tension, pitting analytical intelligence against the wanton subjectivity of emotion.

Yet one need not deny either power or its hierarchical embodiment in order to adopt

the current proposal. Perhaps the best summary of the attitude being advocated can be found in the subtitle of Hilgard's (1986) treatise on hypnosis: "Multiple Controls in Human Thought and Action". That structural constraints and purposeful exertions exist within the biological, political, economic or linguistic orders is not being questioned. Nevertheless, behaviour is not the output of some rigidly linear chain of command, no matter how complicated, and despite the development of normative regimes, varying degrees of novelty and potential to evolve can arise both within and without these circumscribed areas.

In short, the conceptual world of complex systems seems a better fit to reality than mechanically deterministic descriptions. To this extent, the poststructuralist vision has much to commend it (Cilliers, 1998). From the present perspective, however, undue isolation of the language system as an analytical focus may itself be a dangerous ploy. Again, this need not reject a certain privileged position for language atop the cognitive hierarchy. Acknowledgement of the flexibility of control processes, however, can open up areas of experimentation that might lead to functional changes in the conduct of our mental affairs not otherwise conceivable.

The object of aesthetic ritual in this context is to wilfully create an environment that can afford and effect the suspension of habitual levels of control. The question of ethics concerns the manner in which this ritual activity is integrated into the broader domain of the organism's transactions. Such a possibility cannot arise, however, if subjectivity is not susceptible to the kind of cognitive deconstruction that will permit even a temporary reconfiguration to transpire. Still, a credible response to those who would claim sovereignty for their particular analytical approach must stem from the possibility of broad systemic change; otherwise, aesthetic experience remains trapped in a space that is indeed an escape from power, rather than one of transformation.

Thus, the question of subjectivity is twofold: the first concerns the nature of divisibility, and the second that of reformulation. Both aspects, seen from the global

perspective of ethics, will be affected by a permanent alteration in the dynamics of power. This would seem to involve a ceding of individual sovereignty. What kind of accommodation, accordingly, does the individual make on behalf of the collective order? Appreciation that the creative act is a product of higher order constructs leads to a pursuit of causal effects that must be sought through the mastery of historical fact and linguistic skill. Such a quest imposes an objective disciplinary regime, along with a concomitant curtailment of belief in the autonomy of one's individual, creative agency. Ethics is a process of appeal to this public domain, conducted through processes of knowledge and negotiation. In this way one seeks empowerment to stake one's claim, and to concretise the *other* with which one must bargain.

The psychoanalytic model does not fundamentally alter this situation, insofar as it seeks reinstatement of the historical. It could best be conceived as a complementary movement, perhaps, an intermediate stage that needs to be traversed in order to keep the ethical process of disputation on more solid ground. Ultimately, these processes of positive acquisition permit an increasing level of control to be exerted over the more objective media through which the ethical process transpires. Under this general program, any alternative commitment represents either capitulation to the whims of personal desire, or evasion of the concrete realities of which the individual is comprised. The process of ethical integration must therefore occur at the level of analysis. There simply is no other recourse, no other domain to which an appeal can be made. The individual may be divided, but only to the extent that allegiance to the analytical process is compromised, tainted by the fantasy of self-containment. Granted, the analyser is subject to lapses in logical consistency, inevitable and perhaps eternal gaps in knowledge, and the like; but this admission should merely increase the motivation with which the ethical goal is pursued.

The concept of moral discipline being promoted here is not compatible with this attempt to smelt an analytical self from the dross of subjective being. Instead,

deconstruction and reconstitution are procedural matters that can benefit from an analytical context but are not ultimately controlled by it. From the perspective of knowledge, this entire project may be regarded as *surrender to a "dynamic more"*. "More" symbolises two aspects: first, recognition of concrete material constraints, to which the analytical approach lends no access; and second, acknowledgement of a spontaneous, emergent level of creativity which the subject must attempt to *understand*, not *dominate*. Proper steps must be taken in order to facilitate the creative process, and likewise, to receive it. Both instances seem to entail a critical degree of discontinuity from the analytical perspective.

Imagine the complexities involved in any communicative exchange: the vast cascades of neuro-chemical activity; the dynamism of the perceptual apparatus; the hierarchical levels of nervous function, processing events within and without the body; the resonance of past experience, both phylogenetic and ontogenetic; the rife associations of knowledge and language. All these multifarious levels, representing diverse kinds of information and temporal frames, simultaneously activated, propagating unimaginable waves of activity in a biological medium of the most exquisite sensitivity: can we really expect to negotiate a single, fixed, deterministic path through such a dynamic tangle of interconnected events and potentials?

The goal of moral discipline is to become cognisant of how habit and fear serve to dramatically curtail the possibilities that such realities can afford. The application of disciplinary energy is intended to overcome the inertia of power, not in order to wrest control of the creative process as an act of sober self-assertion, but to liberate it from the meddling limitations of reductive thought. No amount of respect earned for Herculean exertions aimed at controlling meaning can dispel the fundamental error it embodies. The alternative, however, must not be seen as a necessary lapse into indolence.

What this thesis attempts to present, then, is a particular view of the relationship between the subject and the creative act. Creativity is seen to occur at a multiplicity of

sites, and human beings are sufficiently complex that different functional nodes undergo productive behaviours appropriate to their makeup. The genesis of production is dependent both upon the spontaneity of underlying systems, and the application of various disciplinary measures designed to inhibit activities. Within the musical context, these constraints will include the nature of the musical material being performed, the kind of ritual participation required, and the application of differential cognitive skills that these requirements demand.

Listening in the sense being promoted qualifies as a creative act. The repertoire and ritual context are designed to forgo certain expectations, as well as evaluative and monitoring processes, in order to enable the subject to focus upon a difficult perceptual task. The combination of this discipline, along with the dynamic nature of the musical/mind interchange, provides an experience that appears discontinuous with one's normal modes of reception and evaluation: it is neither the result of consciously pursued analysis, or of habitual emotional patterns. It is this sense of witnessing something unpredictably dynamic, of participating in a heightened apprehension of the present that lends a level of novelty appropriate to the creative concept. A large part of the material in chapter four is intended to help construct a context that lends plausibility to this intuition.

Finally, we propose that the spontaneous processing our ritual allegedly affords--along with the necessary sensitisation to its occurrence--be transplanted outside the particular aesthetic context out of which it has arisen. Listening as a creative act, in other words, must join the entire panoply of behavioural transactions, thus becoming truly ethical in scope. As discussed, however, entertaining such a possibility depends upon an understanding of the subject not merely as non-unitary, but dynamic and multi-levelled as well.

C. THESIS, ANTI-THESIS (3)

Two widely divergent conceptions are being contrasted here, posing an essential question with respect to creativity and the human subject. I believe this difference is most simply and forcefully defined by the historical process to which we have been consistently alluding: the shift from a mechanically deterministic science, to one dominated by mysteries of modern physics, cybernetics, and dissipative systems theory. The beginnings of this transition are now a century old. Yet the strife this reorientation has unleashed at the level of general culture continues unabated. That so few inroads have been made in broadly disseminating key ideas is in part a testament to the discontinuity they represent. But conceptual difficulties cannot entirely account for the intransigence of the problem.

At least two major areas obstruct the progress of integration. One is a political and economic culture that thrives on notions of fixed identity and individual autonomy. The second derives from the history of the social sciences, which began their quest for legitimacy just as older disciplines—which were serving as models—started to turn from some of their own longstanding assumptions. In both cases, we are faced with difficulties involved in trying to cope with an unfamiliar degree of irreducible indeterminacy. For the individual, occupying a socially identifiable space lends a degree of certainty and comfort. One may not be happy with the social status of such an identity, but at least one “knows where one stands” and can act accordingly. The same holds true for any succession of identities the subject may be pleased to “construct”.

For those engaged in the process of a formal hermeneutics, attempting to pin down meaning with increasing accuracy, the careful specification of significant difference seems to grow at an alarming rate. That is, attempts to maintain a holistic view become more difficult as distinctive locales emerge in greater detail. Does one negotiate from a fixed place, and are the analytical co-ordinates of that specificity to be used as guides for a mutual navigation? At what point is that which is considered local truly representative of a

discrete domain, and what is the effect of this entity's behaviour upon the whole, or upon other local players?

But a further question arises as to the ultimate efficacy of such an approach: what passes for a description of the concrete situation may not adequately reflect the operative elements involved. Moreover, it may not be feasible to know which variables can be frozen for analysis without an intimate understanding of the temporal process and how it evolves. In short, traditional means for dealing with the relations between whole and parts are inadequate. It is the unpredictable interpenetration of levels that makes the dynamic complexity of the biological world resistant to the kinds of thinking that effectively served our understanding for several centuries.

In this context, dualism represents the most unequivocal expression of the strategy of absolute division. This ploy prevents the kind of fluidity just alluded to, and consequently imposes unnecessary sanctions on the realm of the possible, including those transactions that constitute the heart of the present proposal. How do we break out of the constraints of dualism in handling this issue of music and morality (Q-3)? The most pervasive solution in the present secular culture is the positive valuation of matter over spirit. However, two equally pervasive problems arise as a result of this alleged commitment to "material reality". First, this approach summarily dismisses all discourse using conventional religious terms, without any mindfulness of the mythic symbolic nature of religious expression, or of the differences between various spiritual thinkers. Second, what passes as empirical knowledge is in fact only one kind of physical theory: one, moreover, profoundly shaped by dualistic concepts.

Self/other, subject/object, biological/cultural, Dionysian/Appolonian: these are but a few of the stock "oppositions" which today's reader is likely to encounter. And though the language of metaphysics has largely deferred to that of the "materially constructed self", old antagonists continue to corral discussion into the same depleted field. Shifting discussion

about creativity from an autonomous “I” to the determinations of social power and discourse does not automatically evade the dangers of binary thinking. Consequently, I am concerned about slipping back into an essentialised albeit collective selfhood. A purely linguistic approach promoting the subject as a social entity fails to recognise the broader biological roots in which linguistic activity transpires (AT-3).

The problem, furthermore, cannot be addressed by utilising verbal formulas about desire, instinct, or similar constructions designed to account for lower levels of human experience. Nor does biology merely symbolise the subjective, that irreducible “inside” of an entity to which no objective correlates exist. In short, dualistic concepts, with their absolute boundaries, cannot capture what is hypothesised as ambiguous in nature. Again, deep creativity is reckoned as multi-levelled in origin, and this is precisely the point against which dualism commits its greatest violence. The radical exclusivity inherent to these concepts forces adherence to various hierarchical value structures because of the category errors they contain.

I submit that our posed musical predicament cannot be adequately assayed by such terminology. What is most interesting—and potentially productive—about the state of consciousness under scrutiny is its apparent blurring of the normal distinction between subject and object. In offering some kind of hybrid, it is necessary to conceive these terms as being susceptible to functional decomposition, in a manner that critiques the dualistic edifice in which they are embedded. As a result, for example, “subject” cannot be neatly cleaved into biological/subjective and social/objective compartments. In order to examine this hypothesis more thoroughly, a series of questions will now be considered, dealing with the problem of dualism and its relation to our focal musical ritual.

Q-3a: Is the biological and social conditioning of the self co-extensive with the cognitive resources of the organism?

The first step here is acknowledgement of the self as an embodied product of a

concrete history. Such a history is comprised of numerous temporal frames reflecting phylogenetic, cultural, and ontogenetic factors. Moreover, these events may affect behaviour, even though not coded as discursive constructs. Nor is their integration a uniform matter. This is because the organism faces a dynamic environment posing a multiplicity of simultaneous challenges requiring different types of processing and different response times, depending upon an evaluation of the priorities each represents. As the work of Donald (1991) and others suggests, even higher levels of cognition reflect simultaneous, semi-autonomous processes that can be ignored at a conscious level but cannot be collapsed into one solitary mode of thought.

The conscious manipulation of language is a very powerful modality, able to inhibit many aspects of behaviour (Luria, 1973). Such usage is predicated upon powerful executive programs, highly efficient skills that can instantaneously assemble protracted discursive sequences at the onset of even the slightest stimulus; constructs, moreover, that can exhibit great subtlety, and be invested with acute emotional energy. Such abilities have imparted unusual adaptive flexibility to the human species, highlighting their role in our complex social organization and technological ascendance. But as Illich writes, "we are presently constrained and driven by the impact of man's ever growing powers" (1971, p. 4). I am urging, in other words, that language be considered a member of that class of innovations, which—in Illich's view—manages to attain an excessive, ecologically unbalanced autonomy despite its initial benefits.

The importance of language proficiency, especially in the context of literacy, is an axiom of modern life. Urban humans live not so much in a natural environment as a symbolic one, and hence the transposition of survival skills is effected accordingly: one survives, literally, through mastery of the increasingly complex semiosis through which human interactions occur. Such expertise, coupled with the proliferation of local discourse as well as the reifying effects of external memory devices, contribute to a sense of the

individual's autonomy and identity.

With the advent of thinkers such as Freud and Marx, focus shifts towards historical conditions of which the speaker is unaware. However, the fundamental aspiration of ascending to the throne of language does not diminish, even though the means have required alteration. Knowledge of past conditions and temporal process allow greater definition of the entity that speaks. Sovereignty is not simply a birthright but an office to be earned; it stems not from some innate subjective connection to the source but from the painstaking commitment to objective analysis. Little wonder that those seriously embarked upon this path are outraged at the seemingly irresponsible ethos of "postmodernity" and its puckish promise of eternal pranks.

This thesis takes a middle ground with respect to the foregoing crisis. While there are clear historical landmarks to which one can point, language as a complex activity seems possessed of a level of indeterminacy, of *creative evolution*, that eludes the best efforts at causal reduction. This by no means empowers the subject with a dizzying capacity for self-creation. Or rather, such a game can be played, but it does not represent the ludic element proper to a deeper understanding of the poststructuralist development. Here we encounter an example of the varying loci of creative activity. To manipulate personae in the euphoric knowledge that no essential self exists may result in behaviour that is socially efficacious, but this is a far cry from exhibiting personal autonomy over the communicative act. From a more general perspective, the effects of such behaviour operate at the level of normative discourse. A more thorough discussion of this issue can be found in chapter four, section B-1-c (p. 315), with reference to Bruner's (1990) work on narrative.

The problem with dualism is that it permits no alternative to the accumulation of historical knowledge other than self-indulgence, or--what amounts to the same thing for the materialist outlook--transcendence. For better or worse, in other words, there appears no

credible option beside the pursuit of mastery. But I would suggest that the necessity of choosing between a disciplined approach to meaning and one that revels in the relativity of non-essence is the product of an underlying dualism. That much behaviour is enacted on the basis of this scheme, reflecting allegiance to one side or the other, does not mean it is the only possible mode of understanding. In the model being proposed, for instance, play is not conceived as a mechanism of personal empowerment, either as restorative tonic or theatre of self-assertion, nor is it deemed an indolent lapse from the realistic rigours of political pursuit. On the contrary, play symbolises a very high degree of discipline and historical specificity.

The skill being promoted, however, is fundamentally non-discursive in character. This returns the discussion to the idea of multiple processing systems and simultaneous demands of the environment. Lost in the imposed quest for linguistic virtuosity are the subtle signs of an organism bearing witness to the spontaneous creativity of nature. Such well-attuned receptivity to the dynamic present represents the product of millions of years of evolution, and offers a vital counterpart to the abstract structures of verbal reflex. It is this inner embodiment of simultaneous perspectives that recent historical events have conditioned us to ignore, and that represents, in response to question 3a, a cognitive endowment offering potential that exceeds the "programs" of culture and ontogenesis.

Q-3b: Can the concept of a "cognitive surplus" be compatible with some form of historical understanding?

As just noted, we are not dealing with processes dedicated to language per se. The goal of self-knowledge in this context is not to be able to utter words that could somehow bear marks of the infinite, mingling amongst the world's discursive crowds in utter self-containment, preserving their intended meaning for all who seek to reconstruct it. A language such as this, in full possession of itself, would stand outside the historical process of evolution (see for example, Derrida, 1988).

The present focus on creative behaviour, by contrast, points to a dynamic locus that includes the brain and its multiple levels of organisation. Self-knowledge from this perspective seeks to drive a functional wedge between the organism as a seat of consciousness and the processes by which it habitually manifests itself as a linguistic subject. It is not the authorial subject that suddenly attains a higher degree of self-identity; rather, this entity, in recognising its limitation, cedes creative control to a more global set of processes. Put another way: in a state of heightened insight, what alters is not an improved ability for precise self-expression but a relation to language in general, including one's own. Language becomes depersonalised, emptied of a content that relates to habitual concerns and modes of production, whether these are coded in social discourse or embodied in inner speech.

Consequently, the idea of a "surplus" is not manifest as a specific *text*, nor is it accessed by means that occur at the level of discourse itself. The musical discipline being investigated is offered as one example of the kind of directed, non-linguistic activity that can contribute to fuller self-knowledge. Again, the problem of dualism becomes a major obstacle. Symbolic thought is widely portrayed as the cultural side of the human mind, contributing self-consciousness and conceptual understanding, whereas biology provides foundations in which are housed the turbines of hardwired desire, generating energy that often disrupts the fragile workings of higher intelligence and intention. As a result, any practice that purports to shun the action of language abandons sober understanding on behalf of dumb appetitive forces.

It is this culturally pervasive binary opposition, pitting the sentience of language use against the mechanical reflexes of natural instinct, to which we are taking exception. Language by itself is a highly mechanised activity; the question that begs consideration is the manner in which its function becomes integrated into the greater system of mental processes. Basic neuropsychological evidence describing the decomposition of function

occurring as a result of pathological injury supports the idea that language is not only disunited at the level of discourse per se, but at a more fundamental level of organization. Some of this material is discussed in chapter four, section A1 (p. 161)

Other sections of the same chapter, such as those devoted to the topic of hypnosis (p. 245) or psychodynamics (p. 222), are concerned with component analysis as manifest at a functional level, without the disruption of gross structural insult. This is important, because the musical ritual under scrutiny may operate along similar lines. From this perspective the objective becomes, in effect, a controlled functional breakdown, an attempt to isolate cognitive activities that are normally integrated with language in strictly conditioned patterns. Dualistic underpinnings become especially evident in discussions about popular culture (p.165ff., 274), where attempts to enforce a ritual separation of mind and body belie the artifice behind which such "naturalised" constructs are advanced.

Consequently, no attempt is being made to describe a naturalistic practice in this sense: activity, that is, in which "high" and "low" functions are teased apart into an allegedly pure, oppositional relation. Instead, what is asserted is the possibility of varying configurations of cognitive processes. The musical ritual being advanced is necessarily organised, initiated, and supported by high level functions. However, this is done to exploit a degree of spontaneity that is deemed to exist, but cannot be appreciated under normal, culturally reinforced circumstances. In other words, spontaneity is not something that applies only to processes that require little directed attention for their conduct; what is more, even the latter contain levels of discernment which are little acknowledged by proponents of the culture/nature dichotomy.

Music provides the basis for a non-linguistic task that serves to deconstruct normative patterns of cognition; the idea is to isolate component processes, and develop an increased sensitisation to the kinds of internal changes these altered forms of interaction effect. It is further speculated that complex evaluative processes do occur spontaneously,

but that their results are lost in the perpetual “noise” of ongoing volitional conduct. Enhanced awareness of these embodied cognitive events may ultimately contribute to the manner in which language is perceived, and hence the way communicative behaviour is conducted. In a sense, this amounts to the fact that a single individual does not represent one way of looking at things, a uniform outlook that is the inevitable and indivisible sum of concrete conditions.

Depending upon the kinds of activities in which the organism is engaged, conditions provide constraints that nonetheless enable a multiplicity of potentially divergent effects. A surplus exists for every individual at every moment; indeed, it is the collapse of this dynamic situation into a single narrative that violates the rich historical tapestry so vehemently promoted by the advocates of materialist analysis. In order to conceive such a possibility, however, the non-linguistic signals of interoception must be included in our equations.

Q-3c: What kind of volitional process could possibly subvert itself—along with its powerfully instituted constraints—so as to effect a deep (multi-levelled) transformation in the dynamics of thought? In plain terms, how does psychological growth occur, profound enough to merit the label of a self-discontinuity? Personal evolution within an involuntary context is perhaps a more easily acknowledged circumstance. Here, the sudden imposition of an extreme or violently intense situation, often forcing the subject into tasks requiring immediate, unusual, and far-reaching decisions, can leave a reflective residue in which occurs a revelation as to the nature of life, and more importantly, one's role in it. Such a pattern conforms to the hero's journey so brilliantly depicted by Campbell (1972), in which unexpected challenge is portrayed as a descent into the underworld. This kind of narrative represents a birth into experience; to this extent, it would be a mistake to interpret the hero's mysterious or divine origins as either the expression of predestination or the inevitable triumph of that which is essentially static. Instead, these symbolic attributes point

to the inherent surplus that all individuals can realise beyond the constraints in which they are initially bound.

Shame is another form of sudden crisis that can yield insight and facilitate change (see chapter four, section B2, p. 329). However, whether it is a matter of answering a call to action, or undergoing a calamitous experience of shame, both instances thrust the subject into the threatening world of the unknown with its demand for proper response. On the surface, at least, this poses a major contrast with the musical ritual being presented, where concern for external personal security is a functional prerequisite. Moreover, it is the metaphor of seduction that characterises the latter rather than any call to duty or sense of mission. Above all, however, both experiences lead the subject into a state of profound vulnerability, demanding an “on-line” response for which there is no pre-ordained method of action.

Like the experience of hypnosis, with which it shares some features (see chapter four, section A-4, p. 245), the aesthetic journey can only be successfully negotiated through an act of voluntary participation. But this, of course, begs the question being addressed: how can self-seduction be conceived as a valid process? Do we not comprehend the seductive act as dependant upon its exploitation of an underlying desire, that if it represents the capitulation of our “better judgement”, this is due to a triumph of natural instinct over reasoned self-autonomy? Further: how could the pleasure of the aesthetic moment be construed in such a manner, if this is clearly what we have wanted all along?

The dualistic mindset is especially prevalent in thinking about music. The dominant pop culture pits an alleged advocacy of the body over forces of repression, while portraying its highbrow counterpart in pursuit of insipid sentimentality, elitist snobbery, or naïve spiritualism. While the experience of music per se is thus seen as inescapably hedonistic, the social context that gives it deeper meaning partakes of higher, more objectively based factors. Through dualism, consequently, we encounter a curious alliance between pop

culture and sociology, concerned to articulate the political and economic import of activities so prominent upon the collective world stage.

But the nature/culture dichotomy these ideas embody is a false one. Music that requires little directed attention in order to process it is not necessarily more natural than other styles, nor more spontaneous. In general, all behaviour inhibits the vital impulsiveness of underlying neural processes due to the necessities of distributed brain function. Ritual action is a complex mechanism of semantic focus that occurs at a high level of integrated function, but it is important to recognise its status as a behavioural subset that is still reliant upon the principle just stated. This means, basically, that spontaneity should not be viewed as a single process.

At the crudest and most prevalent level of corporate strategy, musical discourse panders to the childish propensity of equating freedom with lack a discipline. But the problem has a more subtle dimension. Consider for a moment the broad meditative tradition that narrows the focus of attention to a single object, thought, or process. The only thing spontaneous here, it would seem, is the propensity of the novice's mind to continuously wander from the unnatural discipline imposed upon it. We do know, however, that in some instances something happens to alter experience in an unexpected way, producing meaning that is far removed from the rote repetition that constitutes the ritual pattern of activity. Hence we are led to believe that the initial training—entirely a self-conscious artifice—has enabled a level of spontaneity not otherwise accessible.

Looking at the contrast provided by the Dionysian ritual of release to which much popular discourse is directed is instructive in this context. There is no reason to believe that such activity exalts the inherently natural simply because certain visceral sensations become the apperceptive focus. The language of being in a "groove", for instance, surely betrays a level of culture by highlighting the framing contrivance of rhythmic redundancy within which the ritual operates. This does not diminish the dynamic feeling generated;

what it demonstrates, however, is that oppositional relations between high and low, culture and nature, and body and mind, are not useful determinants of spontaneous semantic experience.

Consequently, music demanding a high degree of perceptual vigilance is not *necessarily* more disembodied, unnatural, or constrained as a result. When these faulty dichotomies are revealed, it becomes possible to imagine alternative regimes of discipline which, while not *easy* to implement, may nonetheless enable different kinds of spontaneous processes. Indeed, both the difficulty and the unexpected riches such experiences hold may be a direct function of the highly conditioned character of the constraints that their discipline is intended to overcome.

Of what then, specifically, does a *self-seducing* discipline consist? First, a conceptual framework in which the voluntary activities can be placed: the overall objectives of the ritual, a description of the tasks involved—as well as the proper setting in which to conduct them—and, if possible, some indication of why the entire set is a plausible and coherent endeavour. Next comes the practice itself, aimed at the development of certain non-linguistic procedural skills. The fugal form is particularly well suited for this program, because of the difficult processing demands it makes. As elaborated in chapter four, section A2b (p. 210), the fugue necessitates a state of intense perceptual vigilance. When practiced with some facility, this task leaves little room for performative behaviour, whether it be dancing, comparing input to an internalised symbolic analytical model, or activating and sustaining particular emotional constructs for purposes of self-stimulation.

Nonetheless, I propose that the fugue only reaches its maximum potential when it precipitates a perceptual crisis, forcing abandonment of the currently operative logic and throwing the listener back upon his or her own cognitive resources. The preferred “solution” to this dilemma is a procedural matter that can only be mastered in the throes of the real-time experience, but its implications form the crux of this thesis. Briefly, the fugue’s

challenge is met by changing the cognitive strategy with which it is being processed to one that serves to de-centre or depersonalise the subject, leading to an altered perceptual state.

It is this crisis, above all, which enables us to adopt the terminology of seduction. Until this point the subject has, despite the need for focused attention, been allowed to indulge in the pleasures of a comfortable aesthetic space. Suddenly, however, the very notion of linear coherence through which the subject is grounded becomes violated, preserved only at the cost of a diminished musical bounty. Consequently, the listener is cast unawares into a predicament not unlike that of the hero, facing a challenge for which there can be no formal preparation. "Survival" in this case, however, carries a very special requirement: from the ritual point of view, "triumph" demands nothing less than a temporary dissolution of the habitual subject.

The ability to "let go", to exercise "playfulness", to permit a process of "creative discontinuity"—however one wishes to characterise the requisite element of indeterminacy—must be accomplished within the strict discipline imposed by the ritual task. Through continuous practice, a level of skill or overlearned behaviour results, culminating in the discovery that permits an unexpected form of cognition to transpire: all this preparation is necessary to prevent the mind from lapsing into its habitual forms of gratification.

In more precise terms, the application of training is intended to elicit a mental set that is oriented around perceptual/receptive performance, rather than the organization of response (e. g., Tucker and Williamson, 1984). It is this contrast, instead of one that focuses upon the segregation of nature and culture, which most concerns us here. Furthermore, there is evidence that these modalities correspond to functional divisions within the nervous system, whereas the notion of hierarchical organization is less amenable to compartmentalisation based on activity.

Fugal ritual begins with the logic of the self, that is to say, within the unfolding

sequence of melody, one is able to “make sense” of things through the perception of a unified, linear “narrative”. Through special features of its task design, however, the fugue ultimately structures a situation that is conducive to alterations of everyday consciousness. The practice of intense perceptual vigilance encourages a state that is fundamentally concerned with environmental novelty, and hence not with the redundancy necessary for the execution of practical motor programs rooted in past experience. Daily living requires a proper balance between these mental functions. With the aesthetic ritual, however, one can “push the envelope” toward change by minimising the continuous monitoring of self-protection, with its readiness for action. With this bias towards the *dynamic outside*, the organism is most advantageously situated to perceive relations that are not a part of its active repertoire.

In my view, the self is a mechanical, reflexive construct that is empowered to police a number of boundaries in order to minimise pain and maximise pleasure, based on past experience. The ritual relaxation of self-vigilance allows a more fluid situation and hence, when a profoundly new perspective is introduced, the act of insight cannot be attributed to the locus of prior knowledge and action. Again, we see the element of indeterminacy at work in the creative process: the result is something that is “stumbled upon”, it does not follow from the previous regime of logic. There is no need to introduce a metaphysical element; the leap might be a product of spontaneous processes transpiring in the brain. The scenario of relaxation and sudden imposition qualifies as a seduction, but one, from a global perspective, that is ultimately sanctioned by the organism.

Q-3d: What kind of evidence would attest to a “success” in this endeavour? The difficulty of achieving external validation for many of the ideas presented here has been addressed in chapter two, and will be broached again in sections that follow. Beyond conceptual attempts to unite these complex issues with reference to the empirical sciences, however, I am offering first-person evidence as a significant constraint upon the sprawling

field of the arbitrary. Replication of phenomena within the experience of others is an important facet of this validation, and close examination of the inner response a vital means of investigation.

Reliance upon first-person material does not automatically imply a lack of rigour or consistency. The effects with which we are concerned do not transpire on the basis of merely desiring them, but rather within a strict sequence of events and behaviours. For example, any lapse of attention prevents the altered state from developing, or terminates it if already occurring. As for the elements of the state itself, there are several principal categories (see List 3). The first deals with a feeling of heightened perceptual acuity. This is manifest as a sense of spatial depth, wherein individual voices seem to pop out in relief as if suspended within three-dimensional space, each occupying its own separate spatial plateau.

Second is the feeling of depersonalisation. Here the dichotomy between subject and object seems to vanish; one is not aware of a self, experiencing music, as much as music itself. To elaborate, it is not one's own emotional state being perceived; rather, there exists a sense of objectivity about the semantic aura, an impression that the state produced is more inherent to the nature of the object than to that of the experiencer. This thought is reinforced by the observation that having the experience at all is a function of how well one performs the ritual task, independent of one's prior mood. This is in contrast with many other musical genres, whose effectiveness seems more sensitive to the affective conditions with which one enters into relation.

Accompanying this state of impersonality is a feeling of letting go, but this surrender is not perceived as an ecstatic release from behavioural constraints, but on the contrary, a total submission to a discipline. The combination of a loss of autonomy plus imposition of external control, however, does not result in some kind of abstract, intellectual gratification. Instead, one is faced with an unusual sense of liberation that is extraordinarily

embodied, in that it is distinguished by the power of its emotional tenor, including a heightened apprehension of the present moment. Here we find a particularly salient transgression of the habitual dualistic opposition between reason and emotion.

Beyond these felt effects lies a more permanent and perhaps significant process of personal evolution, which lies in the area of motivation. This begins with a local insight, revealing that an impersonal perceptual discipline can yield surprising power: more, indeed, than any habitual pursuit of heightened emotion is likely to afford. There seems to be a deep principle at work here, and the ultimate value of the musical ritual is realised when the process of its generalisation begins. Perhaps giving up the basic quest for personal experience, edification, and stimulation will prove analogous to that of the ritual abstention.

The dualistic proponent may become nervously self-righteous—even angry—in the face of such a suggestion. Is this not a total delusion, this outright denial of the natural drive for pleasure? Is it not further a capitulation to repressive forces of power that would deny us the capacity for full personal expression and self-identity? Finally, in the realm of the subjective, who is the final arbiter of value, if not the subject?

As stated, the first-person perspective is considered indispensable to the process of self-knowledge. But this vantage point cannot be ferried to some alleged paradise of pure subjectivity. First-person insight is valid to the extent it becomes an integral part of a larger dialogic process. “Success” in the ritual endeavour is thus judged by the degree to which a motivational construct engages experience outside the aesthetic arena. When insight overflows its ritual vessel, unexpectedly fertilising the ground over which it runs, it becomes marked as a medium of profundity. It is true that such a test remains at least partially outside the traditional domain of public verification, but this is the problematic complexion of investigations into the nature of consciousness. What is important is the manner and breadth with which an insight can be effectively exported.

The fact that a rival motivation begins to supplant those to which the individual has

been intensely committed is significant. This notion of an internal sea change might be fruitfully compared to the experience of addiction. There is no question that from a certain perspective, drugs offer something that is positive: how else would the problem of addiction arise? It is the more global context that reveals drawbacks not readily apparent in the throes of pleasure. As time passes, however, the positive nature of this pleasure is attributable less to the structure of the drug per se, and more to the contrast it evokes with that which lies outside its purview. What distinguishes the good, in other words, is its status as a fixed, sacred site, as that space in which a kind of purity is preserved, defined by what can be kept out.

Apart from the specific virulence of certain types of chemical dependencies, however, this experience need not pertain to ingested compounds alone. It is the notion of context independence, of eternal repeatability, that qualifies as a site of addiction. Efficacy in these terms is the internal recognition of a context that desacralises these points of stasis by presenting a larger, more indeterminate field of action with a stronger gravitational pull. The addictive behaviour is no longer pursued, but neither need it be shunned: integrated and accepted into a larger community, it has assumed a more appropriate place in the behavioural repertoire. This process dispels a great internal tension, of which the subject is well aware. It is the cessation of struggle, not through the glory of personal victory but through the natural dissipation provided by a larger and more complex logic, that provides the subject with an unequivocal sense of objective accomplishment.

D. THESIS, ANTI-THESIS (4)

First-person evidence, however compelling, must enter into dialogue with other criteria. Is there a conceptual framework, grounded in the empirical sciences, which might help substantiate the ritual experience and its discursive progeny? I submit that the

phenomenology of dissociation provides an intriguing way of handling dualistic objections to the thesis problem (Q-4). Chapter four, section A provides a multi-disciplinary examination of this approach. Above all, functional dissociation provides a means of realising cognitive flexibility in a system with bounded resources, and helps explain how creative discontinuity might be achieved without recourse to metaphysical or a-historicist formulations. Moreover, dismissing the articulation of states of consciousness as a mere function of *subjective belief* poses a principal anti-thesis to our proposition (AT-4).

Potential for behavioural flexibility is exploited by the organism in the face of various needs and situations that arise, often unexpectedly and simultaneously. The expression of coherent behaviour is the end result of many competing controls, each with its own degree of autonomy and spontaneity. These diverse processes are concerned with far more than linguistic performance, moreover. Language, especially in prose form, is organised in linear fashion, and operates—as do other cognitive activities—on its own particular time-scale.

With this complex, dynamic panorama in mind, it becomes evident that language, despite its undeniable power, cannot monitor all aspects of the environment, or oversee all behaviour. Yet, the predominant culture has until recently invested the executive language function with an inflated autonomy, regarding it as the ultimate source of creativity and personal identity. The result is that these beliefs have become embodied in a self-reinforcing way, freezing the underlying cognitive flexibility, in effect, so that one can speak of language consciousness as functionally dissociated from a range of input and, ultimately, behavioural possibilities. I maintain that such a predicament is learned and must not be regarded as an immutable structural feature.

The past becomes encoded at different levels, many of which cannot be accessed discursively. Yet, in order to maintain its autonomy, the linguistic subject is coaxed into believing that a pursuit of “history”, organised into causal narratives, provides a ground for

the control and understanding of communicative action. However, these are "material conditions" appropriate to the level of organization at which the linguistic apparatus operates; consequently, it is only a belief in the sovereignty of language that can condone a parallel belief in the project of mastering history.

This logic leads to the conclusion that a dissociation from language, if actually possible, would be nothing less than an escape from the determinative realities of history, and the order of material process it purports to describe. From this perspective, a ritual that facilitated such a fragmented or diminished consciousness might serve a number of important social functions, but would not advance the cause of collective or individual self-knowledge. Again, however, this attitude contains an implicit assumption as to what constitutes historical conditions, and further, what kind of thought is capable of accessing them.

But what is the alternative? Dualistic thinking, unfortunately, always assumes there is an *opposition* at play: the realities of history, pitted against the dreams of transcendence. That knowledge might be sought, appropriate to *a different level of organisation*, is structurally barred from consideration. In other words, the material process of history *includes a level of discontinuity* to which the narrative mind has no access; as history, moreover, it also precludes the possibility of an absolute transcendence. In place of a hermeneutic model, however, we are putting forward the practice of a procedural discipline whose goal is an embodied sensitivity to the richness and variability of meaning.

Why must the linguistic subject be a fragmented entity, cut-off from this vital semiosis? Why this unyielding ontological distinction between the realm of consciousness, volition, and speech, on one hand, and that of biology on the other? This is no mere conceptual matter, capable of being reversed upon a whim of changing opinion. Language as a sovereign skill is a highly conditioned, embodied mode of functioning that must be overcome with discipline.

Brack et al (1994) discuss how feelings caused by trauma can be isolated from the main body of a person's experience. I am proposing that the inability to "listen" to specific levels of non-linguistic experience is the result of a similar but more culturally generalised dissociative mechanism. This, for example, is the crux of Ionesco's creative insight: the fact we are not grounded in language in the manner in which we have been conditioned is a profoundly unsettling, even terrifying realisation. Like all fears, however, it must be faced. Given that this linguistic isolation is not reflective of an underlying structural predicament, however, a procedural question arises. Can the phenomenology of dissociation be employed in a self-conscious manner in order to help dismantle the imposed regime? Such a suggestion is not an original one. As discussed in chapter four section A3 (p. 222), and in A4 (p. 249)—in the context of Janet and hypnosis—dissociation as both a pathology and a form of treatment has been a part of clinical theory and practice for over a hundred years. This is also the derivation of the present work's title, which draws attention to the word fugue—escape—in both its psychological and musical contexts.

The discussion of dissociation in the next chapter proceeds along several avenues. On a structural level, selective cognitive impairments as a result of injury provide an important foundation, helping to establish the diversity of underlying systems that contribute to the human mind. Specific features of conditions such as various aphasias, depersonalisation, and the like, can further be related to concrete aspects of the musical phenomenology. In addition, however, there is pressing need to demonstrate that dissociation occurs in a functional context, without the misfortune of structural damage; hence part of the presentation revolves around issues of dissociation in the context of hypnosis, psychodynamic theory and practice, or simply everyday life. Finally, an evolutionary perspective adds another level of theoretical constraint, plus further justification for exploring the diversification of conscious states.

In broad terms, the musical ritual provides an opportunity for heightening receptive

discrimination of non-linguistic stimuli, while simultaneously curtailing environmental surveillance concerned with self-protection. A particular style of receptive behaviour, precipitated by the fugal crisis, intensifies the outcome through its marked reduction of executive activities. No longer in the business of monitoring and anticipating on the basis of internalised structures implicated in voluntary behaviour and personal identity, the mind becomes aware of other spontaneous, complex cognitive evaluations. It is not that the past per se is jettisoned: only those elements most intimately associated with the formal and emotional makeup of the self as a socially conditioned entity. Such an eventuality is not simply an arbitrary, idealistic pipe dream: this is the cardinal point. The survey presented in chapter four addresses the fact that powerful converging evidence exists for this kind of architectural decomposition of mental processes.

E. THESIS, ANTI-THESIS (5)

Our survey of theoretical and empirical support for dissociation has relevance for Gould's discourse of ethical practice (Q-5). Acknowledgement that dissociative phenomena exist in some form or other, of course, does not automatically spell acceptance for the specific proposal set forward. Though often committed to underscoring the non-essential, culturally mediated nature of the creative act, critical forms of musical aesthetics rarely emphasise the opportunity for greater behavioural flexibility posed at the level of first-person experience (AT-5). In short: dissociation is being promoted as a theoretical and practical framework through which the subject/object duality can be overcome. I therefore wish to conclude this chapter with a brief discussion of the framework within which I see a productive meeting between music, dissociation, and ethics.

The fugal ritual is structured to create a mental bias for processing non-linguistic, rapidly changing stimuli in which multiple simultaneous streams are occurring. The most

advantageous state for accomplishing this cognitive task is one that is non-focalised: unconcerned, that is to say, with the kind of linear thought-processes of language, and other complex acts of motor sequencing requiring sustained attention. We have further urged that this notion of emphasis upon the periphery may not be contradictory from the perspective of underlying cognitive systems, and their capacity for assuming multiple configurations.

Such a state cannot be achieved casually, however. First it requires dedicated practice, conceived as a form of perceptual learning. Second, it requires ability to “let go” of the focal mode of consciousness. The present cultural environment does not encourage opportunities to exercise such a *combination* of skills. Yet once achieved, the organism finds in a depersonalised, defocalised, quiescent state of perceptual vigilance the spontaneous ability to make sense of what is “happening”.

This enhanced sensitivity to a richness of simultaneous meaning--produced without the control of what is widely assumed the most astute form of awareness--comes as something of a shock. The realisation that “letting go” can be a function not only of abandonment to desire, of solipsistic pleasure, or of throwing off the shackles of social constraint, but also of increased environmental awareness and mental acuity--this is no conventional thought. The special nature of the ritual dissociation holds an insight that is deeper than that which the facilitation of absorption might pose in the conduct of some complex activity. There, no parting with focal attention is necessarily imposed. What is particularly unique to the task in question, however, is the added need to jettison *emotional expectation* in the context of a pursuit that is often seen as an ultimate source of emotional gratification.

What seems to be inhibited is a context profoundly implicated with the person as a social entity. Interestingly, the work of Damasio (1994), amongst others discussed in the following chapter, has resonance with the notion of a vertical division of resources,

representing constructs comprised of both high and low level functions. It is not surprising, in light of this, that Damasio's book should be entitled Descartes' Error: a direct assault on the kind of dualistic thinking we have been attempting to dispel.

One of the great consequences of this view of the dissociative episode is that the generation and perception of alternative viewpoints cannot be entirely analytical, as normally conceived. Instead, it appears as if the simultaneous possibilities inherent to a dynamic present might be a function of a cognitive ability to temporarily nullify the self-construct in which one is allegedly grounded. At this point, to be sure, one can only point to musical experience as analogy. But this in itself has merit; if nothing else, aesthetically induced fugue allows the crucial question to arise, as to whether there might be a more general principle at stake.

Such a situation might materialise if enough procedural learning had occurred, whereby the dissociated state could be auto-cued in the absence of the perceptual supports. This might be the case, for instance, if the spontaneous processing of which one is made aware is actually transpiring at other moments as well. In that case, calling to mind the internal feeling of cognitive transition might set in motion a cascade of learned factors that could effect the desired result.

Ultimately, would processing of language be able to proceed under such a regime? Is the linear logic and necessity for focal attention not contradictory to this outcome? Not if it were possible to be sensitised to the embodied reactions of one form of processing even as another was simultaneously active. Such an outcome could be construed a further stage of learning, amounting to what we have been labelling moral discipline. Again, it is the process of reception or *listening* that best defines the form of task. What transpires "in the wings", so to speak, out of the performative limelight of focal attention, are the subtle signs of internal contradiction, of inherent ambiguity, of multiplicity: in short, all those embodied indications from which the birth of alternative vision is conceived. Perhaps even

amidst the bravado of the role wherein we act the character deemed most ourselves, such a sense of depersonalisation might be permitted. The consequence might be an unusual act of really listening, even to our own lines.

It is possible to see why the conduct of moral discipline remains so difficult. Perhaps we would rather not hear what we are saying, or face the possibility that such speech belies an accurate reflection of who we are. Buber (1958) is a persuasive advocate for an approach combining discipline and self-abandonment in the context of ethics. Instantiation of the I-Thou relation is not merely an analytical manoeuvre; to think that Buber is promoting dialogue as *negotiation with the other* is to miss an essential point. Giving the “whole self” to the process of relation means not coming to the table with the habitual pragmatic construct through which negotiation is conducted, but rather the fuller cognitive capacities of the brain. In a similar manner, the notion of *carnival*—so important to the conceptual universe of Bakhtinian dialogue (1984b)—is premised upon a mechanism of *suspension*.

The goal of like-minded thinkers in the field of ethics is to facilitate process, to discredit the imagined necessity of becoming a thing in a world of things. Hence the goal is not to become a creator, but simply to become integrated with a pre-existent, self-organising dynamic. What I believe writers such as Buber were groping toward was not simply a notion of deconstruction but an intuition of how a de-centred form of *productivity* could be plausibly enacted. In temporally extending and deepening the dissociative state, to use the present language, creativity becomes a spontaneous bio-historical process. To this extent, scientific creativity, aesthetic creativity—and finally, what might be called *moral* creativity—are all seen as part of a larger cosmic process, each requiring a component of domain-specific discipline.

Part of Gould's discourse was a critique of the social evolution of artistic specialisation. I propose that the fundamental impetus behind this view was a discomfort

with the partitioning of aesthetic creativity from the larger domain to which it belongs. From the point of view of the most all-embracing and most rigorous form of creativity, being itself is creative. As a consequence, it is also generalised: in other words, it stands as the most natural condition of the human mind, the inherent potential of a healthy human brain. This renders it neither easily achieved nor elitist in character. The process of self-realisation requires dedicated effort but only modest resources; there is nothing on the order of arcane knowledge or linguistic wizardry demanded here.

This is not to deny vigorous institutional biases that impose severe obstacles for the lives of a great number of people, and these need to be addressed. However, there is a further critical need to *initially specify* the precise nature of the process of empowerment that needs to be pursued. A truly global process, as conceived here, cannot be conducted solely upon a linguistic or social plane, but represents the formation of a spontaneous resonance across biological and cultural spheres. Precise features of such a process need to be specified in procedural terms.

The attempt to utilise artistic experience in this context remains an atypical enterprise. Though often committed to underscoring the non-essential, culturally mediated nature of the creative act, critical forms of musical aesthetics rarely emphasise the opportunity for greater behavioural flexibility posed at the level of first-person experience. In short, the subject/object duality is widely reckoned as unassailable (AT-5). To demonstrate otherwise does not simply promise a kind of spiritual patina upon the structural solidity of economic life. Rather, it addresses the whole framework of initiative and expectation in which human action should be conceived.

Unlike other problems of study, however, the solution here cannot be deferred; the nature of ethics demands both action and evaluation in the face of inadequate time and knowledge. Autonomy is inescapably limited: as acting subjects, our behaviour is beset by unintended consequences, and underpinned by a host of subconscious processes. Such

is the human condition.

The challenge of ethics is the necessity of acting within these structural constraints. Self-knowledge in this context means at least partial reliance upon subjective reporting and self-observation. Confining understanding of one another to a woefully incomplete external knowledge is simply intolerable, given the unremitting ethical imperative for responsible behaviour. Such information must be supplemented, to the best of our ability, by the evidence of a rigorous level of first-person *investigation*. Much has been written recently about the difficulties involved in formal research into consciousness, where the subject/object duality exhibits its most trenchant ambiguity. I cannot foresee any resolution of this "special status"; consequently, I believe that intuition must continue to play a considerable role in human communication.

The procedural elements suggested must be integrated into what might be called a rationalistic dialectical approach to ethical issues. This implies a methodically acquired body of experiential knowledge, willingly and openly conversing with other kinds of perspectives. Cognitive science has been selectively sampled in order to foster such a multileveled field of converging constraints.

The reader is encouraged to participate in discovering whether our emerging gestalt elicits a convincing sense of coherence. The success of our claims is dependent upon verification by other psychic "laboratories". That part of this process might involve confrontation with one's deepest beliefs about the nature of consciousness and the significance of life need not revoke the empiricist's edict for careful observation and logical rigour. Yet a science of ethics requires this difference: it does not put a reputation at stake, so much as it does a self. The risk is therefore high. Perhaps the gains can be validated within a conceptual framework. It is only through dissociation, however—that is to say, the genuine enactment of risk—that these rewards can be fully realised.

CHAPTER IV. LITERATURE REVIEW

TRANSLATION A: DISSOCIATION

1. Neuropsychological Perspectives

A. Power and Division in Human Thought

P. K. Anokhin's general cybernetic model (1968; 1974) suggests how brain processes reflect a dynamic coupling of organism and environment that is geared to the goal of adaptive behaviour. Of central importance here is the confrontation between an ongoing modelling of the external world, and an activated copy of executive commands that allows the organism to adjust and thereby maintain the appropriateness of its actions. To some degree, the human situation is no different from that of other complex organisms. Yet the ability to subordinate many aspects of behaviour to higher-level memory constructs renders a species' capacity for unprecedented creative synthesis as well as conflict and maladaptive behaviour.

In particular, the increasing complexity of human society fosters motivation that relies on the power of language to organise and regulate behaviour (Vygotsky, 1986; Luria, 1973). Recognition of such cultural flexibility, however, does not sanction disregard of our phylogenetic inheritance. Hierarchically positioned levels need to maintain a degree of individual autonomy that demands an ongoing, cybernetic *reciprocity* between them, not simply an unqualified submission of lower to higher functions. This has two major implications for the human predicament. First, it recommends a personal turn inward, conceived as a disciplined enhancement of interoceptive abilities. In this manner,

embodied signals that might be overlooked through the attentional allotment permitted by dominant modes of engagement can play a constructive role in the communication process. Second, a broad perspective must be developed that can help illuminate and institute alternative control processes that are able to constrain the abuses of abstract thinking. Because our capacity for symbolic thought enables us to enlist behavioural controls that may become disconnected from more general constraints imposed upon other species, it is prudent to arrive at a more self-conscious understanding of global processes. From this perspective, the term "dissociation" could be used to describe a functional uncoupling that has become a normative cultural condition at the present historical moment.

The recent birth of environmentalism as a social dynamic speaks directly to the danger with which we are concerned. In the terms being employed, activities of human economy have become dissociated from the larger systems in which they are embedded. The issue is a *functional* one: that is, neglect stems from the exaggerated isolation of a coherently organised dynamic with sufficient energy and freedom of action to sustain itself for a prolonged duration. This is not complete autonomy, for such an illusory premise is shattered as constraints of a more general order are violated. Thus the notion of pathology is not inherent to the logic of the limited system, but is rather defined by a larger context upon which it is ultimately dependent.

The function of language can be seen to share a somewhat similar fate. Indeed, the history of human economy itself is inextricably bound to that of symbolic communication. Human linguistic capabilities exponentially expand our species' access to temporal-spatial relational networks, yielding new and more complex behavioural possibilities. We seem to inhabit an abstract space fashioned by the words we speak, both to others and to ourselves, and our identity as individual subjects seems ever more dependant upon our status within that virtual world of symbolic interaction.

At one time, language may have seemed to issue forth at the immediate behest of some transcendental, unified subject. But whether one now seeks a ground for verbal communication in the myriad complexities of historical narrative, or alternatively acknowledges a more indeterminate view of language and its possibilities, skilful use of language remains the focal concern of human communicative practice. Even in the face of a theoretical position that profoundly challenges the accepted extent of a possible coincidence between intention, utterance, and reception, language as a practice has hardly diminished its behavioural hold. If anything, entrance into the world of post-structuralist thought has demanded an unparalleled degree of linguistic competence. Indeed, contemporary writing sometimes betrays a kind of alchemical desire, an occult belief that verbal complexity can transmute itself into an ontological status forbidden by the dictates of its own logic.

What seems to remain constant is an unquestioned, persistent emphasis upon the *practice* of language, irrespective of any differences in theoretical orientation. The common denominator is a presupposition we can somehow talk ourselves out of our social ills and our ignorance, without due regard for the process of talking itself or the dynamic universe that subtends both our acts of speech and our silences. Herein lies the environmental analogy: as part of an overall economy, language must be placed under cybernetic constraints that lie outside the limited autonomy of intentional linguistic behaviour, whether conceived as analytic or not.

This does not imply an abandonment of rationality, but rather a procedural acceptance of the realities of human limitation. These are limits of a global order, part of an ecological fabric that is antecedent to human concepts and constructs. Language, in other words, is a specific way of coherently ordering the operations of the brain, but this partial autonomy must be seen in the context of other types of organisation equally necessary for a dynamic ecological balance. However much we admire the erudition,

persistence, and adroitness of hermeneutic endeavours, they are not the sole basis for establishing communicative consensus and self-knowledge in human affairs.

Luria's (1973) concept of distributed functional systems suggests that the brain cannot support its entire repertoire of configurations concurrently. As a corollary to this, it is apparent that coherent patterns of activity imply a corresponding pattern of inhibition as well. Thus slow wave sleep, to give an obvious example, is functionally incompatible with intentional speech¹. The problem we seek to explore is the extent to which linguistic activities should impose control over the overall economy of human cognition. It is plain that a minimum amount of environmental vigilance is required, but this is so critical for survival that it is conducted quite independent of higher systems of attention. In light of this need for homeostatic maintenance, however, the question concerning the proper role of language can be refined. Do alternative, non-linguistically centred patterns of mental function directly benefit the objectives of social organisation, knowledge and communication for which our use of language is allegedly employed? Further: can too exclusive an emphasis upon speech be detrimental?

Broadly speaking, a long historical process in western society has produced a view that places the organised domain of economic activity on the "material" side of a dualistic opposition. Only the Word is left to straddle the great divide, to act as conduit for an originary consciousness and source of authority in an otherwise darkened kingdom of matter. By the late twentieth century, however, we find that language itself has been thoroughly defrocked.

A similar process has befallen the world of artistic activity, leading to what might be described as an increasing *economisation* of aesthetic experience. A glance at the history of music is instructive. Once the handmaiden of sacred ritual and the word, secularisation

¹ This does not preclude latitude for functional reorganisation, such as that which occurs with the phenomenon of lucid dreaming, for example; indeed, the existence of novel combinations is a necessary

saw the world of *absolute* music become--as the double entendre implies--a last safe haven for the sacred. Now even this has largely eroded as a credible force in public discourse. Instead, music powerfully carries the dynamic vestiges of dualism into the so-called world of material relations. As a "natural" expression of the physical individual, it merits no need of scrutiny or further justification: rhythmically animated flesh simply stands in existential defiance of the abstract forces that encroach upon it. As a social construct, however, music betrays all the operations of the only real game in town: the play of socio-economic relations. That is why it retains such importance in the present culture. Above all, music has found its niche as the perfect vehicle of a thoroughly secularised religious expression: the *ritual of empowerment*. Music as "natural" expression of the repressed body finds itself inherently in league with the politically dispossessed and the socially outcast. In this context, the use of organised sound derives its larger meaning and justification as a motivational tool for progressive political change. After all, to what else can entreaties be made, other than the public arena of social solidarity? To what authority can we ultimately appeal, other than the persuasiveness of our own discourse?

Our interest lies with the consequences of dualism as translated into the terminology of dissociative function. It is useful to pause here, however, in order to gain a better perspective on the nature of the phenomenon under consideration. Dualism is more than a mere concept. It is rather a foundational construct, a way of thinking and experiencing; its implications are global, underlying a vast network of cultural practices, a web of formulations acquired as an integral, naturalised part of the fabric of present day life. The ubiquity of its presence has in effect rendered it invisible, bestowing it, as Tolkien's fable The Lord of the Rings (1966) so forcefully dramatises, with the ultimate measure of power.

premise for this thesis. The point here is merely to stress that coherence demands temporary exclusion.

As a consequence, it becomes clearer why dualism is not simply stored as a set of linguistic abstractions but is rather embodied by the organism as active, value-laden constraints of great psychological implication. In other words, it is not only *in* language: more critically, it helps to define the operations of language in relation to other related processes within the cognitive ecology. Of course, there *is* a discrete set of conceptual oppositions that enables one to speak about dualism as a formal discourse, a group of logical relations that exhibits a certain coherence. There are also ways of conceptually exposing the limits of its integrity, through the employment of either specific religious discourses or scientific ideas of more recent origin. This discursive side of the coin, however, has been exceedingly slow in penetrating the barriers of general conversation. As the pre-eminent means of organising human behaviour, language encodes relations that are central to its economic activities. Hence, it is not surprising that mass channels of information would largely discourage access to ideas serving to erode public confidence in the framing structures of those activities.

As we have been stressing, however, words remain but a single aspect of the struggle to disarm this longstanding mode of conditioning. To transgress its pervasive influence is to risk the loss of one's social status as a rational agent, to become a suspect player in the field of human relations. All carry an investment in the economic game², and violation of its most cherished precepts can provoke an assault on the very integrity of one's person: in short, a form of secular excommunication.

It is necessary to begin to specify how a few seemingly innocuous concepts could come to carry such power. Above all, *categorical exclusivity* stands as the most distinguishing feature of dualistic thought. Carving the world into a network of binary terms is easy to grasp and avoids uncomfortable ambiguities inherent to patterns exhibiting a

² "Economy" in the broadest sense, i.e. one of all human needs, including but extending beyond the acquisition, consumption and disposal of raw materials.

less obvious³ type of logical clarity. But such symmetry is not purchased without significant cost: under its regime, the human organism becomes a creature divided both in thought and action.

Because so much is dependent upon these constructions, and so many social practices have evolved in conformity with them, the result is an instituted pattern of behavioural systems that are continuously reinforced by economic incentives. Critically, however, these semi-autonomous constructs are reproductions of the absolute character inherent to binary thinking. In practical terms, in other words, certain types of interaction gradually tend to become functionally improbable, if not impossible.

The core historical dilemma lies as much with the success of these cognitive alliances as it does with their alleged limitation. This is precisely where the environmental issues discussed in this introduction come into play. Within the limited compass of our species' economy, the practices being discussed have proven themselves a highly successful means of survival. With growing awareness of a larger perspective, however, the question arises with respect to the subject at hand: does the dualistic *weltanschauung* possess a truly ecological validity?

The question becomes whether these divisions actually correspond to some inherent, underlying aspect of the natural order or whether they are culturally imposed. Again, the issue is not the existence of social "programs" per se, but whether these particular framing constructs are limiting practice in an unnecessary and ultimately noxious way. All positive structures of knowledge and action can be viewed on one level as inhibitory agents. In the case of dualism, however, the absolute character of opposition unambiguously fixes certain relations that can consequently be exploited as mechanisms of control. This is what makes the notion of transgression such an apparently easy affair.

³ Less obvious, at least, from an historical perspective.

Operating outside this logic, however, is a different matter. No longer protected by the impregnable armour of a priori definitions, control must be ceded to a non-local process of endless cybernetic adjustment. Even rebellion loses its status to a greater unknown, a field of indeterminacy where things refuse their allotted space. Such a notion recalls the work of Foucault (1970, 1979): without the invisible sentinels of discursive knowledge, the conscious central executive cannot impose the singularity of its perspective upon the collective society of mind. It is thus a notion of compartmentalisation that concerns us: isolation of cognitive activities that stems from ingrained beliefs about the nature of reality and continuously reinforced by the experiences they engender.

Mental dissociative phenomena have bearing upon these issues of knowledge, power, and dualistic thought, for they involve processes that are used to both enforce divisions and to overcome them. Dissociation implies that things are neither indivisible nor wholly particulate. What appears whole can be taken apart; conversely, what seems unattached can suddenly be brought into meaningful relation. This is especially relevant when considering the source of control for human behaviour. As mentioned earlier, the concept of distributed function—wherein both local and global viewpoints are linked to the emergence of multiplicity—is suggestive of an answer to the conundrum of fixed identity.

Evidence from the domain of the pathological is equally intriguing. Among other things, psychological dissociation can imply the unacknowledged operation of a behavioural system that has outlived its original adaptive function. Here we see the concepts of invisibility and ecological validity at play. Conscious utilisation of dissociative experience, however, may provide a potential mechanism for deconstructing these noxious associative structures, thereby providing a positive service as well.

Finally, consideration of dissociative phenomena in the context of mental processes leads us to entertain the possibility of specially acquired constraints that might serve to discipline the implications of deconstructionist thought. As we have repeatedly

stressed, total relativism is an invalid accusation, and is not congruent with a mode of thinking that demands sensitivity to the logical and historical context of language. However, the prospect of instituting further, biologically implicated limits on linguistic behaviour augurs hope for basing the operations of language on a more ecologically comprehensive and harmonious footing.

The topic of dissociation has been chosen as especially germane to the fundamental question at hand. Does sufficient richness, diversity, and granularity exist amongst the multi-disciplinary writings of cognitive science to lend credence to the notion of a mode of being freed from the rigidities and irreconcilable conflicts of dualistic thought?

B. Holiday

The variegated world of processes that goes by the name of music is a wonderful laboratory in which to study the issues just raised. Perhaps the best place to begin, however, is at a distance: to determine, that is, whether such a complex domain deserves its customary status as a single entity. Does a perception of large-scale unity emerge at some appropriate level of analysis? The use of sound as common denominator seems an inescapable observation. Another perspective, however, derived from case studies of brain injured patients, emerges from the field of neuropsychology. As Sergent (1993b) explains, “[t]he existence of aphasia without amusia, and of amusia without aphasia, indicates a double dissociation suggestive of a functional autonomy of mental processes inherent in verbal and musical communication systems and a structural independence of their neurobiological substrates” (p. 8).

The consequences of this predicament may not be immediately apparent. Indeed, a casual glance might seem to confirm an essential, dualistic distinction between the conscious, intentional subject based in language and the biological aspect of an embodied

musical reflex. But is this interpretation warranted? Imagine the simplest rhythmic pulse, so closely associated with motoric and hence physiological manifestations of music. To become aware of this periodicity implies a level of memory able to represent ongoing events of extended duration, as well as a comparative process that recognises both differences in intensity between stressed and unstressed beats, and the regular recurrence of these accents within a particular temporal pattern.

From this perspective, physiological reactions to even the most rudimentary forms of musical expression are mediated through a process of informational abstraction. This demonstrates that musical styles are not differentiated by means of actions either upon the body or the mind per se; rather, they represent an array of differing effects by virtue of the degree of functional and hierarchical engagement of the nervous system. The fact that some types of events elicit bodily changes of a more obvious order does not alter this predicament. The distinction is important, because it negates a critical absolute. Where does the body end and the mind begin? The logical relations between the two concepts lack deep correspondence with the phenomena they describe.

But Sergent's statement cited above harbours a more interesting ramification. Preservation of musical abilities in the context of language degradation demonstrates that musical perception of a much more advanced order than that just discussed can also occur without the necessity of linguistic intervention. The brain's capacity for awareness and complex cognitive activity, in other words, must not be seen as wholly dependent upon the workings of what is conceived as the linguistic subject.

In a sense, this notion of musical independence becomes emblematic of the entire field of this inquiry: it inspires a series of questions and imparts a basic directional impetus to the work at hand. None of the steps seem self-evident, and the answers are far from conclusive. However, the evidence is intriguing and the potential import great. Could the brain really exhibit a very high level of subtlety, discrimination, affect, and intelligence

without the participation of a controlling agency that seems so inextricably wedded to the processes of language? And if so, could this situation have any practical implications for the use of language itself?

For practices grounded in the dualistic ethos, the nature of the interaction between a subject split into a personal, biological domain of embodied feeling and a social, linguistically conditioned consciousness is simplified by the absolute character of the division. Here, economics provides a concise understanding by means of a *discourse of the holiday*. Music provides an opportunity to vacate the workplace, to escape to a paradise of play, to assuage the needs of a body victimised by an undesirable, externally imposed discipline.

The benefits may be self-evident, but only in the context of a holistic perspective: one, however, that is founded upon a particular logic of mutual exclusion. Indeed, vacation is not merely defined by spatial imagery but by temporal co-ordinates as well. "Time off" is not simply a respite from the necessary quantification of service and productivity; it is, when properly spent, a cessation of time itself, a shift from the historical contingencies of social and economic relations into the supposed timeless verities of biological function.

Consequently, the ritualistic expression of this highly secularised discourse must be organised in accordance with its dualistic underpinnings. For the "body" to have its say, it must be given our undivided attention; it must be granted the only platform commensurate with its status as an absolute antithesis. Thus, in conformity with evidence for a potentially dissociated musical experience, the devotee is propelled into the law-abiding, a-historical, reflexive certainty of pleasure, untainted by the impersonal and contingent forces of social repression.

The holistic benefits of *holiday* can only be conceptualised as restorative in nature: based, that is to say, on the character of an absolute *cessation*. Under these circumstances, interaction can only be conceived as an alternation, for the logic of mutual

exclusion prohibits any notion of simultaneity. Regeneration is consigned to perform its function behind the ontological divide; its effects are not so much structural as thermodynamic in character: one is not granted clarity in order to transform the everyday so much as the energy to endure it. What else could an entity as mute as the body impart?

As already discussed, however, musical effects do not reflect an absolute dichotomy but, rather, a differential utilisation of the nervous system. Thus, in the end, one is forced to examine the phenomenon of music in a more detailed manner. It is not that its purported autonomy from linguistic function has ceased to have a potentially deeper meaning, but that significance must be clarified through an understanding of music as a composite field of relations. In short, the human subject is no more essentially unified when considered from a biological standpoint than from that of society and language. Behaviour must therefore not be reduced to an issue of social analysis; it must also reflect how variety is instituted at the neuro-physiological level. When difference is considered only as a function of factors derived from a social level of analysis, a method of elucidating and evaluating salient contrast has been systematically excluded from the knowledge process. Further, it is precisely this area of inquiry that holds the key to the understanding and conscious implementation of modes denied by the dualistic regime.

Whatever emerges from deeper study of music's implication in processes of meaning, evidence from pathological studies will need to be integrated with an understanding of normal brain function. This is proving an extraordinarily complicated venture (Sergent, 1993a). Judd goes so far as to assert that "the entire brain is involved in music" (1992, p.6). Again, such a statement is not intended to discredit the notion of a musical autonomy relative to language; rather, it confirms the complexity of a field that is neither homogenous in composition nor spatially localised in function. He further adds: "each part [of the brain] makes characteristic contributions which depend upon the musical activity in question, the strategies used, and the cerebral organization of the individual" (p.

6).

Repeatedly, we see that design of musical meaning must be approached from a multi-disciplinary perspective. High level constructs impose order upon a multitude of underlying processes. Social rituals and customs, musical genres, expectations, and memories all serve to focus events upon particular kinds of meanings, or constrain the process of meaning in diverse ways. Nonetheless, higher controls cannot express these meanings by themselves or substitute for the totality of physical events that comprise the particular performance in question. Instead, they act as a kind of template of inhibition over a vibrant ecology of spontaneous processes, channelling activities into a co-ordinated unity after their own image.

We face as a central *problématique* a group of cultural meta-constraints, distinguished by their inherent capacity to form and maintain functional systems with impermeable boundaries, related to each other largely through the auspices of verbal discourse. Moreover, insofar as these separate ontological domains can be further articulated into parts, analysis is habitually forced to adopt terms that are congruent with the *a priori* system of categorisation. Against this, we assert that such irreducibility is a misrepresentation: it is only by examining the inextricable interplay of biological and social factors that musical meanings, in all their tremendous variety and potential value, will come to be better understood.

Of particular interest here is a type of meaning not premised on the imposed isolations of the dualistic worldview. By broadly reviewing a great pattern of underlying articulations—expressed through the language of dissociation—we hope that new vistas of human understanding and experience will come into view, topographies largely forbidden by the strictures of a world-view grossly implicated in present systems of power. For this to happen, however, topics of music, selfhood, identity and language need to be seen as expressions of a more flexible and more populous global domain.

C. Hierarchy

One major axis of division within the brain is that of hierarchical function. For example, visual information that leads to a high-level perceptual categorisation has been systematically abstracted through an array of lower-level processes. Ultimately, this trend towards increasing complexity is reflected in the evolutionary history of an organ that has in a sense undergone a series of ad hoc additions, with earlier structures appearing at more functionally primitive stages. Unfortunately, the stratification of biological processes can be confounded with cultural values that exploit the notion of hierarchy in a different manner, often in accordance with dualistic conceptions. For instance, if the "body" is given a positive valuation, musical design can facilitate ritual factors focused upon a high level of physiological arousal and motoric involvement. Discursively, such rites are generally allied with nature, seen in "opposition" to the world of social power that asserts itself through the pejorative instrument of "hierarchy".

But the evaluative poles of this force field can be reversed. Now, higher realms of spirit and abstract thought serve to elevate participants above the mechanical forces of matter. Conceptualisation of this scheme can take several forms, each finding musical expression appropriate to its area of focus. Broadly speaking, three basic variants are in currency. With the notion of spiritual edification, the power to be moved transmutes itself from a state of muscular excitation to one of inner sentiment⁴. A second view holds the structures of abstract analysis as expressive of the highest aspects of the musical art. And finally, musical form is seen as embodying forces exposed through a process of socio-historical analysis.

⁴ In its purely secular manifestation, spiritual fulfillment is conveyed through the language of *self-expression*.

What are described above are not simply concepts, but motivational devices: they elicit behaviour that actively seeks to fulfil specific expectations by inducing gravitation towards artefacts best suited to perform a specific task. In short, they serve to define an entire modality of interaction, and in so doing, exclude the possibility of alternative types of receptivity. Again, the character of *opposition* is at play, whether it is manifest as body-mind, spirit-matter, individual-society, self-other, or subjective-objective. Interestingly, however, the particular context of meaning being promoted in each instance is expressed in a manner that is reminiscent of an understanding of isolated levels of *hierarchical* neurological function.

The entire panorama of evaluative stances, then, is verbally conceived as a series of opposites, but embodied as divergent logical types. This means that most discourse about the meaning of music involves a category error. The result is that a regime of behavioural practices is imposed upon the nervous system in a manner that does not reflect the underlying functional realities; there is nothing inherent or essential about such an evaluative scheme, even though it is understood as such.

Laborit (1977) provides perspective on this problem by means of his distinction between hierarchies of *value* and hierarchies of *function*. The former situation is distinguished by a principle of dominance, whereas the latter is better characterised by interdependence, reciprocity, and collective satisfaction. This way of stating things is useful in approaching the issue of music. If one examines the variety of musical discourses touched upon above, an interesting common denominator emerges: as discussed, each specific evaluative focus does indeed express itself in terms of *isolated* levels of functional hierarchy.

At first glance, this may not appear troublesome. Does not all meaning involve a process of selectivity, an imposed inhibition of some things at the expense of others? The examination must not stop here, however. Why, it must be further queried, does

this *specific* pattern exert itself with reference to the musical process? Let us consider a particular ritual, one that employs a highly homophonic, sensually orchestrated lyricism in order to elicit a state that is evocative of what might be labelled a "sublime state of unearthly beauty". It is not unusual in such a context to speak of music as conveying its meaning in the form of "pure refined emotion".

Thus, we have described an area of focal concern that is scientifically associated, in crude terms, with so-called limbic structures of the brain. This is, of course, one typical generic category of dualistic discourse. Nevertheless, the complications are manifold. No music is "pure emotion", if by this we mean to hold it in contradistinction to that which is "formal" or "reasoned". In other words, emotion must be seen as a complex process with inescapable cognitive operations of its own. Further, however, emotional processes themselves are highly conversant with other levels of organization and do not exist as completely autonomous entities. Indeed, what is immediately striking about even the most elementary foray into literature about the brain is the bewildering amount of connectivity it has been found to exhibit.

In order to comprehend how such ritualised segregation operates, then, it is necessary to examine a larger and more concrete context. Because the dualistic concept of "pure isolation" has no deep correspondence in terms of the brain, there must be a more integrated behavioural process that is able to maintain such an abstract attentional configuration. The same holds true for alternative viewpoints. A practitioner of Adorno's (1981) type of analysis might well find a tone-poem of Richard Strauss as intolerably anachronistic and anti-social as the late quartets of Beethoven are deemed historically progressive. Here again we are focusing upon a specific abstract level--this time discursive in nature--which shapes our experience of the music in question and helps determine our response to it.

But this generation of meaning is not accomplished solely by means of a ritual

mechanism. It requires motivation to seek it out, and the intelligence necessary for successful participation. The meaning, in other words, cannot simply exist as an *it* out there, to which we lay claim; rather, there exists an unacknowledged, embodied, integrated, multi-levelled system of rewards, constraints, and dynamic processes underwriting its existence and its value. After the manner of Buber (1958), we discover that every evaluative *it* implicitly contains an *I*.

There is a distinct advantage to categorising the experience of music in terms of isolated levels of function, however, and this lies with the notion of control. By imposing an abstract scheme upon a situation that has no structural necessity of performing in such a way, care is being taken to discourage and ignore those interactions that might otherwise spontaneously occur. Furthermore, grounding the abstract evaluative grid in terms of irreducible natural elements creates a system of expectation in which only the acceptable can come into view: acceptable, that is, to the context upon which its existence depends.

Whether this *it* is classed as emotional or formal is of no consequence. The former requires only pleasure for its *raison d'être*, while the latter can summon the aid of discourse and abstract analysis on its behalf. No meaning falls between the cracks because there are no cracks; the absolute exclusivity of the dualistic categories makes sure of that. The multileveled phenomenon of the *I* thus always views the meaning of music as an abstracted part of itself, a reduction that marks it as beholden to the larger field for legitimacy. From this perspective, it appears that musical experience is inescapably wedded to the evaluative action of a subjective *I*.

Erosion of a widespread belief in absolutes is not a theme requiring recapitulation here. In light of such history, however, it may seem a curious pastime trying to articulate the observer-dependent status of complex musical reactions. After all, music is not confined by the same necessities as language, either in terms of its linear presentation

or its degree of isomorphism with the categorical world of things and events. Do these facts not merely further substantiate what is already self-evident regarding the non-objective status of our musical taste?

The whole point is to suggest that music perception and evaluation habitually operates under a falsely naturalised regime of control. And this poses the question: is it therefore possible to conceive of—and ultimately to initiate—a form of musical practice that integrates hierarchies of brain function without reference to the dominance of this inhibitory, embodied construct? Indeed, might not music's epistemological wantonness be the very quality that enables it to organise matters outside the meddlesome demands of linguistic sense? The result would be an autopoietic process whose meaning emerges as a legitimate and no longer subordinate voice to be heard. The implication is that such an integrative dynamic could speak with authority, demanding a genuine, respectful cessation of activity in order for its "message" to be conveyed.

Listening stands as the paradigmatic activity of our musical ritual. This is helpful, for it allows one to concentrate on a smaller range of skills than those conceived under the general umbrella of music. Further, effective listening is itself distinguished by absence; it presupposes a respectful temporal space in which incoming information can exhibit its organisational patterns. This can be understood as a temporary suspension of planning, rehearsal, preparation and motor execution, acts that are closely associated with the use of language. We thus find behavioural reasons to justify our choice of activity as promoting a functional distance between musical and verbal behaviour.

As suggested, the differentiation being drawn between normative dualistic practice and that involving a particular use of the fugue is in part defined by an understanding of the concept of hierarchical function. The freedom of intercourse between levels is one hypothesised factor that helps create an integrated structure capable of wresting the musical process from the self's control. This does not further

imply, however, that the overall process is not a kind of artefact, a form of control, that is to say, that organises behaviour with the intention of generating a specific semantic focus. The object is to institute a different configuration of control, not to somehow abandon thought in a chaotic or haphazard way.

Nonetheless, fear of losing control is a critical issue. I would claim that the magnitude of this trepidation emanates from the deepest recesses of the dualistic sanctum. One lets go a certain hold on the world at the risk of being immolated by forces of irrationality and chaos. Ironically, perhaps, the real threat has installed itself as precisely that which requires our most vigilant protection. Seen in these terms, the self is a parasite. This is not a metaphor: the body is no longer the spontaneous expression of a complex global process, but rather serves the ends of a much more limited construct.

Nor is aesthetic primitivism a productive response to the woes of a clinging self; it merely stands as an inverted version of the same faulty logic. Far from initiating any genuine encounter with contingency, chthonic rituals in the present culture narrow their focus to the most predictable and hence controllable aspects of response: what they present is an *image* of disruption, of uncontrolled nature, based upon the fundamental defect of the system they represent. The great seething cauldron of unruly desires that we alternatively fear or celebrate is in fact a human construction that has no correlate in the beautiful and highly ordered societies of the animal kingdom. This appeal to the "natural" in us is a specious one.

The attempt to confine meaning to certain controllable avenues of expression, and the apprehension that arises when these barriers are threatened, is well summarised by Laborit:

I am not attempting, as I have often been accused of doing, to reduce the "psychological" or the "sociological" to the biological. . . . One cannot enclose oneself in a single level of organisation, whatever it is,

unconsciously wishing to remain ignorant of the others in a highly primitive attitude of territorial defence and attempted repression of the unknown (i.e. of what is inevitably a source of anxiety). It is not the reduction of the psychological or the sociological to the biological that is to be feared, but the reduction of the sociological to the sociological, or of the psychological to language. What is to be feared, in other words, is the closing of a system of thought, an information-structure, upon itself. (29-30)

Systems of thought encourage patterns of practice. What we are trying to conceive is a musical ritual able to facilitate a greater degree of spontaneous activity between hierarchical levels of function than that which the embodied logic of dualism permits. On the conceptual plane, the task involves an examination of the natural divisions or subsystems that belie traditional beliefs about the ultimate composition of music and of selfhood. On the procedural side, these newly articulated relations must be exploited in a manner that will allow an alternative mode of control with a different underlying pattern of distribution to take hold.

D. Skilled Production and Naïve Reception

Though a form of brain degeneration rendered Ravel unable to compose late in life, he nevertheless maintained his ability “to listen to and to appreciate musical pieces” (Sergent, 1993b, p. 10). Sergent characterises the composer’s deficit as “a selective impairment of functions underlying the translation of musical representations from one modality to another, such as from a visual to a motor or an auditory representation, or from an auditory to a visual or a motor representation...” (p. 10). Interestingly, “none of these modalities considered separately was impaired” (p. 10).

This case sheds light on the nature of musical training. The need for proficient memory involving both internal and external forms of storage, acute monitoring of simultaneous events, and various kinds of fine motor skills develops in part due to practical demands of music *making*, in contrast to those imposed by the receptive act alone. In

some sense, Ravel's story confirms a physiological basis for the differentiation. However, this does not imply that listening—as dissociated from other skills—is therefore to be considered a totally unified field of its own.

Thus, from the present point of view expressive musical skills can influence those involved in reception, but the latter cannot be entirely reduced to the former. This judgement aside, one of the important ramifications of musical practice is the pressure it exerts to form multiple representations of its activity. Notational systems, performance conventions, as well as the embodied schemes of diverse instruments force musicians to categorise, analyse and experience sound in ways not accessible to the lay audience, and hence to understand it in different ways as well. These distinct perspectives enable a musician to explore the potential of the material at hand and present it in a stimulating and effective manner.

Despite this acknowledged diversity, however, Sergent also urges that investigation of the neurological substrates of musical behaviour is better served by concentrating on musically literate individuals on the grounds that there is more *homogeneity* “in their knowledge and mastery of the skill under consideration” (1993b, p. 9). I think that part of the implication here is that literates employ modes of communication that focus upon empirically verifiable attributes of sound to a greater degree than their non-literate counterparts, and that these would tend to form more consistent relational systems for dealing with musical material.

In addition to performance, however, there are ways in which expressive musical skills contribute to the quality of a musician's listening as well. Given the extra emphasis placed upon physical parameters of sound, one must develop a sensory acuity to their fluctuations. Further, the musician must not only attend closely to particular aspects of sound, but must often attend to multiple aspects simultaneously. This monitoring is especially critical when the co-ordination of ensembles is involved. Indeed, Judd finds this

social aspect often unduly neglected.

If we look at simultaneous music-making as a more appropriate and prototypical example of musical communication we can readily see that co-ordination among music makers is a fundamental concern, but one that is easily overlooked with the isolated individual in the sound booth (1992, p. 3).

Judd goes on to explain that “the need to co-ordinate sound” has in fact given rise to many fixtures of musical practice, such as the use of fixed pitches, scales, and beats (1992, p.3). The notion of simultaneity also serves to create a large-scale contrast with the notion of linear sequencing that is so central to verbal communication. Included amongst social musical skills is the ability to continuously adjust ones responses to the dynamic situation that is being monitored. When playing a solo instrument, monitoring involves the sound of one’s own efforts; in an ensemble, the situation becomes more complex as other levels of sound are added to the mix. In addition, the need for real-time responsiveness is a hallmark of the musical predicament as described by Judd.

From this perspective, the ritual being discussed here represents a considerably diminished area of activity. Indeed, one of its aims is to create a situation that minimises the requisite for any response whatsoever. Thus, there is a sense that by so doing—that is, by removing so many aspects of the core abilities of expressive musical behaviour—it offers itself as a kind of lay experience. Yet, it has already been acknowledged that musicians are highly skilled at listening. Is there a form of listening, then, that exploits the sensory acuity of the musician but is not wholly congruous with those traits mentioned so far in the context of proficient musicianship? Rephrased: is there a vocational skill that might seem to be a component of listening that must be *removed* in order to achieve the particular ritual act in question?

It was earlier remarked that some musical skills, at least, have evolved as a result of the practical problems of expressive behaviour, and are not indispensable to the receptive act. In light of Sergent’s discussion above, I would like to include some of the acquired

representations of musical material to which the performer has access, particularly those large-scale structures that are derived from the activity of literate analysis. This creates a problem, however: it might appear from this explication that musicians would be denied a significant aspect of musical meaning by virtue of their very ability to produce it. I do not believe such a forgone conclusion is warranted; nonetheless, I would also assert that learning can in some instances present an obstacle to the kind of listening act being pursued.

Glenn Gould has called invention “a cautious dipping into the negation that lies outside system from a position firmly ensconced in system” (1984, p. 5). When he speaks of the virtues of the naïve listener (e.g., 1984, p.42), moreover, I believe Gould is including the receptive situation in his recurrent warnings against overreliance upon systematised thought. This implies that the act of listening can be a “dipping into negation” for both musician and layman alike. A hint toward understanding this process can be found in the polyphonic repertoire the pianist championed. Here, emphasis is placed upon a very dense concentration of events that effectively shrinks the temporal scale of material with which the listener can consciously deal.

In contrasting his own playing with that of Schnabel—a musician he admired greatly—Gould has noted that the great Austrian pianist tended to think in musical “paragraphs”, whereas his own focus was directed more toward unfolding details of the moment⁵. This does not imply that Gould was unconcerned with certain levels of explicate structure from a production standpoint. Rather, the characterisation sheds light upon the kind of listening experience he so valued in the highly contrapuntal situation, one that inhibits the possibility of utilising certain acquired representations, and hence more “naïve”

⁵ Unfortunately, this is one of several instances where I have been unable to document the source. Gould was involved in countless radio broadcasts over the years, parts of which have been re-aired in various formats; though I am confident the ideas expressed were his, I no longer remember the details of where I encountered them.

in nature.

Nonetheless, this depiction remains congruent with Judd's archetypal character of musical behaviour. In the particular model of reception that concerns us here, however, an attentional shift occurs, away from tasks that are requirements of expressive behaviour toward a plurality more unique to the listening situation. In both cases, it is necessary to develop awareness of concurrent streams of sound. What we propose is the elimination of expressive functions that will free up cognitive resources, resulting in the emergence of a new and more intuitive level of meaning. Such a field must be generated spontaneously by the brain itself, not mediated through conscious processes concerned with the monitoring of internal representations drawn from memory. It is by concentrating exclusively upon the dynamics of incoming information that awareness of such meaning is conceived possible.

To summarise, this salience should reflect a pattern of neurophysiological embodiment without reference to long-term, acquired templates; accordingly, the dissociation between receptive and expressive skills that Ravel's case history has been shown to exhibit assumes significance as supporting evidence. We acknowledge that such a claim cannot be conclusive; however, it does lend weight to our developing argument concerning the possibility of a non-morbid functional dissociation.

E. Laterality

In her article on Ravel, Sergent contends that the French composer's symptoms "all suggest a selective involvement of the left hemisphere" (1993b, p.11). With reference to this appraisal, our discussion broaches the topic of hemispheric asymmetry, an order of mental fractionation that has also found its way into the discourse of popular media. Sergent herself has cautioned against the facile application of lateral dichotomies to something as general and complex as music. Widely discussed analytic-holistic contrasts,

for example, "are useless as long as the actual operations they are assumed to characterize are not spelled out, and as long as no clearly defined operational criteria are suggested to assess the nature of performance" (1993, p. 28).

To be sure, the level of specificity required for empirical work of this kind is beyond the scope of the present paper as well. The issues are complex and sometimes contentious: for example, debate surrounding the utility of the dichotic listening paradigm (Mondor and Bryden, 1992). Nonetheless, it is clear that hemispheric specialisation is a significant dimension of brain organisation, and consensus does exist in a number of areas. Still, it remains prudent to observe at the outset how easily the prevalent mode of thought can appropriate new information into its familiar pattern of binary structures. Again, we are faced with global distinctions that merely serve to mask the underlying realities. It is therefore necessary to identify the fullest range of factors contributing to any given instance of musical meaning; only in light of this detailed specification will issues of laterality come to acquire greater significance. Our concern may ultimately lie at the large-scale level of human behaviour, but such contrast cannot be elucidated with reference to only one particular variable. With this cautionary note in mind, it is possible to continue a brief examination that began with a diagnostic reference to the illness of Ravel.

The belief that linguistic behaviour is preponderantly a function of the dominant—or in most cases, left—hemisphere is widely accepted. Conversely, there exists a more limited consensus holding that certain key elements of western musical practice are associated with the minor hemisphere's specialised capacities. Auditory processing of steady-state frequencies characteristic of music (Wallin, 1991), complex tones and harmony (Roederer, 1982), and melodic contours (Peretz and Morais, 1993) all seem suited to the gestalt-forming propensities of the brain's right side. Furthermore, many emotional functions (Bear, 1983), including the prosodic component of verbal communication (Borod, 1993) are also frequently allied to the right hemisphere.

In the present context, one of the most persuasive models implicating right hemisphere function is that developed by Tucker and Williamson (1984). Following Pribram and McGuinness, the authors elaborate a distinction between neurochemical systems for *activation* and *arousal*, the former relating to motor readiness and the latter to environmental monitoring. In the first case, the operative logic is referred to as a *redundancy bias* which seeks to reduce uncertainty and noise. Restated, “[a]ctivation provides a bias against change in the output channels, thereby affording continuity and stability in motor control” (p. 194). In the second instance, a perceptual *habituation bias* concerns itself with novelty. “Rather than being restricted to a given semantic or motivational content, the animal’s processing capacity is allocated to the most novel—usually the most informative—feature of the stimulus array” (p. 194).

This contrast is highly reminiscent of the one proposed between expressive and receptive functions above, and critical to an understanding of the nature of our ritual task. The parallel is best expressed in the authors’ own words:

A habituation bias loads storage capacity with new data, such that prior cognitive representations can have less influence on the current process. The locus of information control shifts from a determination by previous, internal representations to determination by novel features of the external perceptual array. (p. 196).

Indeed, in these terms our receptive goal is to attain a maximal state of perceptual arousal at the expense of activation.

Tucker and Williamson assert that arousal is a right hemispheric function, mediated by NE pathways. In keeping with this, they draw a familiar distinction between parallel processing capabilities of the right hemisphere—required for broad environmental monitoring—and the dominant side’s serial bias, so useful for complex sequencing inherent to motor acts (1993). All these various factors thus seem to indicate a heavily lateralised mode of cognition. In particular, the non-focalised attention being advocated as most appropriate for baroque polyphony would conform to this scheme.

Anecdotally, a couple other points reinforce this general conclusion. The dissociative experience associated with contrapuntal music is accompanied by a palpable feeling that separate melodic lines occupy a three dimensional space. Perhaps this spatial enhancement is also due to an increased participation of the right hemisphere. Moreover, processing of complex rhythmic information has been linked to the brain's left side (Peretz and Morais, 1993); the fact that Bach's rhythm is singularly regular in design adds yet another right side advantage to the mix.

It may thus appear that consideration of laterality has yielded little more than the familiar, popularised dichotomy, pitting holistic attributes of artistic creativity against the cold calculation of linear thought. Perhaps a partial truth resides in even so crude a characterisation; yet the level of specification presented here far exceeds an evaluation which, taken alone, accomplishes very little. Enhancement of perceptual acuity, peripheral monitoring, and orientation to novelty may be all facilitated through activities associated with right hemispheric function, but such attributes are not of necessity well realised by means of activities falling under the general rubric of music. Instead, we seek to delimit a particular type of musical structure as well as a mode of engagement.

Beyond these qualifications, however, lies a dimension of Bach's music that serves to complicate our developing model of unilateral perception, that is to say, its overt sense of formalism. This feeling of rigor, or even mathematical precision, is a fairly universal reaction that can be elicited without knowledge or reference to the expressive structures of theoretical analysis. Even to the untrained ear, Bach's music seems to present a sonic image of matter in process, of ordered structure in perpetual dialogue and self-reflection. Involuntary toe-tapping might be the only level on which a particular listener engages; alternatively, one might find satisfaction in the moving undulations of a melodic contour or the simplicity of a plagal cadence. Yet, even the casual listener senses in the endless sequential flow an inner determinism emanating directly from the nature of the material at

hand. The fact this busy linear commerce all coheres on a harmonic plane—which partakes of its own narrative progression—simply adds to the puzzle-like quality, deferring to an external logic that takes precedence over the stereotyped image of an intuitive creativity.

This impression relates to several issues that arise from a closer scrutiny of the Bach phenomenon but are not necessarily wedded to a reductive view of “pure form” that is often identified with the artefact alone. Whether or not one utilises such representations, the basic continuity of texture and lack of dramatic contrast cries out for the kind of conscious attention to detail often associated with the intentional behaviour of language. Put another way, an awareness of the dynamic exposition of Bach's material seems to force upon one the realisation, not simply of multiple melodic contours, but of continuous analytical permutations and juxtapositions. If Peretz and Morais (1993) are correct in asserting that processing complex melody can recruit the left hemisphere, attentive listening might elicit this effect from those not necessarily literate in the strictest sense. In this case, sensitivity to intervallic relationships would develop with practice, perhaps aided by an innate proclivity to develop it. This is where the style of presentation would also come into play; in this context, Glenn Gould's portamento manner of piano playing might facilitate the process of apprehension.

It would appear then that Bach's idiom encourages the participation of left hemisphere processes. These may also be required to lead one to a state of ambiguity that is a hallmark of the fugal situation. In other words, conferring a precise identity to melodic strands becomes a prerequisite for that eventual blurring of separate existence that results from the fugue's combination of increasing polyphonic traffic and dynamic harmonic relation. This is one of the critical components contributing to the meaning of our ritual act, for it is ultimately an inability to follow the fugue's initial linear logic that demands a response that is dissociative in nature.

F. Emotion

The ability to understand and implement means for initiating a behavioural alternative to the current, culturally normative dualism remains the ultimate goal toward which this research aspires. Emphasis on issues of laterality suggest that the enabling ritual task—a discipline that can only be mastered procedurally—promotes a wedding of attributes that may seem incongruous from the standpoint of standard practice. Bach's music seems to encourage this incongruity, offering a kind of analytical process that cannot be "followed" by the same logic of which it is comprised. In fact, the most effective method of approach is one that abandons a commitment to step by step procedure that seems the very foundation of our logical process.

This ability to "let go" without ever abandoning a scrupulous perceptual allegiance to the complex material being presented is accompanied by a number of unusual sensations. One of the most striking of these involves the experience of emotion. Having alluded to the abstract, almost mathematical cast of the material employed, it is once again necessary to discredit a characterisation that is as tempting as it is misleading. The meaning of the fugal phenomenon does not reside in the artefact as a *content*, subsequently transferred to the listener and ultimately extolled as "pure form". In such a scenario, the salutary outcome can be traced to the understanding of an experiencing subject who becomes ingratiated by the certitude of perfect comprehension. Here at last one finds solace in transcendence or escape, so the argument goes, far beyond the painful contingencies of power and history. But such a conception is not inevitable. On the contrary, though the musical artefact can well be reduced to a series of graspable relations, it is the concrete instantiation of perceptual *ambiguity* that is of special interest here. The wonder is the brain's innate capacity to "make sense" of a dynamic process from which the intentional mind simply balks. These facts lend a different orientation to the aesthetic ritual.

In overall functional terms, it is not the self that is attempting to escape the clutches of concrete history; rather, the real world is attempting to escape from the clutches of the self.

Our goal is to plausibly articulate this distinction, both theoretically and experientially. Accordingly, we proceed to explore the relationship between the unique emotional tenor of the focal activity and its specific formal attributes. Part of this discussion concerns the nature of the musical material per se; another deals with the personal mode of engagement that such material recommends. In any case, it is the overall context that permits productive appraisal of individual concepts. Form and emotion, music and reception: these are not sets of separate issues, but aspects of one grand field of functional relations.

From a first-person viewpoint, experience of dense musical polyphony can—under special circumstances—attain an ecstatic character. Moreover, precise verbal description is impeded by the dualistic legacy, apparent in the following entry from Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary (1984):

ec·sta·sy \ 'ek-ste-sē\ n, pl **-sies** [ME *extasie*, fr. MF, fr. LL *ecstasis*, fr. Gk *ekstasis*, fr. *Existanai* to derange, fr. *ex* out + *histanai* to cause to stand -- more at EX-, STAND] (14c) **1 a** : a state of being beyond reason and self-control **b** *archaic* : SWOON **2** : a state of overwhelming emotion; *esp* : rapturous delight **3** : TRANCE *esp* : a mystic or prophetic trance

Within the dualistic framework, “beyond reason and self-control” implies “overwhelming emotion” as a logical consequence. The problem, however, is that such an interpretation neglects to pay homage to a fuller etymological concordance: standing outside, that is to say, not only from the perspective of reason, but from that of emotion as well. The definition thus omits an apprehension that is of cardinal interest here. Above all, it is the ecstatic sense of *objectivity* that makes for such a puzzling and potentially fruitful experience. Whatever the intensity of feeling, such affect is not perceived as one’s own: it

is something external, something that manifests its full presence without obligatory reference to an observer.

As I hope to suggest, the unique character of this predicament offers clues as to a distinction between fugal ecstasy and the raptures of *holiday* as expounded above. In the case of the latter, participants are released from a condition that is imposed upon them, leaving them in fuller *possession* of what seems truly theirs: a body, an inner core, a personal being, a vital force, a soul. Within the confines of its ritual enactment, such experience acquires a solidity that is not easily disturbed, and hence can thrive in the tumult of extreme sensory stimulation and public pageantry. By contrast, the ecstatic as portrayed here is apprehended as something external, even impersonal, which becomes manifest through a temporary abdication of an emotional centre. Once achieved, it is easily lost; as a result, such fragility seeks the safety of solitude in order to maintain its tenuous attentional focus.

In light of this withdrawal, it may seem that the charge of solipsism has pertinence, regardless of what such a ritual is said to highlight, be it ambiguity or formal perfection. Indeed, our uncompromising pursuit of a temporary detachment from the social appears to imply an inevitable flight into the self. What is more, the notion of emotional objectivity presents itself within the dualistic logic as contradictory and unintelligible. In order to confront these difficulties, it is necessary to consider the topic of emotion from a more theoretical perspective.

Damasio (1994) notes that "both the records of experiences and the responses to them, if they are to be adaptive, must be evaluated and shaped by a fundamental set of preferences of the organism that consider survival paramount" (p. 111). This biological value system is cognitive in nature; in order to respond with an integrated pattern of physiological activity, the organism must make an appropriate appraisal of the contingencies it faces. And given the nature of the environment and the seriousness of the

challenges it poses, this decision-making apparatus must also be able to operate with considerable speed.

As with other species, humans rely on this first line of defence in order to promote their survival. The evolution of culture has created a new environment, perhaps ameliorating some of the older selection pressures; nonetheless, insuring the structural integrity and homeostatic balance of the organism remains the primordial task of existence. In short, response patterns that are experienced as basic emotions must maintain the autonomy to act as circumstances arise, overriding activities that may already be in progress.

With the emergence of a distinctly human culture and capacity for greater elaboration and abstraction of information, reciprocity for inhibitory action is granted to higher level processes. Nonetheless, a major premise of Damasio's critique of the reason/emotion dichotomy is that anatomical structures are often shared by multiple contexts, with more recently evolved processes "piggybacked" on earlier ones, not simply built up from scratch (p. 137). Our experience of the body, in other words, does not lose its critical implication with higher levels of thought, an idea that flies in the face of dualistic tendencies. The kind of cognition the author calls secondary emotion thus utilises basic emotional systems in a more complex process that correlates body states with categories and events, on the one hand, and a sense of self on the other (p. 147).

As stated, the ultimate goal remains survival, but with the advent of a more complex situation, this objective becomes increasingly entangled, mediated through the historical niceties of human culture and personal history. What seeks to endure is an emergent subject, a bio-sociological entity that must navigate a niche that includes an unprecedented symbolic dimension. According to Damasio, moreover, it is the ventromedial prefrontal cortex that is most responsible for organising and monitoring this novel form of existence.

The expanded domain of human experience is regulated by a variety of temporal

and spatial constraints. We have already cited adequate reaction time to environmental events as a critical requirement. With increased complexity of information, however, the problem of retrieval time becomes a pressing concern as well. The way knowledge is embodied differentiates the organism from technologically based storage systems. Like the longer-term biological memories with which the organism is endowed at birth, acquired information is also strictly organised along criteria of value. Memory is chunked in what Damasio calls “convergence zones”, small ensembles of neurons which, when fired, activate spatially distributed “dispositional representations”, specifically acquired relational structures that are not simply facsimiles of events or things in the world “outside”. In short, information is ordered according to its significance for the organism.

The implication of the body in thought is especially clear with the concept of “somatic markers”, which essentially signal the outcome of a process that extrapolates probabilities of outcomes for the complex social and symbolic situations that a human organism faces. In Damasio's words, somatic markers “*are a special instance of feelings generated from secondary emotions. Those emotions and feelings have been connected, by learning, to predicted future outcomes of certain scenarios*” (p. 174). Like their phylogenetically older cousins, these cognitive processes assist decision-making in a predicament where both time and memory capacities are limited; they are, in effect, a more recently evolved form of vigilance that peers into a distinctly human environment and the special contingencies of a distinctly human future.

And yet this automatic utilisation of emotional mechanisms that “bias” thinking provides a more thorough critique of the reason/emotion duality than might readily be apparent. Important as they are for planning and decision-making in the social and personal sphere, these processes may also represent an integral component of productive reasoning in general. Damasio suggests “that somatic markers, which operate on the bioregulatory and social domain aligned with the ventromedial sector, influence the

operation of attention and working memory within the dorsolateral sector, the sector on which operations on other domains of knowledge depend" (p. 198). This situation questions the conception of an autonomous reason, often portrayed as independent from or even contrary to the workings of emotion.

Instead, Damasio stresses the dependence of effective reasoning upon automatic somatic states. The primary challenge in a dynamically changing world is the need for adequate response. In the arena of human socio-economic life, decisions may not always have the urgency of life and death, but the need for imposing temporary closure remains a ceaseless challenge. It is due in good measure to the probabilistic calculations of the higher emotional apparatus (Simonov, 1986) that this cognitive objective is met. Without it, "you may not even end up with a decision at all because you will get lost in the byways of your calculation" (Damasio, p. 172).

This view does not deny the potential for maladaptation. Any level of automaticity carries an insensitivity that can be counterproductive as circumstances evolve. "The buildup of adaptive somatic markers requires that both brain and culture be normal. When *either* brain or culture is defective, at the outset, somatic markers are unlikely to be adaptive" (p. 177). Damasio cites some of the great tyrannical regimes of the twentieth century as examples of cultural pathology. Hence the problem is a profound one. Is it possible to escape its troubling circularity? How might one provide a reasonable analysis of a given predicament when the very processes upon which such cognition depends have gone awry?

The critique of Cartesian dualism and underlying biological theory offered by Damasio provides some important clues towards answering these questions. As repeatedly stated, our thesis contends that the dualistic worldview is part of a complex pattern of practices that can be diagnosed as morbid. Furthermore, certain aspects of the general post-modern culture—proliferation of excessively complex discourse, failure of firm

commitment to non-fundamentalist values—bear the mark of the disintegration of adaptive cognition as depicted by Damasio. If the neo-primitivistic response to traditional rationalism does not appear adequate, however, perhaps better understanding and utilisation of emotion remains an alternative nonetheless.

In order to elaborate how this might be effected, however, a few comments upon the notion of selfhood as conceived in Descartes' Error are in order. There is nothing absolute about the kinds of continuity that comprise the individual and its history. "At each moment the state of self is constructed, from the ground up. It is an evanescent reference state, so continuously and consistently reconstructed that the owner never knows it is being remade unless something goes wrong with the remaking" (p.240).

Damasio refers to two fundamental sets of representations. The first concerns our autobiographical knowledge, memories of recent events, and plans for future action: in short, "the endless reactivation of updated images about our identity..." (p. 239). The second set refers to "the primordial representations of an individual's body..." (p. 239), including "background body states and emotional states..." (p. 239). Finally, however, he poses "a third set of structures which is neither the one which supports the image of an object nor the one that supports the images of the self but is reciprocally interconnected with both" (p. 242). These *convergence zones* represent very high-level processes from which subjectivity ultimately emerges: the building of an image "of an organism in the act of perceiving and responding to an object" (p. 243).

It thus seems that selfhood, like music, is a function of the entire brain, and not confined to some specific anatomical centre. Nonetheless, the confluence of information that occurs in the prefrontal cortices is notable; indeed, this region "seems dedicated to categorizing contingencies in the perspective of personal relevance" (p. 182). As stated earlier, moreover, this influence acquires a high degree of automaticity that can, at times, become counterproductive. In order to deal with this problem, we consequently believe it

necessary to address the system before such automatic events are set in motion. The challenge, in other words, is to design a procedure that both prevents the elicitation of unwanted response and simultaneously re-educates the system to behave in a new direction.

Here we pose a functional utility for the ritual of social withdrawal. The act of solitary listening in a protected environment curtails the need for the kinds of response for which the ventromedial prefrontal area is specialised, allowing attention to be focused in order to enhance both perceptual and interoceptive information. Such an outcome is due in part to the way that the dynamically unfolding musical activity is able to limit the temporal frame. The rapid delivery of simultaneous perceptual auditory streams that distinguishes Bach's work imposes a task that is jeopardised by any extended calculations about the future; its success is facilitated to the degree such complex acquired levels of function are temporarily set aside.

The task is not to arouse a particular emotional state or execute a particular ritual response; rather, the immediate situation provided is one utterly lacking in social and personal relevance. No form of self-assertion is called for, only an intense inner silence that permits the greatest amount of concurrent information to impress itself upon the mind. If will is necessary, it is a will to non-interference, a letting go of any conscious expectation or control. What needs to be temporarily curtailed is the abstracted process that builds "*a dispositional representation of the self in the process of changing as the organism responds to an object*" (p. 242). Note that this would not eradicate the hypothesised components of selfhood: specifically, neither the continuous monitoring of body image that is a function of somatosensory areas, nor the *reaction of the brain itself* to the presence of changing stimuli.

Writing about Phineas Gage, the American railroad foreman who survived dramatic frontal lobe injuries, Damasio notes: "Gage lost something uniquely human, the ability to

plan his future as a social being" (p. 19). Yet what remains equally astonishing about this case is the degree of function that was spared: that is, "the impaired character was dissociated from the otherwise intact cognition and behavior" (pp. 11-12). This graphically demonstrates the compound nature of subjectivity. Of course, Gage's alteration was irreparable; he could not reintegrate what was lost. Yet these pathological dissociations may add to a picture of human psychology that finds a salient variety within the compass of the normal: one, moreover, that cannot be differentiated on the basis of discursive analysis alone.

The notion of a functional dissociation involving ventromedial prefrontal areas could be seen to correspond in some respects to the ecstatic syndrome presented here. The latter begins by eschewing the world in order to relax the habitual need to respond. It offers a form of music whose perceptual task effectively reduces attention to an immediate, compressed temporal frame without the possibility of planning or rehearsing. As a corollary, it is an enhanced sense of the present that accrues from this unconcern with the complexities of expectation.

The most significant effect this hypothesised dissociation might bring about, moreover, concerns the experience of emotion. Given that Damasio sees the brain area in question as correlating body states with external events and autobiographical information in an ongoing, non-verbal narrative of selfhood, it may play an important role in the quality of the background states that underlie human subjectivity. If the pattern of cognitive activities demanded by the musical ritual were facilitated by an inhibition of this integrated "self-making", the sense of emotional continuity providing a ground for the "everyday" might fall into temporary quiescence, thus paving the way for a profoundly altered experience. Moreover, lacking a sense of temporality as it relates to one's existence would further contribute to the apparent "objectivity" of the apprehension.

Such a scenario might not only help explain the subjective changes that accompany

the ecstatic state; in addition, they suggest that a mechanism may exist whereby maladaptive aspects of embodied conditioning could be unlearned. *Letting go* in this context acquires a more precise meaning: it implies relinquishing certain high-level components of personal concern, including planning *and* emotion. Liberation here is not sudden abandonment to unruly thermodynamic forces, forbidden or repressed desires; rather, it is recognition of the brain's underlying capacity for complex cognitive/emotive processing without reference to the acquired motivational structures of a fixed personal entity. Consequently, there can be no *identification* with the source of the exceptional, as if one bore its majesty as a kind of individual distinction or possession.

What the ecstatic instils is a sense of *contrast* between the operations of a system of rewards and punishments that seeks to postulate the reality of a sovereign, individual agency, and those of the human brain as a naturally evolved organ of insight. It is awareness of this contrast that is the starting point for basic psychological change. Only through a ritual denial of the world of personal relevance, however, can one initiate the functional pre-requisites that such a change demands. Otherwise, cognition is biased by a set of acquired constraints—somatic markers—which preserve a human organism's history of successes and failures, as well as its cultural knowledge. Such information may be useful in many instances; given the blinding speed of recent cultural evolution, however, it may not keep pace and remain adaptive in every circumstance. Consequently, the kind of aesthetic ritual of which we have been speaking may itself acquire an adaptive function, offering a way of learning to dissociate from the past in a self-consciously controlled manner.

The music of Bach is particularly suited to this end. Undertaken as a rigorous perceptual discipline, it disdains the closed, self-indulgence of both personal sentiment and formal perfection. In particular, Glenn Gould's performances of Bach's fugues might be considered anti-prosodic in character. By stressing intervallic relations over contour,

melody bears less relation to prosody as an emotional component of linguistic communication. Emphasis upon the clarity of multiple linear voices rather than sonority per se also serves to minimise the opportunity of eliciting specific, pre-packaged emotional reactions. Perhaps this is due in part to the fact that harmonic analysis is an auditory task that serves the identification of things bearing direct relevance to the organism, whereas the cognitive challenges of fugal reception are specific to the artifice of ritual. Be that as it may, it is dualistic thinking that attributes the "impersonal" style of presentation as a purely "formal" concern, deducing from the relegation of emotion a necessary focus on abstract structure. Such formalism, however, seeks to divorce the musical phenomenon from the brain's perceptual processes, leaving a static residue over which to ponder. Thus unfolds the tragedy of historical thinking, that ceaseless striving to reduce the complexities of the real to narratives of control.

We are not attempting to deny history; rather, we are trying to encourage sensitivity to historical particularity by allowing the brain more flexibility with which to re-interpret the present moment. The ecstatic becomes a means of liberating both reason and emotion from the clinging structures of the self by demonstrating that the brain possesses more acumen and creativity when left to its "own" devices. This latter point is critical, for it points to a process more creative and profound than the image fashioning that finds its apex in the cult of personality so endemic to the present electronic media culture. Knowledge, furthermore, is not an antidote to the facile pleasures of self-creation. No amount of erudition can transcend the inadequacies of the quest for total control; nor does such an effort, however humble in expectation, stand as the only reasonable avenue of approach to communication. Over-reliance upon theory is no substitute for the creativity that lies at the heart of the animate world.

2. Fugue and Meaning

A. Language, Music, and Ambiguity

In a series of lectures subsequently published as The Unanswered Question: Six Talks at Harvard (1976), Leonard Bernstein attempts to assimilate music into a framework provided by the work of Chomsky. Since his student days, Bernstein claims to have been fascinated by “the notion of a world-wide, inborn musical grammar” (p. 7). Yet it was only with his discovery of the linguist’s writings that his intuition could be explicitly articulated, and a suitable scientific rationale found to give it concrete expression. The resultant musico-linguistics is subdivided along the lines of its disciplinary relative: phonology, syntax, and semantics. It is the last category that most concerns us here.

Bernstein’s analogy between the semantics of music and language is to be sought through an examination of metaphor; accordingly, he offers the Shakespearean example, “Juliet is the sun”, as prototype (p. 123). At first glance, the obvious lexical incongruity seems to disqualify such a statement as meaningful. But here we are given a distinction: “Chomsky is not concerned with poetry; his inquiry is into normal human speech” (p. 123). It turns out that “poetic logic”, however, *can* be transformed into “normal” discursive speech by spelling out the isomorphic relations between the entities involved. Through a series of deletions of this explanatory material, moreover, it is possible to arrive at the simile “Juliet is like the sun”. The final step is easy. “We then delete the *like* and Juliet *is* the sun. And what a deletion is there! Of such transformations are metaphors made, and of such metaphors is beauty born” (p. 125).

Given the effusiveness with which this semantic implication has been noted, however, one would expect that the simplicity by which it is achieved would be somewhat illusory. Like the previous textual reduction that rendered the simile, the small

excision of a single word—apparently bridging the world of prosaic logic with the glories of poetry—might intimate the elucidation of a somewhat more complex process. Yet no such analysis is forthcoming, and the reader is left to ponder the meaning of this explanatory deletion from the text of Bernstein's own thesis. The present object is to give some indication of what has been omitted, and, subsequently, to consider what purpose the elision might serve the author of The Unanswered Question.

To begin, several remarks can be added to Bernstein's treatment of simile. When one is dealing with meaning, some mention must be made, however cursory, about the importance of context. To specify the rhetorical mechanism whereby a meaning has been expressed is not equivalent to explicating the meaning it invokes. A simile, from the point of view of both composition and reception, involves a degree of creativity. That is, the active process of constructing a link between entities is not always self-evident, and further, must be made with the help of the context in which it occurs. Secondly, the field of meaning that this process engenders depends upon the precise nature of the covert relation. The isomorphism might be idiosyncratic and trivial, or, alternatively, it might unexpectedly bring together areas of experience, discourse, and emotion in a manner that is at once revelatory and profound. In a real sense, moreover, it is the search process itself that is a major contributor to the semantic "content" of the simile.

Nonetheless, we acknowledge that, as a figure of speech, simile is defined by an explicit set of "directional arrows", demarcating the areas in which one's search is likely to be profitable or not. This formal constraint on the kind of relation implied means, that once the riddle is "solved", it takes the form of a logically coherent construct. But this situation alters considerably as we move into the realm of metaphor. "Juliet is the sun," as we are told; but as we also already know, "Juliet is not the sun". An element of

ambiguity is inherent to the construction, and the door is opened to an infinitely vast and convoluted world of subterranean connections.

From the present perspective, ambiguity is best conceived as a kind of semantic catalyst, a device that facilitates interactions in a multi-levelled reality. Profound ambiguity, then—like profound science—achieves its loftiness to the degree it implicates hitherto unrelated conceptual domains. Unlike "theory", however, successful ambiguity does not neatly tie phenomenon together: rather, it resonates across extant semantic boundaries in search of a greater stability. It cannot be symbolised as an algorithm, because its very role is to motivate, challenge, unsettle the theoretical structures in which it is embedded. Ambiguity is meaningful precisely to the extent it sends shock waves outward; its function is to threaten the very notion of self-containment.

Understood in this manner, the asymmetry of metaphorical relation presents a discrepancy in emphasis with the view proposed by Bernstein. The poetic can no longer be held as a separate domain for the cultivation of beauty, precisely because its rhetorical basis necessitates a "spilling over" that cannot be controlled. Far from representing an aesthetic space in contrast with the hard realities and communicative problems of everyday living, the poetic is a dynamic attempt to come closer to the fundamental indeterminacy of a reality that defies the inevitable limitations of our explicit conceptual maps.

What gets temporarily suspended in aesthetic ritual is the need for redundancy, the requirement to narrow focus to a small range of salient information needed to cope with the time-locked exigencies of survival. In such instances, concern is not for the greater complexities of reality, but for making correct and speedy choices from a small number of options requiring unambiguous communication, both internally and externally. When we make the deletion of certain specific logical relations from our utterances—dropping the word "like", for instance—the thing that makes us swoon is not the specific,

identifiable reduction, but the indeterminate *extra* that is now permitted *in* to the semantic equation. Moreover, it is *the overall context* that determines the quality of the relations that can be forged, not simply the fact that greater freedom has been permitted through deletion.

What gives the "hard facts" of living their solidity is not that they are rooted in reality, but rather in judgements concerning high probability. Habits of personal experience and social custom can more often than not be relied upon to get us through the day. This does not mean, however, that they partake of something absolute; indeed, when circumstances change, it becomes imperative that we treat established behavioural patterns as the children of exigency that they really are. Suddenly experiencing the world with greater focus upon its novelty and the diversity of its connections can be both liberating and beautiful, but such elation is rooted in an upheaval in our attitude toward the world at large, and not simply the product of an autonomous realm of aesthetic activity.

Despite all that has been said regarding the nature of ambiguity, however, Bernstein appears to hold a formidable trump card: the non-referentiality of musical symbolism. Unencumbered by such interpretative worries, in other words, music is free to act as a language of pure tropological gesture. And this has important implications for the field of musical semantics. As the author explains, "music has intrinsic meanings of its own, which are not to be confused with specific feelings or moods, and certainly not with pictorial impressions or stories. These intrinsic musical meanings are generated by a constant stream of metaphors, all of which are forms of transformations. This is our thesis" (p. 131).

Let us examine a rudimentary example. Brahms's fourth symphony begins with two two-note phrases in the violins, which together form an analytical unit that Bernstein labels "A". He then goes on to explain: "What we've labelled A in itself involves a

transformation: the descending major third transformed to its exact inversion, an ascending minor sixth. So A already contains a metaphor..." (p. 127).

We thus find two phrases that establish, through temporal juxtaposition, a meaningful relation between each other: the trope of inversion. Being musical, moreover, nothing need be imported into the context in order to grasp its significance; the meaning is intrinsic to respective positions in the diatonic scale, and our equally intrinsic ability to recognise them. This is not all. "In fact, when you think of the number of transformations taking place in the short space of those few bars of Brahms, it becomes almost incredible that all of them can be instantaneously perceived" (p. 127).

Given the fact we are no longer constrained by external reference, moreover, there is apparently almost no end to the complexity these relations can reach. As an example, Bernstein dissects a passage from Beethoven's sixth (Pastorale) symphony, one in which the composer uses a fragment of previous melodic material in order to construct one of his patented obsessive climaxes. Analysis reveals, among many other things, "a pattern of ninety-two bars, all to be comprehended together as one immense metaphorical design: twenty-four plus twenty-two, which makes forty-six, and again twenty-four plus twenty-two—another forty-six—which already reveals a large inner repetition" (p. 181). Several pages of meticulous scrutinising later, we arrive at a summation of cumulative insight: "Thus is born a great musical metaphor, out of what seemed to be merely twenty-four stupefying repetitions" (p. 186).

During the live lectures, Bernstein had means to present this musical material to his audience, prefaced with the following admonition: "And I hope its time for you to listen to this music purely as music, as a magnificent utterance in a metaphorical language, a language of creative transformations. I hope you are somewhat prepared for this, prepared to renounce the whole pastoral paraphernalia, jonquils and daisies included" (p. 186). The problem is that the perception of "stupefying repetition" is not at

all of the order of imported semantics against which we have been warned. This particular expression of *structural* observation, in other words, does not appear to violate the edict of “shedding extramusical associations” (p. 187). Worse still: “even if you succeeded only partly, even *one* percent, you’ve accomplished a lot, because you’ve taken at least a first step toward new listening habits...” (p. 189).

Yet even allowing for the author’s penchant for hyperbole can hardly justify his reference to the Beethovenian excerpt under scrutiny as “one of the most exciting passages in all music” (p. 180). Something is amiss in Bernstein’s world of musical meaning. On one hand, we are led to appreciate the incredible instantaneous perception of our innate grammatical capacities and, on the other, chastised for the crudeness of our structural acuity. It must be asked: does the full range of intrinsic musical semantics become available to the listener who can jettison all that is external, or is something more required? Moreover, how do these skills—whatever they may be—compare to those that are assimilated during the acquisition of natural language?

Questions such as these focus special attention upon the issue of specialised knowledge and music appreciation. Moreover, a deeper issue remains to be broached concerning the role of ambiguity. No doubt it is of critical importance for Bernstein, who spends a great deal of time examining the evolution of tonality and its ability to generate ever greater amounts of ambiguity, leading to a crisis at the end of the nineteenth century. Nor is it by chance that so much discussion focuses upon the historical development of musical craft. With all external relation renounced by decree, the analyser has no recourse but to turn inward, to the larger temporal context of music itself. Ultimately, Bernstein’s encounter with musical ambiguity is entirely a conversation about the technical means by which it is achieved.

In terms of our previous observations, however, such an attitude does irreparable violence to the living heart of ambiguity; it reduces it to a mere set of algorithms,

wrenched from the vast, uncertain context of potential and limitation that defines each historical moment. Here lies the central thrust of this critique: by confining the semantics of ambiguity to the field of technique, Bernstein is able to maintain his mastery over it, as well as his role as intermediary, graciously bestowing the glories of music to a public ill-suited to receive them from the source. Ambiguity that is controlled by placing arbitrary limits on its meaning, however, has lost both its productive potential and its profundity. In the context of "pure music", it becomes yet another descriptive axis of only modest utility. Ambiguity/unanimity; tension/resolution; energy/fatigue; novelty/redundancy and the like: important as these conceptual pairs may be, do they really represent the last words regarding our apprehension of musical meaning?

I propose an alternative to the discourse of artistic specialisation, one based upon a more coherent development of the premises that Bernstein has set before us. If music truly comprises a figurative language in sound, its richness stems not from the purity of its self-reference, but rather from its inescapable involvement with the world at large. Performing a trope of inversion upon the notion of music-in-itself, we find an art form that does not wilfully exclude the entire world, but openly embraces it. Put yet another way: music does not simply offer moments of contrived ambiguity; it is, instead, a communicative act that is inherently ambiguous *all* of the time. The consequence is that the nature and productivity of this ambiguity is no longer a function of musical analysis *per se*; it is thrown back into the larger world of meaning, in all its infinite richness and variety.

Does this necessitate a return to the language of "jonquils and daisies", as Bernstein would have it? It emphatically does not. Here we might postulate our own credo. Music does not represent; it resonates. This means that a particular piece dynamically activates all sorts of underlying, isomorphic relations with the world, as embodied by the brain. These cannot be confined, *a priori*, to any particular level of

function or analysis. Nor can they be captured through a process of conceptual or linguistic reduction. Nonetheless, this does not imply that musical meaning resolves into a sea of relativity, subjectivity, or vagueness. On the contrary, it remains deeply structural and historical in nature, offering genres and individual examples that elicit contrasting responses, and are suited to vastly different ritual uses.

The question arises: what is the nature of the hermeneutics that can deal with such complexity and ambiguity? Bernstein's approach cannot escape a specialisation that is inconsistent with the spontaneity that his linguistic analogy demands. The need for such formal assistance is due to the brain's inability to differentiate, on the tropological level, between what is intrinsically musical and what is not. In order to enforce the distinction, the author is obliged to derive conceptual models based on systems of symbolic representation. Yet, in shunning their use, one need not abandon the practice of closely attending to sound. Here we reiterate a basic point: musical hermeneutics must not be reduced to an analytical method based on knowledge of a purely musical order. Neither should any disciplinary context be imported as executor of the listening act. The discipline we require is basically perceptual, not conceptual in character.

In the absence of any fixed method of interpretation, however, reliance must be placed upon the spontaneity of the brain itself to make meaning. This does not mean that a further process of reflection cannot exploit a person's entire knowledge and experience. A life of musical engagement becomes a life of dialogue, dependent upon the ability of organised sound to set up complex patterns of resonance. Like the ambiguity of great literature, this process may link many levels of organisation, or seemingly unrelated areas of experience. And likewise, music's resultant semantic aura can be explored; that is to say, it need not exist as a vague and fleeting subjective feeling, lost to the ephemeral moment of its duration.

What, then, are the ramifications of this unique field of semantic resonance? If one has faith to engage in an open way, music offers a means of reflecting the mind/world back upon itself in a manner that can enhance awareness. Different styles and genres relate in different ways. Nothing is excluded here; various isomorphic elements simply emerge from the process of listening. Some may relate to explicit discursive domains; others may reflect more general issues of consciousness. Rather than staking a theoretical discipline that proclaims sovereignty over the field of musical semantics, the goal is to become sensitised to the distinctive aura which any given instance of music triggers. Affective reactions are a significant facet of the overall dialogic process. Rather than attempting to elicit a particular reaction, the challenge is to observe what the music has been able to effect. To what has one been especially attracted or moved? What are the co-ordinates of the descriptive axes, such as novelty or ambiguity, at moments of greatest interest or boredom? What is the state of mind that listening induces? How does this relate to one's everyday perceptions, and the process of transition between the two? Active engagement with the consequences of open resonance can become an evaluative litmus test on multiple levels.

All this is deemed to be possible without recourse to abstract levels of musical analysis, but simply through the application of perceptual attention developed through the act of listening. Further: holding too much musical knowledge in working memory may actually inhibit the kind of open-ended reaction that is being encouraged. Which brings us to a final, critical question: are there musical structures that can set in motion semantic ripples of such expansive magnitude as to demand the appellation *religious*?

Again, Bernstein provides us with a convenient contrast:

The title of this lecture series is borrowed from Charles Ives, who wrote that brief but remarkable piece of his called "The Unanswered Question" way back in 1908. Ives had a highly metaphysical question in mind; but I've always felt he was also asking another question, a purely musical

one—"whither music?"—as that question must have been asked by Musical Man entering the twentieth century. (p. 5)

Bernstein proceeds to fashion a musical universe that is built in the image of a linguistic deity, with all its fantastic generative powers of abstract categorical thought. In so doing, he is able to envision a self-contained process that turns inward in search of its grandest semantic horizons.

We are promoting a widely divergent point of view. Semantics in this context is not the intrinsic property of a spontaneous, purely musical grammar; it is, rather, the centrifugal force of musical experience as it pushes across the gravitational field of the conditioned human self. The deepest musical questions are not ones concerned with the fate of the tonal system; we might even re-interpret Ives, being so bold as to suggest that the pragmatic Yankee made no essential distinction between the referential levels that his question might embrace. That is to say, the metaphysical cannot be excluded on disciplinary grounds. Yet, interesting as the pursuit of this line may be, it digresses from the more narrow focus of the present study. Accordingly, we now turn our attention to the musician whose output was dedicated—quite unabashedly—to the service of god.

The Unanswered Question, in many ways a treatise on the history of musical ambiguity, makes little mention of the famous Leipzig cantor. This is because the baroque master stands at the threshold of the emergence of the tempered scale. In Bernstein's words:

This great system of tonal controls was perfected and codified by Johann Sebastian Bach, whose genius was to balance so delicately, and so justly, these two forces of chromaticism and diatonicism, forces that were equally powerful and presumably contradictory in nature. This point of delicate balance is like the still center in the flux of musical history—a condition of such stability that it was able to continue without remarkable changes for almost a century, a century which became a Golden Age. (p. 39)

It is the subsequent history that occupies Bernstein's interest. From such a developmental perspective, the figure of Bach stands as harbinger of an epic repose:

one that might appear, moreover, in concordance with his position as devout servant of the church.

However, notions of technical mastery, balance, and monumental stasis are not features that alone would merit application of the adjective religious, in the sense here pursued. Rather, they symbolise concepts that might be applied to a general field of discourse. It is the facilitation of a direct experience of perceptual ambiguity that lends the music its especially efficacious character. Or, perhaps more accurately, it is the combination of the above—ambiguity and harmony—that best suggests wherein the power of Bach's music can be found. And nowhere are these traits more effectively embodied than in the genre of the fugue, to which we now turn attention.

B. Fugue

Sloboda's The Musical Mind: The Cognitive Psychology of Music (1985) offers insight into the form that has come to exemplify western polyphonic technique. A large part of this discussion revolves around the central perceptual challenge of processing multiple, concurrent linear voices. Particularly important is the recognition of limits to the amount of information that can be simultaneously attended to, and this limit is related to the complexity of the task at hand. Sloboda states: “[i]t is when some integrative response is required to the material in each channel, such as detecting sequential structure (as in understanding a sentence or recognizing a tune) that problems begin to occur” (p. 167). The difficulty of simultaneously extracting high-level information from more than one stream in the auditory modality is somewhat alleviated in traditional western music, however, due to the underlying unity provided by the harmonic context. In other words, there exists another framework or set of constraints that provides a meaningful temporal relationship, whereby two streams are no longer heard as semantically independent. As a

consequence, the burden of decoding the "meaningfulness" of their co-existence has been somewhat ameliorated; it does not rest exclusively on an ability to keep them perceptually independent.

Sloboda's "hypothesis is that polyphonic music is perceived as an ambiguous pattern capable of 'figure-ground reversal'" (p. 168). At any given time, one line is treated as figure, while the other line, or lines, form the background. These secondary voices are registered at some basic level, but not processed focally. Instead, they are fragmented into a series of individual notes that are heard "vertically", as chords supporting or accompanying the focal melody (p. 169). The metaphorical implication of harmony is apparent. We appreciate that separate voices are contributing to a positive process of social interaction; they are, in effect, speaking a common language despite their differences. The communicative analogy may be extended, however. Fugue can be viewed not only as a dialogue between discrete voices, but as a working out of the structural/semantic implications of a single voice: that of the *subject*. However, this inner dialogue reflects the limitations of personal autonomy and identity. Firstly, harmonic language implies an inescapable level of social relation that must be acknowledged and respected; secondly, interaction with elements such as the countersubject suggests a process of mutual conditioning, especially in development sections. Even though secondary voices can be internalised, in other words, a watertight distinction between inside and outside is untenable.

Nonetheless, pedagogic and performance tradition has often treated this situation as decidedly undialogic in nature, attempting to give full primacy to the subject. This may seem to be in accordance with the limitations that Sloboda elaborates. But the privileged position the subject occupies has its roots not only in issues of perceptual expediency or even analytical coherence; it is rather deeply embedded in notions about the nature of

subjectivity itself, and in cultural practices pertaining to the function of art and artistic experience.

This is why the musical revolution that Glenn Gould helped to spearhead has ramifications extending far beyond the esoteric world of baroque performance practice. His attempt to democratise the linear threads of a composition actually offers an invitation to alter the way the listening act is conducted, an entreaty that sounds, on the surface, virtually synonymous with that proposed by Bernstein. In an attempt to broaden the semantic horizon of music, to wrench it free from the vagaries of subjectivity and conditioned desire, the conductor sought the ordinance of abstract analysis. To comprehend a piece of music on its deepest level, we are led to believe, is to negotiate its complexities according to the lawful dictates of an inborn tropological function.

By contrast, this is not at all the kind of objectivity that performances of Gould are designed to encourage. Clinging to pre-ordained routes of passage creates confusion comparable to that which Bateson (1979), among others, attempted to dispel with reference to language: the map is not the territory. Enhancing certain characteristics of the fugue, alternatively, the listener is presented with a perceptual experience that becomes impoverished by confining attention solely to its “musico-linguistic” sense. This does not deny the kind of logical coherence that analysis reflects, and indeed, comprehension of this dimension can serve as an aid to performance. The ultimate goal, however, is not an appreciation of how ambiguity is achieved, but a prolonged *experience* of an ambiguous perceptual field that does not lend itself to conceptual reduction.

The fact this ambiguity is situated in a framework of supreme technical mastery and harmonic resolution may serve as a religious metaphor. But actual *acceptance*—the concrete, embodied instantiation of ambiguity in the act of listening—becomes something more: a form of mental discipline that lends itself to use outside the confines of the purely musical context. Greater equalisation of the linear threads of a fugue jettisons perceptual

and psychological identification with the "hero's journey". The point here is that the analytical voice stands as but another manifestation of the same phenomenon: a form of closure, a safe passage from harbour to harbour from which an experience has been wrested.

Here the work of Sloboda is critical in understanding the potential of the fugue as an interactive medium. Regardless of the fact that every single note can be encompassed within a systematic rendering of various tropological moves, such "totalised" understanding does not translate into an experience of sound: from such a perspective the fugue is, in short, a perceptual impossibility. Sloboda offers a solution: although it may be impossible to focalise more than one voice at a time, "[o]ne factor which may allow things to seem that way is a high degree of familiarity with the individual parts, through repeated hearing" (p. 170). Once the subject has been sufficiently internalised through learning, the listener is more likely let go of the principle focus and permit a gestalt switch to occur. In this way, awareness of some of the hidden implications of a work may unexpectedly spring forward. Sloboda explains:

In such cases all the contrapuntal lines may be *implicit* in what a listener knows, simply awaiting a reorganization of his knowledge to be made explicit. In such a way may a listener suddenly realize that the 'accompaniment' of a well-known passage actually has its own melodic integrity. It is not that there are notes present which he has not noticed before. It is simply that he has not heard them as melody before. (p. 171)

This view likely describes important aspects of our experience of polyphony. Figure/ground reversals such as these do seem to occur, and the issue of learning is without question a significant one. This would seem to be especially relevant for the pianist, for example, who alone must execute and control the multiple voices. Not only does the instrumentalist become familiar with separate lines through the process of practising; in addition, they are further internalised as motor schemes, lending embodied representations that contribute to the overall articulation of experience.

Our primary concern, however, is with the listener, and here the proposals of Sloboda would still seem to apply. Certainly the non-musician—given widespread access to electronic media—can repeatedly hear a given piece. To be sure, this was a luxury not available to baroque audiences. Nevertheless, the fugue itself is patterned to allow an abbreviated process of assimilation, in that the subject is initially stated in unaccompanied fashion, and steadfastly repeated—with only minor variation—throughout the exposition. In this manner, the form itself is establishing a degree of familiarity before taking flight into the dizzying heights of ambiguity.

In order to explore in greater detail the nature of this ambiguity that lies at the heart of the fugal experience, however, I believe it is necessary to continue the conversation that Sloboda has initiated by further discussing his analogy of the gestalt switch. In particular, Sloboda makes reference to familiar, ambiguous visual patterns or images that can oscillate in a continuous process of figure-ground reversal (p. 168), an explanatory device that does effectively account for an aspect of the polyphonic experience. The question here is whether the fugue may also pose a level of ambiguity that is resistant to this kind of resolution, and further, whether it may lend itself to another style of audition.

Let us begin with the visual situation. In the case of two images, it is indeed difficult to imagine how one could articulate the transformational process from a local perspective. It is only when the perceptual puzzle is solved that it becomes possible to begin rationalising the metamorphosis. In other words, using principles of perceptual grouping enables us to notice shared contours, areas of focalisation, etc. that contribute to the formation of the simultaneous images. Increasing the availability of this kind of analytical information can thus facilitate one's ability to reorganise from one image to the other. In addition, other features of the visual mode assist in our ability to perform the task. Discrete images can be held in memory and recalled, and they also remain stable over time.

While this is somewhat the case with two simultaneous melodic strands, it does not account for the entire musical predicament, which is considerably more messy. First, the ambiguities do not always resolve into a limited number of entirely discrete perceptual categorisations: not only are the boundaries fuzzy, but the "objects" are ephemeral, continuously changing over time. In addition, the juxtaposition of individual elements changes as well, and further complexity can be added through the temporal tropes of motivic augmentation and diminution. Add to this the harmonic system, which is capable of producing even more ambiguity, and it becomes clear that the analogy between the two perceptual modalities has limits. During its most intense moments, the fugue creates a multi-levelled field of ambiguous relations that does not always resolve into simple relations between discrete, simultaneous gestalts. Of course, there are moments when the latter does occur; part of Bach's artistry is the sensitivity with which he effects a constant ebb and flow of the overall "ambiguity quotient".

Nonetheless, one of the hallmarks of fugal experience is that of a confrontation with semantic overload. There are moments when the auditor is assaulted with an unmanageable plenitude of implications, a "dance of creation" that clearly exceeds one's perceptual capabilities. Thus presented with what we have chosen to call the fugue's *crisis*, the listener is faced with the most important question of the entire ritual: by what means is this impasse to be negotiated? Again and again, from different disciplinary perspectives and levels of analysis, we are attempting to come to grips with the possibilities this aesthetic contrivance poses. One offshoot of these considerations is the interpretative context it lends to the work of Glenn Gould. From this vantage, the deepest novelty of his playing lies in the manner in which it serves to accentuate the fugal crisis.

Perhaps the most noticeable device in this regard is the characteristic portamento style of articulation. Legato is an important means whereby the unity of the subject can be attained; by definition, it imparts a quality of seamlessness. It is not that Gould wishes to

avert a sense of individuality or character for the subject. By employing the detached method of playing, however, we avoid ascribing too much autonomy; we see more readily those levels of substructure of which the subject is comprised, and which contribute so much to the subsequent conversation. Greater equality is given to elements that might have been considered subsidiary. As logically coherent as it might be, what we are *not* granted is a guided tour, organised around the absolute ascendancy of the subject. And in the absence of such a clear methodology, listeners are thrown upon their own resources to negotiate the complexities in which they become immersed.

Gouldian clarity, then, is employed in order to give precise articulation to a logic that leads to moments of overwhelming ambiguity. This is why he vigorously campaigned against a performance tradition that strove to supply a ready-made rationale for the trip. Let us recapitulate here. What Sloboda asserts is that the structural limitations of the human cognitive apparatus prevent focalisation of more than one circumscribed area within a given perceptual modality. What we have added is the contention that the fugue presents a multi-layered ambiguity, the most *basic plane* of which corresponds to familiar figure-ground pictures. What is preserved in this instance is the essential identity of the subject or accompanying countersubject.

Yet conveniently, this predicament can be seen as paradigmatic of the entire issue at stake. Assuming Sloboda is correct, the requirement to focally process the subject necessarily leads to the digital oscillation between discrete entities, a depiction reminiscent of the plight of the *pathological* fugue state. The alternative we are proposing involves a different ideal with respect to the overall informational content that should be extracted. Preservation of the subject's identity now gives way to an ideal of simultaneity, a task that can only be enhanced through a curtailment of focal processing itself. Further: we contend that such an outcome is actually demanded by the fugue's very structure.

The somewhat paradoxical sounding notion of "cultivating peripheral focus" becomes more coherent as distinctions are drawn. Obviously, the process of focal attention cannot arbitrarily reconstitute itself about a marginalised content, maintaining its de-centred status. Consequently, there are genuine concessions that have to be made. One of these has to do with the threshold of high-level information that can be abstracted from a given sequence. We must accordingly expect degradation in our ability to apprehend explicitly the subject as coherent object through which all fugal acts are mediated. This implies that, as listeners, we are effectively ceding some of our own subjective autonomy as well: that is, we no longer seek this specific degree of volitional control over the listening act.

According to fugal logic, however, both musical subject and auditor meet face to face as typically autonomous agents at the outset. With the appearance of the first answer, Sloboda's figure-ground relation has been established. The explicit sense of unified identity may in fact even persist with successive entrances, as the fugue embarks upon a transition from focal to peripheral demands. From this point of view, the exposition initially educates the cognitive apparatus as to the subject's identity, but soon begins to escalate the amount of ambiguity, ending with paralysis of the focal attentional system. Ultimately, the musical texture supports a kind of perceptual stalemate, wherein "competing" groupings exert their forces without ever emerging victorious in the spotlight of attention.

This equipoise condition of ambiguity might be regarded as producing a kind of focal blind spot, prolonged under a regime of intense vigilance. In this state of affairs, a level of peripheral processing uncharacteristically "sounds" amidst the enforced quietude of the fugue's impossible demands. Such a scenario must rely upon the capacity of operative cognitive systems to sufficiently process incoming stimuli, generating a dynamic aura of semantically related events. This plenitude of proliferating meaning is in some ways a

more accurate reflection of the current state of affairs than the abstract, reductive "solutions" offered by the focal system itself, predicated, as they are, on the "resolution" of ambiguity at their own level of function.

Even though the perceptual process has been appropriated by spontaneous capacities, however, the state of suspended volition must still be considered a species of acquired discipline. A more "natural" seeming response might be either to retreat from the problem altogether—in which case one loses concentration, along with any precise involvement with the music—or to attack it, seeking recourse to high-level processes that spell an alternate form of disengagement from the multifarious perceptual flow. Finally, it is the listener who must discover—through the ritual act itself—a technique capable of promoting vigilance, yet forbidding the importation of conceptual models: a skill, moreover, for which the naïve participant may be particularly well suited to master.

As intimated, losses accrued by letting go of the focal view are amply compensated by the apprehension of a greater simultaneity of meaningful relation. It might be helpful to consider some of the more general implications that these contrasting modes of operation afford. A great deal of highly complex human processing is dedicated to the development of abstract representations that are temporally sustained in symbolic form. But this fact betrays both advantages and disadvantages. On the positive side, symbolic abstraction allows vast amounts of information to be handled by a cognitive system of limited capacity, and in a manner that is manageable both in terms of its storage as well as its potential to evolve into increasingly complex configurations. The two notions are in fact linked, for the possibility of achieving complex conceptual links is a consequence of the possibility of performing lengthy operations upon a base of information that must remain stable in the face of a host of more time bound processes and events. Obviously, these higher orders of abstraction can be highly isomorphic with large-scale, periodic events or levels of

invariance, and the test of such congruence is the efficacy of behaviours that are modelled after them.

On the other hand, the world is rife with fluctuations that do not readily map onto our fixed representations; indeed, the very biological structures on which such thinking depends are seen to exhibit unimaginable levels of dynamic complexity. In addition, we seem to be living in an era of profound change that is pushing existing conceptual and discursive systems beyond their limits. It is the realisation of this limitation that the presence of ambiguity signals: a warning of the constant danger of uncritically habituating to the structures of explicate reason. What the fugue offers is a direct experience of this limitation, an embodied realisation of how one can develop sensitivity to the great *concurrence* of meaning that is always present. In this sense, ambiguity is not simply an aesthetic device, but an experience with epistemological import, an essential component of our cognitive interaction with a dynamic world.

C. Music and Religiosity

It is important to consider the functional limits of musical ritual, as well as its virtues: the special vehemence, for example, with which unwholesome levels of invariance are often embodied by the human organism. There exist no guarantees that the merits of music will fulfil its greatest potential; hence the familiar riddle of the musically enraptured nazi. Yet the vexing quality of the question arises because it focuses solely upon the artefact, unmindful of the larger cognitive context in which the aesthetic act is situated. In certain circumstances, at least, musical experience can provide an opportunity to implement an enhanced modality of peripheral perception. Such skill can only acquire the status of spiritual discipline, however, to the extent it truly functions as part of a conscious, holistic process of integration: that is to say, when all the sacred boundaries of the self are

open to revision. The polyphonic situation might be compared with an eclipse of the sun: when the nearest light is obscured, there are countless wonders to behold. But what is remembered when the orb of daylight once again asserts its blinding glare?

It must be asked: what is unique about the fugal situation, and why is it so pre-eminently suited for Bach's purposes as a religious composer? I believe the answer lies in the fact that fugal experience is ultimately concerned with the limits of volitional consciousness; what makes it so effective is the way this understanding transpires from the inside, *through the process of rational understanding itself*. In this manner, the mind is led blithely to the limits of its efficacy. This is not a denial, a dionysian revel that—due to its negation of higher-level functioning—is forever barred from such an insight. The fugue unabashedly revels in the glory of explicate reason, even as it paves the way for an ultimate failure in the face of a greater semantic source; as such it stands, paradoxically, as harbinger of the most exhilarating moment of rational self-understanding.

This ultimate breakdown of the conceptual apparatus is experienced as an opening out toward the world, not a turning inward toward the security of the body's automatisms. Far from being solipsistic, the solitary ritual turns back to society, for in the very experience of one's limitations arises a wave of compassion that engulfs other souls as comparable, suffering systems. The fugue's heuristic value lies with the realisation that its grandeur overflows the rutted banks of habitual being; it can only be accessed, therefore, through a disciplined act of temporary self-annulment. This is not a personal empowerment, an act of *identification*, but a palpable expression of what transpires in a state of psychic silence. The orgiastic trance, by contrast, is a phenomenon wherein the individual consciousness is ablated through social absorption and amplification, drowning out the timid cries of structural shortcoming amidst its din. That is why the freedom it grants appears so unconditional, and remains so untempered by the inner realities that condition it. Holism without parts, in short, is a grievous form of reductionism.

It is not the business of religion to traffic in personal certitude. To the degree the fugue creates a functional alignment geared to the free play of ambiguity, it begins to approach the dynamic realm of a vital religiosity. We must not deny that fugal space is contrived, a ritual enclosure that lacks the radical inclusiveness marking the highest forms of spiritual life. For the latter, all behaviour is obliged to clarify its stand, from the smallest daily act to the grandest aesthetic gesture. Therefore the rapt listener of the fugue is not necessarily free in a larger sense, nor totally consonant with the deepest levels of psychological integration.

The ritual enactment of fugue can be considered a valuable tool within this overall process. Tools exhibit internal relations that selectively advantage them in various situations, but they do not operate in a vacuum. The ethical issue is accordingly one of great complexity; nonetheless, it is possible to envisage a context in which the merits of the fugue could be utilised. First and foremost, this form of music presents an occasion for the procedural mastery of an unfamiliar form of attention. Because we hypothesise this discipline to be predicated upon the relaxation of voluntary planning and control functions, the nature of the perceptual experience is altered. The result is not chaos: thanks to our brain's internalisation of the harmonic system, its recourse to gestalt principles of perceptual grouping and other spontaneous perceptual abilities, we can undergo an experience that is meaningful, despite its temporary autonomy from usual controls employed in the act of audition.

Aided in no small part by the supreme craft of Bach, the fugue provides a rare glimpse into the creative heart of nature, active in our own minds. In so doing, we experience a contrast between the variously elegant and ugly unities we impose upon the world, and the unfathomable depths of simultaneous relation of which we can only glimpse, but must always remain cognisant. It is a lesson with far-reaching implications.

3. *Psychodynamics*

A. Introduction

The problem of unified subjectivity is not typically applied to the non-human organism. An animal may be conceived as experiencing an inner world that is mediated by memory, knowledge, and even long-term social relations, but these instruments of continuity fail to comprise a foundation for the autonomous behaviour we often attribute to ourselves. Incapable of deferring its urges to a symbolic process which fashions an image of self as actor in the world, the sub-human creature has no apparent means of laying claim to its own decisions. Recipient of rewards and punishments, it experiences the outcome of its actions without the blessings and travails of responsibility. Deliberations are conducted from behind closed doors, as it were; in the face of multiple options, the animal seems to endure its evaluative processes as passively as it does the digestion of food. Even when drawn forth to explore the world, its attention seems controlled by environmental contingency rather than any stable sense of internal agenda.

As the beast shifts its activity from one focus to another, consequently, we do not ascribe to it any betrayal of a perspective that is uniquely its own, hovering above the fray in an atmosphere of self-consistent reason. Whatever its challenges, the problem of authenticity simply does not arise. The burden of remaining essentially oneself is, in effect, an entirely human one. Yet this task becomes increasingly difficult to conceptualise, let alone bring to fruition. We are no masters of our own actions, and find it impossible to fulfil the expectation that surrounds us. To be sure, there are those who still postulate total control as a laudable if unattainable ideal of knowledge. Alternatively,

it is possible to attain the *semblance* of mastery through the semiotics of cultural imagery, becoming blinded by the very real power that often accrues to such "success". However, neither theory nor social success can recompense the quest to dominate meaning, and such an attempt must end by denying the world's multiplicity, thereby blocking any deeper insight, along with its potential bounty.

On a practical level, however, abandonment to the whims of desire and environment remains an unacceptable abdication, hence reasserting the need for integration as an irrepressible hope. Given this predicament, there seems a fundamental incongruity between the search for power and that for responsible action. The problem may be stated in the following manner. *Responsibility* is a value-laden concept; it implies that some actions are positive, while others are negative. This, in turn, suggests that action must be accompanied by the will to impose an agenda upon the possibilities for action that may arise. The requisite awareness for success in such an endeavour seems to be threefold: first, it recognises a set of values from which to act; second, it is able to synchronise its behaviour in conformance with such values; third, it understands which actions are appropriate to achieve the desired effect.

The imposition of a value-structure requires the power necessary to foreclose other types of meaning. Such a cohesive force goes by the name of will. But insofar as the notion of value represents a particular way of viewing the world, the force of one's investments always carry with them an inherent blindness, a limitation, moreover, that cannot be overcome by means of an "impartial reason". As we have seen from Damasio's (1994) presentation, reason by itself is rudderless and soon gets lost in a maze of the competing dynamics that govern it.

So long as value remains wedded to the self, it forfeits the flexibility necessary to overcome the abuse of power that is a constant companion of its pursuits. Consequently, if responsibility is mediated solely through either knowledge or identity, it

loses its claim to legitimacy: in short, knowledge and identity are in themselves instruments of *repression*. A default position claims that the search for a ground through such means, while obviously flawed, remains the best alternative. *Concrete historical reality*—so the argument goes—is all we have to fall back upon.

We face the confusion, however, between history as a dynamic set of material constraints and history as verbal narrative. There exists a form of subjectivity that has been created by a specific notion of history itself. The kind of stability that is attributed to the human self, in other words, is a product of an understanding of how the natural world evolves over time, and this in turn has become embodied in the organism in a way that is proving exceedingly resistant to change. The presumption of a particular kind of continuity creates a desire to make the present moment conform for the sake of preserving what is deemed essential. It matters not whether this entity is assumed as either spiritual in nature, or culturally evolved; both conceptions overlook the more dynamic natural processes from which these constructs emerge.

Recent theories of complexity, for example, (Jantsch, 1980; Cilliers, 1998) attest that fluctuations in natural systems change their dynamics in ways which, while not completely predictable or accessible to linear description, are nonetheless conceived as historical in nature. From the standpoint of any local perspective, or one that seeks a linear, mechanistic explanation, the result of these global changes in behaviour will appear chaotic. The new theories assert the contrary; it is only a *particular* notion of continuity that they put into question. Indeed, the very concept of continuity should alert us to the problem of identity. Only absolute self-identity—what Meister Eckhart (1981) calls that which is completely “indistinct”—can qualify as truly unified. With reference to anything else, however—that about which distinctions can be made, in other words—the notion of continuity is a relative affair, always containing its opposite to some degree.

It is the self's overstepping its bounds, of trying to assert a form of stability that is inconsonant with the dynamic processes of life, that forms the primary blunder of "historical" thinking. Nor is it a question of laying claim to an ongoing "constructive" process or succession of produced identities, which is simply another ruse of self-control; rather, the situation demands a deeper form of discontinuity that no longer posits the need for such mastery. Like the example of dynamic systems, the ensuing result is not of necessity chaotic or undisciplined: it only appears so from the logic inherent to the self. In short, a radically new situation can arise that in no way violates the fundamental tenets of historicity.

In a sense, the appropriate question is not whether human subjectivity is unified or divided; rather, we must seek to specify the varying kinds of continuity and discontinuity that define the subject's actual activities. Take the example of memory: it is very difficult to posit the storage and retrieval of information as either non-degradable or independent of other cognitive processes. Even with the advent of external, technological storage media, the interpretative context of any particular stored artefact is subject to varying degrees of mutation, thereby altering the continuity of its meaning over time. So the simple notion of a completely stable, unbiased, objective memory is misguided. Nonetheless, the notion of amnesia is hardly rendered inconsequential as a result.

Mnemonic continuity is above all an issue of adaptation, and hence of value. What is important to remember? Knowledge is an active, creative process of fitting what is remembered into a context that is continuously tested for efficacy in the historical moment. Consequently, what is remembered cannot be conceived as an indiscriminate "storage" function that exists independently of the larger process. It is just as important to consider the context in which remembering transpires. What are the circumstances,

the states of mind, the intensity of experience, the motivational milieu in which memories are fashioned?

Zealous investment in identity constrains memory by creating an inflexible inhibitory context. By establishing a specific regime of values and attention, identity shapes the way that information is perceived and stored. It is not merely *other* identities that come into conflict with this fixed perspective. Due to the rigid manner in which order is imposed upon the dynamic complexity and ambiguity of life, preservation necessarily entails a movement towards inner fragmentation as well. The attempt to preserve one level of continuity thus creates a contrary movement on another. Nor is the issue settled by sanctioning a profusion of identities for the individual, a ploy that merely acknowledges disjunction without coming to grips with the problem of its resolution. Giving up one conception of unity, in other words, does not imply that the notion of integration per se is bogus. How could it, when such an outcome would simply spell chaos?

Yet, if adaptation for survival is the primary objective of behaviour, it may seem a trifling matter whether the self is conceived as essentially unified or split amongst a variety of roles or subject positions. Can either conception pose a serious obstacle to success? Surely it is possible to proceed from such principles and fulfil even more than the minimum criteria demanded by life: not only material sustenance, that is to say, but high social status, along with the many benefits that this implies. Nonetheless, there are reasons to question the adequacy of such an evaluation, both from the standpoint of individual satisfaction, as well as that of biological viability.

As discussed, motivation to establish identity—be it one or many—places the organism in a state of great internal tension. The attainment of any given social category of being, whatever its rewards, cannot ameliorate the conflict between the limitation of such constructs and the propensity for proliferating meaning that is inherent

to the brain. This underlying incongruity is experienced as a lack of repose, an emptiness that seeks to intensify the current regime of values either by sheer force of repetition or through mobilisation against a suitably concrete "external" enemy. What is more, even if this were not the case, such a notion of prosperity cannot provide a stay against the possibility of a more general condition of social pathology, alluded to by Damasio.

Given the present process of globalisation, I believe we have also reached the limits of identity-based thinking in biological terms as well. The threat of ecological destruction and the potential for technological aggression of all kinds makes the adaptive benefits of this type of cohesiveness suspect, as the recent history of the Balkan region testifies. We may wish to remember in order to insure that mistakes of the past will not be repeated, or that injustices will one day be rectified. Until the nature of the entities deemed to endure over time is clarified, however, it may be history itself that is perpetuating the greatest obstacle to our collective security.

The problem with the whole regime of historical logic is its inability to generate a viable alternative. Abandoning the ground of historical continuity seems to imply an embrace of timeless verity, or profession of transcendent vision. Nonetheless, such an outcome is not inescapable: by transferring the order of continuity from one based in narrative, to one more dependent upon an embodied level of non-discursive information, a new form of integration may be given opportunity to arise. Rather than a top-down approach that attempts to close the system of meaning for instrumental ends, the new style of cognition grants credence to levels of function that can open the overall system up in unexpected ways.

Continuity is not based here upon loyalty to a particular model of action so much as it is a model of listening, and this requires a stringent discipline that forecloses any necessary abandonment to chaos. In particular, the practitioner must withhold imposing

abstract schema upon the historical specificity of the mind's thought processes. It is the structures of positive knowledge, and their ability to inhibit connections, that must be overcome. The goal is not a rejection of knowledge or motivated thought, but an ability to integrate a permanent process of receptive detachment, thus imparting greater fluidity to the overall dynamics of thought. Disciplined reliance upon the brain's ability to spontaneously process complex information is not considered here as capitulating to the whims of primitive desire, but rather as rescuing thought from the mechanistic reactivity of the self.

From this perspective, responsibility emerges from the assertion of a will to relinquish control of the meaning process to a larger context, not to seek power for the implementation of *a priori* structures. The ability to defer continually to this larger context implies a shift of emphasis, away from a continuity of content toward that of process. This is not the negation of long-term temporal planning, but the granting of an indeterminate element of evolution that is ultimately more responsive to the unforeseeable novelty that continuously arises. There is a sense here that we are never personally responsible for the insights we receive: more accurately, we are responsible only to the extent we allow them to transpire without interfering. This is also an insight into humility, and hence very different from the possessive ethos that envisions creativity as a property to which a boastful self can lay claim.

The movement toward openness is at once a devaluation of the self as a system of automatic reflexes; an acquired trust in the fecundity of nature as expressed through the brain; and an acceptance of an irreducible level of indeterminacy. This is not a faith in nature as a repository of timeless, volcanic desires that spew ashes over an otherwise clear prospect of historical reality. On the contrary, in remaining intensely vigilant to the inner workings of our biological nature, it is possible to remain in touch with the pulse of a more concrete historicity: one, moreover, that is not entirely of our "own" making.

Allegiance to the non-linear flow of this continuous process provides the ground of a new coherence that is able to adjust more rapidly and efficiently, especially in a period of overwhelming change.

B. Mahrer's Humanistic Theory

The figure of Freud has become synonymous with the scientific discourse of psychic disunity. The ubiquity of his thoughts and image in our cultural iconography has tended to consign a number of other researchers to obscurity, at least in terms of the wider public. Yet Freud is also the subject of an immense critical literature. Commentators have explored his development, from an early desire to base psychology upon a model of pure empirical science, to his eventual conviction that contemporary physiology was inadequate to the urgent need of alleviating the suffering he encountered. These factors, along with a strong philosophical bent, culminated in the production of a strange blend of mythology and reductionistic thinking (Rieff, 1979; Ricour, 1970).

Our purpose, however, is not to engage his theories in any thorough manner or attempt to assess their overall contribution to understanding. From the standpoint of the present discussion, Freud remains important as a voice that forcefully questions the presumption of autonomous human agency and further sheds light upon the means whereby a subject's fractured awareness is susceptible to alteration. On the theoretical side, concepts like repression and the unconscious address a patient's debilitating condition of *inner discontinuity*. At the core lies a set of operative structures that are hidden from awareness, a profound disjunction between behaviour and intention. From a practical perspective, dreams, inadvertent "slips", and free association all share some notion of *relinquishing control* as central to the therapeutic process.

The work of Mahrer (1978) is an example of theory that agrees with these central tenets, while differing from Freudian orthodoxy in crucial ways. Perhaps the idea of *openness* most succinctly depicts this recent thought, in contrast to its more familiar antecedents. This is evident in Mahrer's use of two key words, *experience* and *potential*. The primacy of experience is non-reductive to the extent it asserts that our judgements about human life cannot be grounded solely in terms of input and output. What happens in between the two matters, and matters deeply. This emphasis grants a unique perspective or emergent property that is not explained by reference to the interaction of biological and socio-cultural factors. Dewey and Bentley's (1949) concept of *transaction* is applicable here, suggesting that complexity cannot be captured through the language of identity, which serves to constrain understanding to predictable orders of events.

From the conceptual perspective of nature and culture, then, the human mind represents something singular and mysterious, an interpenetration of domains that defies coherent description. Boundaries have become blurred; neat categories give way to something irreducible and transformative. This scenario also suggests an alternative to the essential distinction between the unconscious as a timeless repository of natural instinctual forces, and the conscious processes through which these primitive energies become distributed. As Mahrer states, "the psychoanalytic picture has ego and unconscious as qualitatively different kinds of entities, functioning on the basis of different principles" (p. 25).

This essential division must be mediated by the hermeneutics of psychoanalysis. But the Freudian conception of the unconscious tends to place rather severe constraints upon the whole semiotic endeavour. As a repository for mute natural forces only, the underworld of the id in effect severs psychology from history. This reduction closes the content of the hermeneutic system, making its goal the translation of surface paraphernalia into the primitive language of underlying motivation. Because of this need

to conform to an *a priori* content, onus is placed upon the analytical exercise, the brilliance of the hermeneutic stratagems in unmasking deception.

It is here that Mahrer's emphasis upon experience opens the field of meaning, shifting focus toward alternative means for exploring and modifying the quality of an individual's subjectivity. If nature is the realm of mystery for Freud, it is a mystery of origins: what is unfathomable must lie in the past, inaccessible to a consciousness forged in the realm of collective symbol and knowledge. The heart of nature, in other words, lies at once with the inarticulate sentience of the infant and the mythological fancy of our species' childhood. Self-knowledge is a process whereby the mystery of origins is dispelled, allowing a more sober and realistic vision of the world to take hold.

Mahrer expands the scope of the unconscious. By regarding it as different only with respect to its current inaccessibility, the stuff of the unconscious becomes a hybrid, neither essentially natural nor cultural in origin, and hence historically specific as well. This diversity and specificity also lends an unpredictability that eludes the capacities of a pre-programmed decoder. As locus of old and new, inside and outside, experience is home to a constituent mystery that invites a condition of permanent exploration. Given the indeterminacy of its multi-levelled transactional field, moreover, the information that experience yields is not simply a surrogate for linguistic structures: it is a "more", in other words, that demands to be encountered *on its own terms*. Again, the paradigm of listening emerges as an appropriate vehicle of self-understanding.

This does not suggest that narrative is without significant bearing to the unconscious. Indeed, it is precisely because culture is permitted as intrinsic component that such a mapping is noteworthy. The point here is that the complexity of the processes involved cannot be reduced to a task of purely linguistic understanding. The essential fluidity of the situation necessitates an opening out of the psychic system, not merely to provide a series of images, narratives or accidental substitutions as fodder for

hermeneutic theory, but further, to sustain the interval of suspension in order to loosen an entire logical gestalt of experience.

In Mahrer's terms, what lies *behind* the presumptive unity of the everyday is a vast realm of human possibility, structured as an indeterminate variety of relatively coherent entities he calls "potentials":

Each potential constitutes its own zone of experiencing, more or less distinct and independent of the other potentials. It is as if each potential is its own mini-world of experiencing. In this sense, we are indeed multiple selves, multiple consciousnesses, even multiple personalities. Each potential is its own center, its own self system, its own personality.
(p. 29)

However, this picture of disunity is more complicated than the notion of "multiple selves" might suggest. There exists a complex asymmetry between these zones, with a small number of "operating potentials" setting the predominant tone of an individual's behaviour and range of experience. These in turn serve to mediate the "deeper potentials", areas of a given personality structure that are not open to direct experience but that nonetheless exert a certain influence upon behaviour. For Mahrer, the specificity of this overall system is determined by the nature of the relations between potentials that is occasionally manifest in the realm of *feeling*. In the author's words, when the "conscious self goes ever so slightly beyond these operating potentials, it can include some of the disintegrative and integrative feelings which are the relationships between operating and mediating potentials" (p. 33).

The relative isolation Mahrer grants these experiencing entities does present an image of genuine fragmentation. The problem, however, is that such diversity is not readily perceived as such; that is, the subject experiences the movement from one state to another as an "illusion of continuity" (p. 35). The difficulty of acknowledging and dealing with the charged "spaces" between potentials amounts to the spiritual challenge of our lives. So formidable is this trial, apparently, that a blunt refusal of engagement

represents the most preferred strategy of choice: or more precisely, of non-choice. The qualification is necessary because Mahrer considers that existing in such a condition “forecloses the possibility of acknowledging it” (p. 90). Despite this ominous predicament, however, the possibility for change is not hopeless; but it does demand an appropriate response.

As discussed earlier, the dynamic evolution of the entire field of meaning prevents the construction of a hermeneutic device adequate to the specificity of the mind’s potentials. It is in the arena of first-person experience—that of *feeling*, for lack of a better word—that a sensitivity to one’s internal structure must consequently begin. And it is precisely with respect to a pandemic *lack* of feeling that the subtlest danger to the process of personal development arises. Mahrer states with surprising vehemence: “I consider unfeeling as the characteristic state of human beings” (p. 90).

Framed in these terms, what we are in the habit of calling “everyday reality” no longer functions as a kind of ground state or reference point for the rest of behaviour. Such a conception implies a coherent background against which the exceptional can be apprehended and judged. It is this particular notion of continuity that is being called into question. Behind the appearance of uniformity lies an unacknowledged procession of lacunae. However, these are not benign blinks intended to conserve the eye of consciousness, like so many shutter flashes over an enduring world of things. What seeks protection here is that other “I”, the one whose very being is defined by its abiding assertion of control.

Whorf (1956) asserts that languages both enable thinking and institute unseen constraints. “I” exists; it merits the status of a name. But as Mahrer points out, “there is no label for the thousands of times we momentarily disengage ourselves and let the deeper potential behave for us, while we fall into the momentary state of sleeping unfeeling” (p. 93). Are these just tiny defeats we suffer at the hands of an entropic

world, or moments of weakness in which we succumb to the urges of a chthonic nature? By employing the terminology of "depth", Mahrer is suggesting something quite different. Far from representing a suitable foundation, the world of the everyday tries to convince us of its solidity by keeping the hints of a greater reality at bay, one less arbitrary, more dynamic, and ultimately more continuous with the subtle oscillations of a complex universe.

From the present perspective, the process of momentary disengagement is part of a general field of dissociative phenomena. In this context, they serve as adhesive force, reinforcing the apparent unity of the "I" and its everyday experience. They are also situated to provide the means for opening up the psychic system as well. In Mahrer's terms, "the function of the operating potential is to serve the deeper potential by providing for its experiencing. Yet at any moment, the operating potential can provide for *complete* experiencing by *fully surrendering* to the deeper potential" (p. 39).

If his theoretical scheme has validity, in other words, then the relative coherence of the underlying psychic "units" should be reflected physiologically by a transitional phase of extinction and institution that can transpire independently of consciousness. Whether one is aware or not of these passages depends upon the nature of control systems that are partly a function of learning. In terms of our objective, ritual dissociation aims at increasing awareness, first, to the possibility of movement between discrete states, and secondly, to the kinds of feelings that are routinely generated by the boundary transactions and just as routinely ignored.

C. Surrendering

Basic to any therapeutic process is the need for a method of escaping from the logic of the self. Yet, the problem is one of extraordinary subtlety. As discussed, the

mechanism of dissociation nearly precludes awareness of the system's limitations. The very notion of method, furthermore, seems to imply a procedure whose necessary coherence can only be judged by the best means available, a fact that reinforces the unfortunate circularity of the dilemma. And it is not only the force of formal reasoning from which the self gains legitimacy: behavioural and perceptual patterns have been retained because of past efficacy, and thus are seen to carry the weight of experience.

What does the "other side" have to offer in the face of such pragmatic expertise? It appears that fully surrendering to the logic of a "deeper potential" must involve a leap into the unknown. Before it is possible to consider the many questions that arise from such a projected action, however, it is helpful to reflect upon the scale of the resistance against pursuing it. The everyday is allegedly grounded in logic and the common sense of experience. Everything points to the fact that a genuine leap can only spell abandonment to futile fantasies, to forces of desire and chaos.

The enactment of risk cannot foreclose an undesirable result; that is why it is well to make a considered choice. Undesirability from one context may be the source of virtue from another. Part of this thesis deals with the importance of the objectives and structure of given ritual activities, but it is also critical to appreciate the necessity of risk as an indispensable component. Even when this has been accepted, however, the problems are immense. What constitutes a reasonable risk in the context of our mental lives, one, moreover, that results in an authentic level of discontinuity? The present culture offers a plethora of opportunities for enacting the identity of transgression, but rarely those in which the self is actually beguiled into ceding its operative constraints.

Freud was able to exploit little lapses of control on behalf of a discourse that attempted to reassert authority over an unacknowledged domain of primordial desire. By analogy, then, an expansion of the unconscious seems to call for a breach that is commensurate with the enlarged topography. Gendlin's book Focusing (1978) promotes

a technique devoted to the accomplishment of just such a task. Rather than concentrating primarily upon the verbal interpretation of linguistic mishaps, associations, and narratives, Gendlin wishes to prolong the duration of the gaps in everyday reality in order to become better attuned to the body's oft overlooked signalling. As therapeutics, this practice explicitly underscores the context of "personal problems", but it does so through a forthright refusal of analytical thinking (p. 67).

Our musical ritual may be seen to differ in that it pays no overt attention to the arena of psychological conflict. Indeed, attainment of ecstasy may seem to imply a pursuit quite contrary to that directed toward the harsh realities of life. Nonetheless, the two share important similarities. Fostering an initial state of relaxation is one such congruence. Moreover, both begin by stressing the non-linguistic character of their respective tasks. Finally, and perhaps most significantly, both are conceived as cultivating discipline: each stands as a *practice*, in other words, viewed as the acquisition of procedural learning sought through recursive, goal-directed activity.

When these traits are emphasised, it also becomes apparent that the task of listening is unavoidably bound to a perception concerning the state of the organism. The intensity of attention demanded by the proposed task means that even the slightest distraction in the form of inner conflict will detract from performance, thereby blocking its realisation. In this sense, the ritual serves as inadvertent barometer for the psychic climate. Furthermore, difficulties involved in propagating the ecstatic experience accentuate its disciplinary character. Surrendering to an *alternative logic* does not imply only one generic mode of control to which one must succumb. On the contrary, since the self is a construct of habitual, reflexive activity, the process of giving over must be accompanied by appropriately strategic countermeasures.

But discipline can be as self-indulgent as insobriety. The logic we wish to put in effect must, from the self's perspective, contain a measure of indeterminacy. Perhaps

the concept of *seduction* best encompasses the process required, for the self cannot willingly divest itself of its very *raison d'être*. Thus it is of great importance to begin from a position of affirmation. Fittingly, it is no coincidence that the Sirens lured Ulysses with their song: music is an unparalleled medium with which to achieve the objective in question. Ritual requirements for undisturbed quietude and physical relaxation are designed to create a feeling of trust by means of which the seduction is effected. In such an atmosphere, the logic of the fugue can subsequently take control, ultimately leading to a dissociated state that nonetheless imposes strict disciplinary measures over the dynamic array of cognitive processes. As we shall see, it is the specificity of these constraints that define the nature of the ecstatic experience in question and its possible utility outside the confines of ritual space.

Consequently, the considered employment of music may not be as far removed from Gendlin's therapeutic technique as it might initially appear. I also believe it significant that of all the fine arts, Freud confessed to having little affinity for music⁶. This stands in stark contrast to the therapeutics, so profoundly rooted in language, a domain in which his brilliance was unquestionable. Perhaps an inability to dally in the utterly non-referential milieu of music holds a key to the limitations of the psychoanalytic approach. There we find an impatience for that which lay behind the sober reasoning of everyday thought. The field of the unknown is not the source of creative insight but a puerile wasteland of non-linguistic, pre-historical energy that needs to be captured and controlled by the regimented civility of language.

A folk-psychological account, embedded in what is ostensibly a frivolous piece of children's entertainment, may have surprising relevance here. Produced as an animated film and subsequently transcribed for 78-rpm vinyl record format, MGM's The Story of Johann Mouse (Quimby; date unknown) transplants the archetypal cat and mouse tandem

into fin-de-siecle Vienna and the very parlour of the waltz-king himself. Such close proximity to inspiration exerts a profound influence upon the mouse, as witnessed by his irresistible propensity to dance while "under the spell" of Herr Strauss' piano playing. Even more remarkable are the migratory flights from the safety of his hole that such involuntary eurhythmics occasion, a fact not lost upon the observant cat.

When the maestro takes an extended leave from home and Johann's whirling forays into the cat's larder cease, the frustrated feline decides to take initiative into his own paws. Obtaining a step-by-step manual of piano instruction from the attic—topographically equivalent to the dwelling's brain—he proceeds to master the musical curriculum with surprising facility. In the composer's absence, the cat delights in his newly acquired facility with the "keys" of his prey's instinctual repertoire. A familiar sequence soon acquires the weary pall of inevitability: the cat commences to play, the mouse waltzes ever-closer to the piano, the cat pounces, pursues his quarry to the mouse's hole, and finally crashes into the wall that rudely cleaves him from the object of his desire. The moral is clear: the mouse can never be caught. Involved in his "instrumental" pursuits, the cat's paws are tied, and no matter how heroically he tries, it remains clear the two are doomed to repeat their antagonistic drama *ad infinitum*.

What is striking in all this anthropomorphic silliness is the verisimilitude with which *human* phenomenology is portrayed, giving rise to pertinent questions: why, for example, do we so readily relate to the archaic phrase "being under a spell," along with its concomitant notion of involuntary behaviour? What is so "right" about the image of something tiny and vulnerable being seduced from the safety of its hidden dwelling? Equally enticing is the fact the story is narrated in an impeccable Austrian accent, one that still stands in our cultural iconography as the voice of psychoanalysis itself!

⁶ I no longer remember the source of this information.

Nor do these points exhaust the interest this little parable holds. From the perspective of the cat, artistic activity is merely a subterfuge designed to appease an underlying physiological desire. And as a psychoanalytic construct, the mouse might be seen as an unwanted vermin that can only be eradicated through the auspices of an educated understanding. Still, this attempt to reduce the entire situation to a set of controllable reflexes seems inherently flawed in terms of its ultimate objective; it can reach no satisfying resolution. And this, it seems to me, portrays an intrinsic limitation of the reductive nature of the psychoanalytic project itself.

This is not to deny that psychic maladjustment often finds origins in a distant past, or that individuals become “stuck” in a manner that mechanically re-enacts any number of unacknowledged behavioural patterns: in short, some of the myriad insights of Freud. When the unconscious is conceived as something irreducibly primitive, both in ontogenetic and phylogenetic terms, however, the risk of a loss arises. What we are exploring are the possible ramifications of the act of surrender, conceived as a disciplined dilation of the normally precipitous transition between instrumental acts. The idea is that in such a silent pause, a fuller encounter with the field of unconscious potential might be realised.

D. Frames

Unlike the activity of maestro Strauss' four-legged disciples, artistic creation involves an act of self-negation, an ability to open the cognitive system in a uniquely human way. The aesthetic orbit involves the mutual attraction of a biologically prevalent activity of “play” and a species'-specific capacity for abstract thought. Much has been made in recent years about the historical specificity of artistic endeavour (e.g. Wolff, 1992), but without a general capacity to create a dynamic buffer of processing between incoming information and behavioural output, the present disappears through excessive mediation

of the past. Discipline must not be reduced to an obstinate application of behavioural agendas; it must also include the ability to suspend agendas, the most difficult aspect of which applies to the notion of unconscious motivation or control. Art is never disinterested, in the sense that its products embody some kind of timeless truth or perspective. Nevertheless, there is an essential *process of disinterest* that plays a critical role in the act of creation and receptive engagement.

Individual organisms are a locus of activities constrained by culture, language, and personal history. The present moment confronts this complex field of spontaneous reactivity with its own array of simultaneous possibilities. These diverse triggers initiate programs of action that transpire on various time-scales, with differing levels of autonomy. Clearly, we lack conscious control of all this manifold activity. Yet, as previously discussed, accepting such a state as "natural", allowing it to drift with prevailing winds, is to abdicate responsibility over that which we insist we must be accountable. The question is, how to envision a proper role for volition and the kind of agenda that is most realistic and effective for furthering collective communication and co-operation. Acknowledgement of inner fragmentation is a necessary first step. Disharmony, however, is not dispelled by simply assuming a succession of identities or roles, or alternatively laying the burden at the feet of a flawed society that cries out for systemic change.

The latter tack is not deemed inadequate because such changes are unnecessary, but because it is seen to depend wholly upon the negotiation of positive knowledge. Important as this may be, aligning oneself with various instruments of social change cannot substitute for personal growth, conceived as a process of disciplined exploration. Here, no amount of positive thought can resolve the issue of control, or unify the underlying dynamic diversity in an acceptable manner. In the end, the "authorial" solution can only reach an apparent victory, held together by an increasingly complex web of knowledge and, more insidiously, of unacknowledged oversight. What we are

investigating is the possibility of instituting a discipline that is designed to continuously overcome the mechanistic limitations of unconscious motivation through a process that includes an element of surrender. The idea is that under appropriate circumstances, the cognitive system might achieve a global coherence that is lacking with attempts to control it through the imposition of linear executive programs.

Brack, Brack and Bagwell (1994) have attempted "to integrate Bateson's frame theory into an understanding of the mechanisms of dissociation" (p. 2). The frame is another construct designed to articulate functional but potentially troublesome divisions within the psychic landscape. As the authors explain, "a frame defines, classifies, and/or delimits one set of events (or messages) in relation to other possible messages and the frames that might be used. One can never merely frame one event in isolation from other events and/or frames" (p. 6). In addition, the frame is conceived as a dynamic entity: it "represents the gestalt meaning given to developing information about the environment" (p. 8).

This scheme poses a number of relevant points. To begin with, it recognises that knowledge is organised in order to serve the primary objectives of the organism; the way it is stored, interrelated and accessed, in other words, is value laden. The result of this is a field of varying densities: it is clustered, that is, into smaller and larger constellations with manifold strengths of local and global connectivity. Vigilance defines another aspect of the theory, in the sense that ongoing surveillance of the environment is a dynamic component of the evaluative process. In terms of a specific frame, perception is consequently coloured by a corresponding field of expectation. This is accomplished by a process of comparison, defining incoming data as either *match* or *mismatch* to the operative frame. The validity of the global perspective is subject to cybernetic adjustment by means of local information, tested against sub-components called "frame-slots" that are deemed to "contain the expected information that can be found in the environment" (p. 8).

Given the fact that frames are functional entities serving specific classes of events or situations, the need for many such constructs becomes apparent. To this end, the authors envision a "frame ecosystem" to which individuals have access. "Ecosystemic framing theory suggests that individuals essentially engage in a constant match of their active frames of events, the information from the event itself, and all available frames for that event" (p. 9). The notion of availability complicates matters, because congruity is not simply a matter of logical choice and adequate inventory. Asymmetries between frames can lead to inner conflict, especially when previous discomfort has raised the emotional stakes. An inability to reframe can occur because "many of the alternative frames may be related to past trauma and are avoided in order to avoid dealing with the feelings they engender" (p. 14).

When a mismatch between current frame and incoming information occurs but more acceptable choices are accordingly barred from activation, dissociation is postulated as a viable behavioural option. Such a course of action, moreover, can take numerous forms:

The client may do this by refusing to process information, minimizing its rate of processing, avoiding matching information against the slots, reducing the slots' salience, changing the slots' values, over-focusing on only some frame slots, or devoting total attention to only some small component of the environment. (p. 15)

In this context, let us briefly examine the special status of these actions. Despite their appearance as functional cognitive responses, these alternatives can also be viewed as mechanistic default programs rather than creative solutions. Surprisingly, perhaps, a comparison with the case of musical improvisation sheds some light upon this aspect. Glenn Gould has pointed out that, under the duress of the improvisational moment, it is sometimes necessary for the performer to resort to certain stock-in-trade sequences until

more complex ideas are enabled to emerge⁷. These *holding patterns* facilitate musical “survival”, so to speak, but cannot be seen as elements that contribute to a performance’s expressive resonance.

In a like manner, dissociative reactions allow the self to survive the danger of an uncertain moment, but the price paid is in fact a *loss* of the present, due to an accompanying lack of consciousness. Such a move may meet a set of limited objectives, but will often be seen as detrimental when judged from a more global perspective. This miscarriage represents a loss of sensitivity to the wealth of the moment and, concomitantly, the dumb assertion of a pre-existing format. The tension between self-protection and growth is graphically portrayed here. Frames are emergent, *gestalt* constructs (p. 12); they unite incoming information into a coherent template. In addition, however, an individual’s frame *ecosystem* is itself a totalising entity, designed to uphold an acquired vision of the world.

Again, we note that much granular level activation and utilisation of information occurs spontaneously, outside the system of consciousness. Nevertheless, not all of these processes are structurally independent: that is, their relation to one’s field of awareness is a function of learning. In the context of dissociation, these acquired patterns of behaviour “unify” the subject by selectively excising segments of the mental landscape; in effect, part of the world silently falls into the cracks of the current framing system, unnecessarily impeding the potential for growth. As Brack and associates would have it, “[d]issociation might be viewed as a state of being ‘between frames’” (p. 15). The question that arises concerns the possibility of inverting this situation by training attention upon the very gaps from which a sentient light has been excluded. Is there a *content*, in other words, that lurks in the alleged emptiness of the cognitive warehouse, lost between the neatly ordered rows of pragmatic framing implements?

⁷Regrettably, I have not been able to document source information

Rather than filling gaps with the bustle of automated activity, the subject is called upon to evoke a deeper stillness, one that exposes the action of the frames themselves. This does not imply that frames can be permanently dispensed with; rather, it refers to the quality of interchange between the system as a whole. This is an attempt to effect a *radical* holism, one concerned to make all boundaries conditional, including that between the social and the biological. The capacity for inner harmony that comes as a result of increasing embodied awareness may well bring with it the satisfaction of essential needs, but "inner" in this context is not merely confined to the individual perspective.

In other words, we wish to expand the notion of what constitutes being healthy or well-adjusted beyond the capabilities of a discourse of personal and social needs. Concomitant with this, the alleviation of pathology cannot be found within the framework of a discourse devoted solely to an analysis of personal trauma, on the one hand, or structural social issues on the other. In their paper, Brack et al devote specific attention to the manner in which trauma can distort selective utilisation of the frame ecosystem. In addition, the authors briefly discuss the capacity—and necessity—for change and growth both at the frame and frame-slot levels.

Beyond the issue of trauma and dissociation lie the gaps that must arise with any structural mapping of the world: that is, a system composed of a multitude of pragmatically oriented components is bound to exhibit its own internal inconsistencies and ambiguities. This acknowledges that the problem of reframing requires an inescapable element of creativity. Add to this the ever-present potential for pathological social conditions, and the connection between the individual and the collective becomes more obviously intertwined. In both instances, the phenomenon of dissociation is pivotal as a means of both preventing and facilitating the process of holistic growth.

As an automatic behaviour, dissociation becomes a means for imposing unity upon the mind by making internal inconsistencies invisible and reducing reality to a closed

system. Framing may be an inescapable condition of thought; our goal is to turn the mischief it can cause into a positive test for the invisible limits of the given. The very existence of pathological dissociation asserts the power of the brain to function outside the narrow limits of conscious behaviour. Employed with more self-conscious purpose, the propensity to "disengage" might be used to open the mind to new possibilities and permit the forging of connections that would otherwise be blocked by the logic of social and personal conditioning. Attainment of biological and social ends are not sufficient criteria on which to judge the "success" of a human organism, for they cannot speak to the global state of the underlying relations discussed above.

Retreat into an aesthetic mode of "disinterest" may appear a solipsistic pursuit of platonic dreams, but it can also be used as a tool that furthers the cause of communication, creativity and self-awareness, things hardly neglectful of the "social". Bernstein and Putnam (1986) assert that "[d]issociation is increasingly being recognized both as a normal process and as a psychophysiological mechanism that plays a major role in the psychopathology of a number of mental disorders" (p. 727). We believe this dual character may also implicate dissociative phenomena in the problem of everyday pathology as well.

4. Hypnosis

A. Introduction

The study and practice of hypnosis has a long and often contentious history. Current research has yet to reach consensus on many issues surrounding this perplexing phenomenon, not least of which remains the validity of hypnosis itself as a coherent domain of investigation. Yet whatever role this concept ultimately serves, there

is little question it continues to motivate inquiry into important aspects of human experience. Moreover, hypnosis shares similarities with the present focus of investigation that are striking enough to warrant further discussion. These parallels occur at both descriptive and theoretical levels. The latter was briefly addressed in Chapter two, but will be revisited in somewhat more detail here, along with a discussion of other aspects of the hypnotic terrain.

Among the various attributes generally considered central to hypnosis is suggestibility: in other words, the context in which the subject is embedded poses a requirement for action—variously motor or cognitive in nature—whose accomplishment appears outside the pale of everyday possibility. It is around the qualifier “appears”, of course, that so much theoretical controversy has swirled. In a sense, the debate presents itself as a measure of discontinuity: without *some* degree of the latter, there would be nothing to warrant use, by social-psychological theorists, of the concept of *simulation* (see pg. 76, and below). More specifically, the conundrum revolves around the appropriate choice of level from which the “successful” atypical act is deemed to arise.

For the social-psychological approach, as described by Dixon and Laurence (1992), subjects “behave in ways that are consistent with their preconceived notions of how a good hypnotic subject is expected to behave” (p. 40). They do this by resorting to the use of “cognitive strategies”, goal-directed means that achieve their ends without the assistance of any special physiological state. In an important sense, this amounts to the assimilation of hypnosis to the realm of everyday function. By contrast, “neo-dissociation” theorists such as Hilgard (1986) do not regard the search for physiological correlates as misguided. But this does not necessarily mean they ascribe an entirely uniform signature to hypnosis. Dissociation, in other words, is not considered something

unique to hypnosis; rather, it refers to a whole range of phenomena that includes features of so-called everyday living as well.

Both sides of this longstanding debate, however, acknowledge that cognitive strategies are germane to the topic; moreover, there is consensus that differences exist in the ability of individuals to successfully apply them to a given task. The study of personal traits has thus become a staple of research aimed at helping to illuminate the range of hypnotic susceptibilities, identified through the administration of various psychometric tests. A comparison of some of these issues with central aspects of our musical practice yield similarities as well as contrasts.

B. Attention

Under proper circumstances, fugue presents listeners with the perception of an altered subjectivity that is, in the first instance, dependent upon an ability to maintain intense concentration. The resultant state of total immersion qualifies as an instance of absorption, defined by Dixon and Laurence (1992) as “the dispositional propensity for having episodes of all-encompassing involvement towards specific attentional objects” (p. 53). The fact that these authors consider absorption “[t]he most reliable univariate correlate of hypnotizability” (p. 53), moreover, makes it a significant factor for the present comparison.

The general subject of attention will be addressed in greater detail in a later section. One point discussed by Crawford and Gruzelier (1992), however, serves to reinforce the importance of “attending” for present purposes. Attention can be considered a twofold process, involving not only the selection and retention of specific information for further processing, but the inhibition of distracting data as well. The authors state that “[o]ne of the most robust electrophysiological findings is the greater

theta power found in highs in comparison to lows in both nonhypnotic and hypnotic conditions..." (p. 265). This is noteworthy, because Gruzelier and Crawford subscribe to the notion that "high-amplitude, regular theta may be reflective of a dis-attentional process—the acknowledgement of irrelevant stimuli, with a decision not to attend to such stimuli in the environment" (p. 236). In addition, they point to the fact that "[i]ncreases in theta similar to those in hypnosis have been associated with restricted environmental stimulation (REST), autogenic training, and meditation" (p. 235).

Such a discussion provides linkage between attention and various contexts—including the present one—that are said to alter experience in some significant fashion. Indeed, the above authors make passing mention that "greater absorption in music may be related to hypnotic susceptibility" (p. 238). Hilgard also includes music amongst the imaginative activities in which hypnotically susceptible individuals are likely to become absorbed (p. 160).

C. Suggestibility

Consideration of features not shared by these disparate modes of activity may be of equal interest. Suggestibility, for example, is an important concept for hypnosis, but one with little apparent applicability for the solitary listener. Of course, a case could be made that social expectation is hardly annulled in the absence of witnesses. Much behaviour is motivated by internalised factors of social origin, and it is reasonable to assume that one's reactions to music might be mediated in a similar manner.

Indeed, we concur that the meaning of music cannot be entertained without due consideration of the role of cultural discourse, ritual, and expectation. Nevertheless, these do not exhaust all critical components involved with the process of musical engagement. A parallel with the social suggestion/special state debate is manifest. For

those wishing to confine understanding of musical phenomena to a sociological context, *suggestion* may well serve to explain the subject's apprehension of an altered state. Consequently, it is worthwhile considering the topic in greater detail, particularly with respect to how far a comparison between hypnotic and musical practices may be justified.

1. Janet and Automatism

At first glance, the work of Janet appears an unlikely source from which to begin the discussion. Dixon and Laurence explain that Janet "would make the investigation of automatisms the basis of his theory of hypnosis, rather than suggestion or suggestibility" (p. 38). However, this fact may be due, at least in part, to the context of mental illness from which Janet's interest in hypnotic phenomena arose. Seen as part of a continuum of various acts, automatisms reach complex proportions in hysterical symptoms, which "can be related to split parts of personality (subconscious fixed ideas) endowed with an autonomous life and development" (Ellenberger, 1970, p. 361). Janet conceived that the origin of such constructs lay in traumatic experiences and, in order to facilitate the task of analytical reconstruction, he engaged in a process of perceptive listening and painstaking documentation aimed at a thorough exploration of the subject's life.

As Ellenberger asserts, however, "psychological analysis could not be separated from the therapeutic process" (p. 367). It is possible that the source of this conviction stems from Janet's insight into the nature of automatism. In short, trauma initiates an embodied, stochastic evolutionary process that cannot be reversed through the efforts of analytical narrative alone. The brilliance of Janet's therapeutic interventions lay in his sensitivity to the resultant structures of personal history, unique operative conditions that defy coherent relation to some grand interpretative scheme. This understanding of

behaviour as shaped by robust artefacts with their own unique dynamic and spontaneity is the context in which he conceived the efficacy of the hypnotic intervention.

In addition, "Janet emphasized the notion of the 'field of consciousness' and its narrowing in hysterical patients as a result of their psychological weakness" (Ellenberger, p. 361). But as Gauld (1992) explains, "[t]he excluded sensations, images, etc., continue...to exist and to exert an influence on behaviour....Janet talks of these sensations as 'dissociated'" (p. 373). This is in congruence with Hilgard, who stresses that hypnotic dissociation does not imply a "total functional independence" (p. 10). What distinguishes the more recent theory is its greater emphasis upon the non-morbid dimension of these concepts, especially as they transpire in the hypnotic situation. In an excerpt taken from Janet's writings, moreover, Ellenberger offers what might be considered a bridge between past and present views on dissociation. "Man, all too proud, figures that he is the master of his movements, his words, his ideas and himself. It is perhaps of ourselves that we have the least command. There are crowds of things which operate within ourselves without our will" (p. 370). It seems unlikely that "ourselves" refers only to those unfortunates cursed with extreme forms of psychological deprivation. Rather, Janet seems to be designating a more general human predicament involving the relationship of behaviour and consciousness.

2. Social Suggestion

In terms of this broader spectrum, it may be plausible to include the phenomenon of *suggestion*. The implication is that the concept of automatism has validity outside the cataclysmic context of personal trauma. Social constraints in the form of taboos, invisible limits to what can be spoken and thought due to the structure of discourse, imagery, behaviour, and technological mediation all become embodied in ways that can partake of mechanisms to which consciousness may be functionally and hence

systematically excluded. We are proposing something stronger than a lack of knowledge or critical analytical skills. In other words, the entire social milieu provides clues that trigger complex patterns of thought and action that may require conscious attention for their successful execution, but not at the meta-level from which the process is directed. In this sense, then, the "social" position with regard to suggestion expresses a critical insight perhaps more universally valid than its proponents intend.

With respect to hypnosis *per se*, Gauld encourages us to regard it "not as a state which subjects enter, but as a concept, or rather socially transmitted conceptual system, which works within their minds. The hypnotic state, its characteristics, and the manner of inducing it, have become almost institutionalized in our society" (p. 618). By the same token, Gauld is not at all comfortable with what he calls the "rôle-playing metaphor" (p. 602) used by social theorists: a device that leads to the impractical and ultimately fruitless criterion of "self-deception". By employing such language, however, social theory creates a ghetto for hypnotic phenomena, a space that is marked above all by the taint of weakness. Such a move serves a precise if somewhat obscure purpose: the charge of irresolution can only be thrown into relief by the unquestioned integrity of the executive ego.

Nonetheless, it must be admitted that suggestion--in the institutionalised sense that Gauld proposes--poses a fairly specific set of active responses or tasks, conducted through a paradoxical blend of wilfulness and non-volition, and aimed at creating rather dramatic distortions of memory, perception, etc. that appear unique to the hypnotic situation. Questions arising from the many issues touched upon above might commend a general direction for further inquiry. Is it possible, for example, that automatism, social suggestion, and hypnotic non-volition exploit certain underlying features of the nervous system in slightly different contexts? What do these have to say about the nature of consciousness, or the self as a unitary entity and autonomous agent?

It is the subject of hypnosis that presents the greatest threat to the notion of the self's supremacy. Both the traumatic experience behind Janet's automatism, and the possibility of censure that accompanies social suggestion represent potential sources of injury; in both cases, however, the source of the noxious element can be seen as external in origin. Granted, such problems have in some sense become internalised, yet they may still be regarded like strains of microbial invaders, alien forces that weaken resolve, cause discomfort, but ultimately reinforce the self as a coherent entity under siege. One is tempted to designate failure as a lack of will, a sign of the self's infirmity either to face its nemesis, or properly analyse its context. Only an absence of information—withheld due to circumstances, moreover, as opposed to neglect to obtain it—serves to absolve the subject for not reasserting a rightful authority.

In contrast to this predicament, hypnosis paints a very different picture. Here we truly find a house divided against itself, a *willing acquiescence* paradoxically aimed at creating—in certain instances, at least—a state of non-volition. It is this internal contradiction at the heart of selfhood that also lies at the centre of the theoretical debate. By asserting that the hypnotic subject is doing nothing more than playing a part with aplomb, however, the social approach has again ascribed the discord to an *external* factor. Hypnosis is thus assimilated into other phenomenon whose underlying malaise is that of a weakened will. This judgement is intrinsic to the theory, for if the subject has engaged in a behaviour that runs contrary to the very essence of human agency—even to the extent of self-deception—it can only be by capitulating at the behest of others.

3. *Impuissance*

Suppose, however, that hypnosis is not a uniform state, but nonetheless represents changes with significant physiological implication—some of which are shared, moreover, by a variety of other contexts. We have already noted, for example,

that Janet's account of automatism is not confined to either general psychic infirmity or amnesia for traumatic events. Instead, it can also manifest a division of the subject's present function, along with an asymmetrical apportionment of consciousness. Likewise, a society that regards the pursuit of identity as the pinnacle of self-realisation creates conditions in which such dissociative phenomena can thrive. Because the entire field of social suggestibility incessantly presents the individual with impossible existential demands to conform to images—including that of the iconoclast—it seems plausible that multiple contexts would eventually be engendered, and their boundaries reinforced.

Yet, however one chooses to imagine the instantiation of these influences at the level of the brain, they do not seem to involve any overt willingness on the part of the participants. Perhaps, then, there is something fundamentally different about the hypnotic situation that disqualifies it from comparison. Indeed, one context more commonly associated with willing acquiescence is that of hedonism, also often identified with weakness. In "giving over" to basic physical pleasures, the subject risks forsaking responsibility and hence becoming divided or estranged from the fullest human capacities. Another context also closely identified with a kind of psychic abandon is that of religious experience, and again—from a certain perspective-- irresolution is viewed as a critical element. Freud certainly considered it a regressive state of mind and, more generally, it is frequently regarded as a means of avoiding the harshness of reality, both in political and cosmological terms.

Assimilation of these areas of human experience into the field of dissociative possibility has the effect of modifying a persistent emphasis upon infirmity. This is not to deny those cases of religious fervour, for example, that may mask an underlying pathology. Rather, the new perspective will be able to include a greater diversity of experiences, not all of which are well served by the social type of explanation. In terms

of hypnosis, Hilgard is emphatic that the highly susceptible subject "has a 'strong ego' by any measure" (p. 182). Nor does he entirely concur with the regressive hypothesis. In referring to the "hidden observer" phenomenon, Hilgard asserts that "the evidence from the subjects' remarks clearly favors the idea of a vertical division (split consciousness) rather than a horizontal division, in which the material would come from more primitive depths..." (p. 194).

Further research into these phenomena might benefit our understanding of religious and aesthetic experience. If Hilgard's rejection of the "weakness" hypothesis is valid for hypnosis, could it not have validity for related modalities as well? For example, Dixon and Laurence cite a study by Diamond and Taft, wherein the authors "reported a significant correlation between hypnotizability and belief in the supernatural" (p. 53). It is easy to disparage such a connection on the grounds that both stem from a puerile impulse to confirm the reality of the paranormal or the magical, an attitude one no doubt encounters. Nevertheless, this cannot discredit an open-ended exploration of experience yielding phenomena for which we have as yet no proper understanding. One advantage of the dissociative theory is the greater malleability it proposes for human psychological function, a fact that may have ramifications for both pathology and creativity alike. Rather than making global, *a priori* assumptions about the meaning of experience, it may be prudent to explore it at a more granular level.

Ward (1989) refers to Tart's conviction "that the human potentials for various states of consciousness are shaped by cultural conditioning" (p. 22). This point could be seen as an expansion of the social hypothesis, one that allows it to embrace a greater range of viewpoints without losing the force of its own contribution. Specifically, the attitudes under discussion regarding the import of experiences of "letting go" are not universal. It is not necessary to become embroiled in an anthropological debate over cultural relativity, or the colonial mentality of science. The present exploration is conceived as a conversation

between players in which no one owns the last word. That other cultures are structured differently in their pursuit and interpretation of experience should be a reminder about the limitations of any individual manifestation. Science, in pursuit of consensus language, can provide a further stay against the dominance of any myopically culture-bound vision; at the same time, it must be cognisant of the socio-economic, cultural, and psychological levels of organisation that serve to shape its activities.

4. Language

As stated at the outset of this section, the central problems of hypnosis are far from definitive resolution. The paradox of divided controls, in particular, seems to marshal theoretical stances that are grounded in widely divergent worldviews. The issue of language is of paramount importance here and serves as one means of integrating some of the material discussed above. Let us briefly mention its relation to the concept of automatism and the context of hysteria. As Hilgard notes, "Janet recognized the role that naming played in defining the secondary personality" (p. 30). The contemporary relevance of this idea attests to the perspicacity of the man who first expressed it. Recent controversy over the appropriateness of therapeutic interventions designed to deal with repressed memories and multiple personality disorder (MPD) has been widely publicised, and Janet's insight speaks directly to these issues.

For our purpose, three points are noteworthy. Despite the fact we are dealing with a pathological context, the power of words to shape experience and alter what seems the very foundation of self-perception is impressive by any account. Second, language here seems capable of a tremendous degree of autonomy that must be kept in check by the healthy organism. Without such constraints, it seems capable of undergoing an evolutionary dynamic that is quite arbitrary with respect to any straightforward, causal narrative: in short, it can "literally" produce a reality. Finally, and

most significant in terms of the foregoing, language can apparently bear differential relations to processes of awareness.

What is most potentially fruitful about the hypnotic situation is its ability to reflect such phenomena in the realm of the non-morbid. In other words, it suggests that the symptoms of "breakdown" that present themselves in the context of illness render clues about levels of underlying physiological organization, the staple methodological approach of neuropsychology. Hilgard is in strong agreement with this view. He asserts, for example, that the "first and most impressive characteristic of the amnesic response is the *power of words* in producing and alleviating the amnesia" (p. 77). What is written several paragraphs later confirms, in his view, the importance of language for the entire field of investigation. "The power of words may be related to ordinary self-control by way of self-talk. What may happen in hypnosis is that this self-talk is turned over to the hypnotist..." (p. 77).

Neuropsychology is not the only perspective that points to the complex organisation and partial autonomy of language. Such features are evident as part of common experience as well. Vygotsky derived his concepts of "inner" and "vocal" speech from developmental studies of children. Vocal or oral speech is "speech for others", corresponding to the plane of social communication. Inner speech, by contrast, differs not only in its status as "speech without sound". In Thought and Language, Vygotsky (1986) states that "[a]ll our observations indicate that inner speech is an autonomous speech function. We can confidently regard it as a *distinct plane of verbal thought*" (p. 248). An additional passage helps clarify the significance of inner speech, or—in Hilgard's terms—self-talk: "In inner speech, one word stands for a number of thoughts and feelings, and sometimes substitutes for a long and profound discourse. And naturally this unique inner sense of the chosen word cannot be translated into ordinary external speech" (p. 248)

One way of looking at “speech for oneself” is that it operates as a kind of personal mythology. Myths are stories, carriers of information, simple in structure and yet harbouring a vast range of applicability; as such they can serve as framing structures for experience. In fulfilling such a function, moreover, they need not explicitly occupy awareness. Inner speech is therefore portrayed as a process of verbal coding not overtly controlled by the conscious intellect—and not as conceptually abstracted from the non-verbal psychological milieu in which it arises—as in the case of oral speech. For Vygotsky, the child’s thought is pre-eminently social in origin and intention, and only later becomes internalised after language reaches a sufficient level of fluency—or, by implication—automaticity. Language, in short, seems to become embodied on more than one physiological level, with inner speech acquiring special status with respect to affective processes:

Thought is not begotten by thought; it is engendered by motivation, i.e., by our desires and needs, our interests and emotions. Behind every thought there is an affective-volitional tendency, which holds the answer to the last “why” in the analysis of thinking. A true and full understanding of another’s thought is possible only when we understand its affective-volitional basis. (p. 252)

The topic of automaticity and language also bears relation to the world of experimental psychology. The Stroop phenomenon, for example, provides an indication of the power of reading skills to involuntarily influence attention and behaviour. In addition, Baribeau et al, (1994) cite studies that claim to have “demonstrated that HHs [subjects exhibiting high hypnotic susceptibility] show a significantly greater *interference* effect on the Stroop task...”. This intriguing finding has led some to the hypothesis that HHs may also prove to process language with a greater degree of automaticity. In the paper just mentioned, Baribeau et al conducted an experiment using a Stroop-like task that lends qualified support to just such a thesis.

For Hilgard, the spontaneity of acquired action patterns finds theoretical support with the organisational concept of subsystems. “Once a subsystem has been activated

it continues with a measure of autonomy; the conscious representation of the control system may recede, leading to some degree of automatization" (p. 218). As mentioned earlier, Hilgard speculates that executive control might even be ceded to the external agency of the hypnotist, thus rendering a temporary if unusual alliance of cognitive systems. And while these events are not spelled out in detail at the anatomical level, patterns of dissociation revealed through the neuropsychological investigation of pathological function do provide at least a rationale for such a theoretical pursuit.

The fact that language is so intimately involved may also help explain some of the resistance this approach encounters. For example, Hilgard states that "[i]n interpreting dissociative experiences it is often necessary to distinguish between the control of movement (executive functions) and the consciousness of what is going on (observing or monitoring functions)" (p. 144). Yet those who tend simply to equate language use with consciousness may find the idea of thinking without awareness abhorrent; that is to say, linguistic behaviour seems the one domain of action in which the observing function is inescapably wedded. If anything is more indicative of our status as individual agents, more revelatory of the self and its essential identity, it would appear to be the volitional control of words, and of actions that follow at the behest of our internal linguistic commands. If we permit hypnosis a special power to decompose what is strictly whole, do we not run the danger of importing the same uncertainty into the heart of our everyday existence?

5. Music

Before becoming further embroiled in the hypnotic debate, however, it is time to revisit the topic of music. The question was posed earlier as to the possibility of something akin to hypnotic suggestion being responsible for the changes perceived in the fugue ritual. In terms of a social explanation, the subject would respond in a manner

congruent with cultural expectations that remain operative, even in the absence of other persons. Let us accordingly consider such a possibility. First, it is necessary to reiterate the lack of any direct linguistic suggestion, wherein the subject must process instructions as they are given, and subsequently carry out the task requested. Whatever it is that the music listener must undertake, it is not articulated in the form of any specific verbal commands.

The cultural requirements can be varied—depending upon the particular ritual being enacted—and sometimes somewhat vague as well. In the present instance, for example, we are encouraged to listen to music in a solitary setting, and perhaps react in a manner that reflects the magnitude of the composer's artistry. There are, to be sure, a more precise set of instructions that reflect a smaller cultural community of "informed" listeners, those familiar with the abstract structures of musical form and analysis. But this mode of listening—which involves comparison of unfolding events with a set of memorised constructs—need not concern us here. Instead, we are focusing upon a more untutored process of self-discovered technique that arises through practice and experimentation with cognitive strategies. The point being made, however, is that this process poorly qualifies as an example of suggestion, not only because of the absence of any verbal instruction but, moreover, because there simply is no coherent goal toward which the subject is being directed. If our culture has conditioned the average subject for any particular agenda with respect to the music of Bach, it is simply that one should expect to be "psyched up"—spiritually, emotionally, or intellectually—pursuant to the act of listening.

Listening, in this context, moreover, means little more than being attentive to the melodies, rhythms, sonorities and harmonies that are being spun out through time. It turns out that this is an inadequate representation of the actual situation, however. In other words, a more detailed analysis is necessary, because the mere willingness to be

impressed or moved is itself inadequate to the goal without recourse to cognitive strategies of a more specific order. Further, the discovery of these means do not seem congruent with the interpretation that they allow subjects to behave to themselves *as if* impressed, a goal that is presumably far more easily achieved, and less dependent upon abilities that are specific to the musical context. Nor would we expect that such a general state of "semantic excitability" would necessarily initiate a discrete set of subjective changes, somewhat unique to this particular ritual, and time-locked to a specific sequence of events.

On these grounds, the idea of social suggestion does not seem particularly helpful in appreciating the nature of the aesthetic effects with which we are concerned. Nevertheless, it does possess a useful if limited applicability. First, I believe the issue of expectation is a significant one, but only if the teleological object is clarified. The end of musical experience is *meaning*; but the *kind* of meaning participants expect, as inculcated by the cultural background, will serve to establish the initial bias to be employed. Anticipation of boredom, for example, will do little to motivate an active state of attentiveness; likewise, a belief that meaning is simply a product of social persuasion will tend to create an attitude of detached indifference or smug aloofness. The presupposition most productive in the present case is therefore one of *open-ended faith*. Faith is important because it suggests that full participation will not entail something harmful to the participant.

It is equally important, however, that the ritual's meaning be regarded as an emergent property of full engagement, and hence not describable or translatable in advance. Further, this open-endedness implies something over and above an essential element of indeterminacy: it demands that the ritual meaning not become self-sufficient, but eventually enter into dialogue with other critical forms of meaning and thought. These factors serve to promote a particular kind of receptivity in which one's self-

directed powers of judgement must undergo a temporary stay of activity. Here we may find a parallel with the hypnotic situation, in that the induction procedure is more distinguished by an encouragement to *let something transpire* than the metaphors of sleep stereotypically associated with it. As Hilgard remarks, “[a]n active-alert hypnosis can be produced in the laboratory without any suggestions of relaxation or sleep” (p. 165). From this perspective, then, some kind of family relation between the fugue experience and hypnosis cannot be precluded.

The second contribution of the social hypothesis concerns the importance of cognitive strategies. The conviction here is that the fugue can only reach its full potential when processed using strategies that must, to a certain extent, become self-discovered. But their use does not foreclose the possibility that they can precipitate changes of a more autonomous nature, thus exhibiting discontinuity worthy of the epithet “altered state”. This is indeed the position taken by Hilgard. Writing about the purposeful use of imagery in accomplishing a suggested task, he nonetheless asserts that “once the setting for the imagery is adopted, it takes on a self-generating nonvoluntary quality as the subjects become immersed in the experience” (p. 175).

D. Active and Receptive Modes

Despite the similarities just presented, however, it is equally important to note how hypnotic and fugue phenomena diverge. The concept of amnesia, so important in the hypnotic context, does seem relevant to the musical one. Even more significant, perhaps, is the contrast posed by the types of task each setting requires. Basically, hypnotic behaviours are to be construed as responses to verbal commands to undertake various cognitive or motor acts. Even if we accept the interpretation given by Hilgard concerning the uncharacteristically divided nature of the control systems operating,

these responses still have an executive component that plans appropriate sequences of events and a monitoring function intended to provide feedback to the action system.

According to this scheme, however, the fugue presents an atypical challenge; it is not really the request for a response in this sense. Instead, what is most characteristic about a successful episode of ritual conduct here is the utter inhibition of responsive specificity. Information is coming in at a rate and complexity that demands the cessation of every posture or plan of action, in order that the greatest array of sound can be consciously registered. To this extent, the task is at bottom perceptual in nature, demanding a form of passivity not at all exemplified by the hypnotic context. Being an entirely non-linguistic medium, moreover, the fugue cannot exploit the kind of automaticity that has been so strongly linked to language use above. It is true, of course, that a necessary familiarity with western musical language cannot help but establish certain circumscribed fields of expectation. Nonetheless, the fugue's pre-eminent feature is one of informational simultaneity, and this above all prevents the kind of redundancy that is necessary to assist the automatic mobilisation of executive resources. What engages our attention is the constant interplay of the "here and now".

The distinction being made is clearly embodied by Deikman's (1971) concept of "bimodal consciousness", cited by both Hilgard and Ward. Hilgard outlines the differences between the *receptive* and *active* modalities as follows. The former can best be characterised as referring to the "relatively passive registration of events as they impinge on the sense organs" (p. 13), whereas the latter "mode of consciousness is the active, planning one" (p. 13). And while "any such simplification is partial only because there are always interactions between any two modes of functioning" (p. 14), the pair can be used to highlight salient differences between the organisation and objectives of various activities. Clearly the fugue, as represented here, poses an example of a

receptive discipline. As such, Ward's (1989) remarks help account for the resistance against wider promulgation that the present climate sustains:

From a Western perspective it has been assumed that the active mode represents ordinary consciousness, a mental state of striving, organized to manipulate the environment and oriented toward achievement of personal goals. The receptive mode, in contrast, is seen as mysterious or even deviant, despite being the complement in a repertoire of cognitive states. (p. 22)

The utility of pursuing a curtailment of the planning function, including that of inner speech, may not be readily apparent. This cultural failing is diagnosed in Kubrick's film The Shining (1980), when an aspiring writer's descent into madness is confirmed by the revelation that his copious work in progress consists of nothing but an endless repetition of the line "all work and no play makes Jack a dull boy". Without an ability to exploit the geographical solitude that surrounds him in order to make contact with the source of his own activity, the victim remains ensnared by the powerful automaticity of self-justifying enterprise. The situation is symbolic of a culture whose labour seems bent on drowning out all precious intimations of the silent mind.

E. Dissociative Depth: Depersonalisation and Hidden Observer

This brief comparative exercise between hypnosis and musical fugue has led to a major divergence. The suggestibility that seems so critically dependent upon the power of language has only a very circumscribed relevance for the non-hypnotic context. The paradoxical non-volitional quality is also lacking here, to the extent that the musical "task" is a negative one, aimed at inhibiting the propensity for willed response entirely. Yet, the phenomenon of depersonalisation that results from this heightened perceptual activity is such that the two domains are drawn together into a family orbit, despite their differences in topography. The altered sense of self is perhaps the most intriguing

quality of the fugue experience. Two related aspects are worth noting. First comes a feeling that the division between subject and object has disappeared; there is no longer the sense that "I am listening" but, rather, that the music simply "is". Second, the experience becomes remarkably impersonal in character. This is not meant to express a state of pure abstraction or intellection. Yet if one must employ the language of affect, it must be made clear that this is affect of a different order: feelings that come, as the etymology of ecstasy implies, from "outside" the pale of the self.

Now, depersonalisation is regarded by some as a dissociative process that appears in the context of profound identity disorder, but that also appears "to be a normal experience that is particularly common during adolescence" (Bernstein and Putnam, p. 727). As such, it is deemed an independent phenomenon: that is to say, one does not refer to the transient episode of a child as "hypnosis", however hypnotic-like its external appearance. And yet, if the terms are not synonymous, they may still be related as part of a complex continuum of dissociative phenomena. For example, speaking in terms of the receptive mode discussed above, Hilgard asserts that "memories may be split apart, so that reflection on experiences registered may be disrupted" (p. 13). Such a depiction invites comparison. That is, would it not be plausible to say that depersonalisation in the fugue context implies being cut off from the domain of personal memory, such that experience cannot momentarily be mediated through them? What we are suggesting is not merely a "looking away" but a functional inhibition that palpably changes the character of experience. From this perspective, a disciplined practice aimed at fulfilling the stringent demands of the perceptual task might well switch into a semi-autonomous modality, one, furthermore, that has no access to the affective aura accompanying the highly automatic spreading of semantic activation that distinguishes linguistic behaviour.

Yet, if language is a key issue in the differentiation of hypnosis and fugue, it does not necessarily tell the whole story. Again, we refer to the fact that dissociation theory does not consider hypnosis a unitary state. One puzzling finding is that hypnotic susceptibility scores exhibit a bimodal distribution rather than the simpler distribution curve one might expect to find as a measure of some ability within a population (Hilgard, p. 157). Hilgard seems to favour the possibility that the metaphor of depth, based on self-reports of subjects, may refer not merely to degrees of hypnotic involvement but to some qualitative change within the hypnotic field itself. In other words, the bimodal distribution curve may reflect two discrete types of phenomena. "The familiar performance alterations in hypnosis, such as movement responses to suggestion, are changes primarily in *control* processes and do not produce very great changes in the subject's consciousness" (p. 157). This would correspond to the first group of hypnotic abilities. The existence of a second peak, however, might rest "on the discovery that, for the highly hypnotizable, the very processes that provide for high susceptibility to amnesia permit a deeper dissociation, with some experiences registered and the information processed, without their ever having been conscious" (p. 158).

What Hilgard is alluding to is research into a phenomenon he calls the "hidden observer". Before considering this, however, some inquiries regarding the preceding statements are in order. Is it possible, for example, that the "familiar performance alterations" of which Hilgard speaks are processes relating directly to language function? And if this is the case, is it further possible that the "deeper" hypnotic context—marked by greater subjective changes—bears a stronger functional relationship to the fugue in its status as a non-linguistic process? More specifically, could a key to this commonality be found with the experience of depersonalisation that the fugue experience engenders?

The "hidden observer" is perhaps the most contentious of Hilgard's theoretical constructs, in part because, like any metaphor, it can be overextended. The author is

aware of this problem himself and considers the concept “a metaphor for something occurring at an intellectual level but not available to the consciousness of the hypnotized person. It does not mean that there is a secondary personality with a life of its own—a kind of homunculus lurking in the shadows of the conscious person” (p. 188). Later, Hilgard adds: “the hidden part...has no independent existence as a part of the personality of its control systems...” (p. 234). Whatever else it is, in other words, the hidden observer is to be considered an artefact of the hypnotic situation.

It is not within the present scope to explore the various interpretations given to this controversial topic. As one of a number of domains in which the subject of dissociation has relevance, however, we have considered it worthwhile to make a comparative venture into the realm of hypnosis. The hidden observer is intriguing on two counts, both admittedly speculative in nature. First, as alluded to above, it may represent a dissociative event which is not as strongly tied to language function as typical hypnotic phenomena. The second point concerns a reputed quality of impartiality. For example, Hilgard presents the following subjective report, given by one of his experimental subjects: “The hidden part doesn’t deal with pain. It looks at what is, and doesn’t judge. It is not a hypnotized part of the self” (p. 209). Or, as Hilgard himself frames it:

There is little evidence of any upsurge from the deeper recesses of the mind. If anything, the “primary process” experiences are confined to the overt experiences of hypnosis in which images of hallucinatory intensity are prominent and there are many reality distortions. The covert experiences, by contrast, are reality bound. (p. 209)

The hidden observer seems to imply a split within the monitoring function, whereby information is processed outside the purview of a consciousness defined by the hypnotic condition. It is almost as if the person in some sense remains whole, with the covert part being necessarily produced as compensation for a shrunken awareness. But the implications here centre even more strongly upon the notion of *objectivity*. Hilgard

himself makes an explicit comparison between the hypnotic and the pathological in this regard.

It may be recalled that it is common in multiple personality for one of the hidden personalities to be more normal than the manifested one.... This fact parallels the relationship of the hidden observer to the hypnotic monitor. It is the hidden part that knows all: both what the hypnotized part reported overtly and what information was available covertly. (p. 235)

Perhaps the distortions of functional pathology, in other words, create the observer artefact even as the experimental laboratory does. Moreover, the situation may well have broader application. Is it possible, for example, that the more pedestrian condition of "being in denial" could manifest itself in a similar manner?

The implications here are threefold. First, if the deep dissociative aspect of hypnosis is able to reintegrate this unheralded consciousness, could a similar process not apply to other situations? This seems to be the idea behind the use of hypnosis in the context of hysteria, and more recently, multiple personality disorder. Second, if psychic divisions represent a continuum from extreme morbidity to common complaint, are there not grounds for promoting programs designed to make dissociative technique a cornerstone of a person's repertoire of life strategies? And finally, what role could music play in such an educational process? More specifically, does the fugue have something unique to offer? Is it the experience of depersonalisation that is critical to its potential utility? Such questions are meant to assert a point, to be sure, but their rhetorical form is also intended to underscore the need for further work along these lines.

F. Cognitive Strategy

After having examined some of Hilgard's ideas, it now seems worthwhile to revisit the subject of cognitive strategies, which—as previously noted—is not necessarily incongruent with the neo-dissociation perspective. According to the synergistic view

supported by Dixon and Laurence, "hypnosis is a situation in which subjects attempt to rally certain cognitive abilities in order to successfully alter normal cognitive functioning in accordance with the given suggestion" (1992, p. 58). Apart from discussed differences revolving around the concept of suggestion, this definition could well serve the topic of fugue as well. Indeed, the line of reasoning here maintains that the fugue's structure intrinsically promotes a switch in strategy that is a crucial component of its unusual effects.

Interestingly, this fact serves to deepen the relation between musical experience and hypnosis, especially as expounded by Crawford and Gruzelier (1992). These authors stress that "the ability to disattend to irrelevant stimuli (to habituate) provides a major clue as to what contributes to dissociative behavior..." (p. 265). The importance of attention for processing the fugue's exceptional perceptual demands has been discussed. As might be expected from our discussion till now, moreover, Crawford and Gruzelier maintain that highly susceptible individuals "show greater cognitive flexibility and are better able to shift their attention and cognitive strategies" (p. 263). But it is how this is translated in neuropsychological terms that holds the greatest interest here: "[c]ontrary to the view that highs are characterized by right hemisphericity...highs exhibit greater hemispheric specificity (left or right), depending on task demands..." (p. 263).

Over and above this emphasis on flexibility, the theory also seems to advocate the importance of a particular sequential process that, as we shall see, has resonance with the musical task of the fugue:

In line with our neuropsychological model of hypnosis, which describes the engagement of anterior inhibitory functions that extends bilaterally, the left hemisphere is more involved than the right in the first stage of the hypnotic induction process. We argue that left-hemisphere advantages in high hypnotizable individuals may be seen to facilitate hypnosis. (p. 263)

Though the fugue begins with melody, the whole analytic employment of this material and its subsequent tonal transposition seems to favour sequential and intervallic

interest over simple processing of contour, thus encouraging left-hemisphere involvement. This is further reinforced by the ritual demand for complete safety and relaxation, rendering it devoid of anxiety that is associated with a right-hemisphere bias (p. 264). Hypnotic induction begins with verbal instructions and gradually switches to a different cognitive context in which the processing of language transpires, one that is distinguished by the gradual inhibition of planning and initiative.

In like fashion, the fugue's emphasis on an increasing density of incoming information creates the need for a mode that is pre-eminently receptive in character and hence unconcerned with producing active, volitional responses. In addition, sequential logic gives way to a task concerned with simultaneity and peripheral perception, implying cessation of the initial left-hemispheric dominance. In a sense, this points to the fugue as a kind of non-linguistic analogue to hypnosis, where initial material is presented in the usual fashion, as that over which one exerts a kind of habitual control. One knows what is going on: while the exact "words" or "subject matter" may not be divulged in advance, the information is unfolding according to a logic that is known nonetheless. It is the breakdown of this internalised schema in the face of a world it can no longer encompass that leads to the fugue's crisis, as well as its ultimate glory.

Let us use an appropriate metaphor. One is first introduced to a human "subject"; on the basis of this meeting, impressions are formed, and judgements are made using knowledge acquired about behaviour, past experience of others, etc. Such an evaluative process might even yield a surprisingly comprehensive set of expectations about the person's past, station in life, and orientation toward a host of issues and belief systems. But suddenly, through an act of ritual magic, one is thrown headlong into the world of the subject's dreams. In this state, recognition of the host is still possible, but no longer through the structures that mediated the initial conception. In giving them up, one is simply forced to surrender to the alien logic as it unfolds.

In fact, then, what the fugue does is cause both subject *and* listener to surrender some autonomy, thus blurring the identities of both. The musical subject has not completely lost identity, because the initial encounter has internalised aspects for the listener that retain a certain meaning, and indeed develop its implications in unexpected ways. In this ambiguous space, however, the listener's own mind is thrown into a process that is simultaneously self-reflective in nature as well. Something *archetypal* emerges: these are no longer merely the subjective dreams of another, but a common dreamscape that is combining elements of both. And when all the dynamic, complex, vibrant eventfulness finally resounds with the resolution of a last great harmonic cadence, one is left with the feeling of having participated in a reality far greater than our everyday experience can muster.

As in hypnosis, this eruption of the unusual is the result of a shift in cognitive strategy demanded by a novel logic. In this manner, the musical subject *does* function like a suggestion in that, once "taken", it *wanders off*, propelling a willing listener into unfamiliar places. Thus, like its pathological counterpart, musical fugue is fundamentally a process about identity. In the case of the former, discontinuity becomes absolute, and integral growth is impossible. But is this tragic and desperate solution not the final, catastrophic architectural failure of a "normal" self that can no longer bear the weight of its own burden? Musical fugue and the dissociation it offers is, from this perspective, nothing less than an invitation for growth: one, moreover, that must be willingly embraced if it is destined to transpire at all. Volition of this kind finds its counterpart in the "hypnotic contract" to which the subject, in Hilgard's opinion, agrees (p. 224).

G. Dissociation and Discourse

The concept of dissociation can be used to approach a variety of psychological phenomena. The fact that it does purport to unite such a disparate field is one possible indication of its potential value. Granted, because of its generality, it may apply to many different physiological levels and contexts, the details of which are not even fully grasped by experts in respective areas of application. Nonetheless, we are trying to establish the possibility that a reasonable gestalt may emerge around this basic idea that could have implications for seemingly unrelated fields of endeavour. The fugue experience advanced here must be understood as a multi-factorial process, and the implication is that such an approach may be useful for the topic of hypnosis as well. Dissociation as a product of catastrophic injury is not so problematic. The symptoms from which Ravel suffered, for example, clearly exhibit a "bracketing out" that nonetheless left other aspects of composer's behaviour relatively intact. What is more difficult is the extension of this idea of architectural division to the domain of functional anomalies, occurring either in the context of psychodynamic illness or even that of ritual behaviour.

But the stakes are fairly high; these questions inquire deeply into the nature of what constitutes normalcy, health, maladaptation and, ultimately, human consciousness itself. At the centre of the storm lies the degree of unity and autonomy that can be ascribed to the individual organism. The position here is that reduction to either primitive natural forces or culture is unproductive. As we have seen, adoption of the terminology of hypnotic dissociation by no means requires such uniformity; to the contrary, the validity of social issues seems indisputable. Hilgard's view of the human estate is symbolised by his explicit denial of a supreme mental Executor that subsumes both planning and monitoring under its aegis. And while it is true that the physiological picture is far from complete and hence open to interpretation, other members of the cognitive science community may make contributions of their own. In particular, cognitive models employing the idea of parallel processing are amongst several trends

that have served to rejuvenate interest in dissociation as a viable concept (Spiegel and Cardena, 1991).

Finally, it must be asked: does hypnosis offer a reply to those who view the human subject as divided but insist upon confining the issue within the level of discourse? I believe it does, and the answer lies in what is implied about the automaticity of language processing. Interpretation cannot be reduced to the level of words, even when symbols are situated within a socio-historical framework of rule-governed behaviours. The grand assumption is that words and consciousness are an indivisible unit, that symbols transparently carry the nature of awareness from whence they sprang, if only the appropriate contextual information is provided. Hypnosis strongly suggests otherwise: that language and awareness vary significantly as to the degree they are co-extensive. This means that, if one wishes to maintain the centrality of context, it is necessary to include the manner in which language is being embodied in a given situation. Likewise, however, the concept of knowledge must also be expanded, for *self-knowledge* implies a procedural understanding of the organism that is not accessible by verbal means.

Hermeneutics is going to have to assimilate the concept of *state dependency*, but one moreover, that goes beyond the incommensurability of parochial ritual. Communication, accordingly, cannot be conducted from behind a serene, authoritarian veil of knowledge: it requires full immersion in the procedural quest for embodied self-knowledge as essential pre-requisite. Hilgard's work on the hidden observer phenomenon may have implications for this process. We have already mentioned its possible relevance for psychological divisions of a rather mild pathological order. But the issue of psychological barriers that are more explicitly social in origin has yet to be discussed in this context. Specifically, is it possible that the prevalent culture of identity,

promoted with unprecedented zeal and efficiency by organs of mass media, may be creating a situation in which the hidden observer artefact may be applicable?

If this turns out to be the case, the use of self-initiated dissociative technique like that involving the fugue may prove to be a valuable tool. Experiencing an embodied moment of “otherness” is not the same as constructing discursive contrast; it amounts to an altered experience of one’s own language and serves to provide insight into the affective basis that both motivates and inhibits various forms of linguistic usage. For, as long as the goal remains self-expression—whether this is viewed as essentially authored or socially constructed—the freer, more adventurous and more objective capacities of the human mind will be forced to keep vigil in the shadows of a covert existence. The complexity of the cognitive universe—of which hypnosis is a part—undermines belief in an essential, unified homunculus; but neither does it equate the highest awareness with contextual knowledge of the most encyclopaedic order. A different form of responsibility emerges when consciousness—and not control—is the ultimate object of communication, for that which cannot be possessed requires no owner to possess it.

5. Attention

A. Dualism

The study of attention is a valuable aid for illuminating the numerous ways in which artistic events are structured to generate meaning. As a result, it can provide an alternative evaluative framework from which to view allegedly divergent types of practice. Does it really matter how we are being asked to attend, or to what? Or is the act of attending to music much more homogeneous, something we simply choose to do or not?

The work of a “pop” singer-songwriter-instrumentalist, Tori Amos, will be used as a convenient example with which to broach these issues. Well grounded in venerable singing techniques such as vibrato, sure intonation, dynamic control, and the like, Amos’ vocal style nonetheless aims at “pushing the limits” as a kind of feminine counterpart to the macho, thermodynamic excesses of the primal scream school. Copious falsetto, pianissimos delivered at the very threshold of perception, quirky intonation, *Sprechgesang*, and similar techniques, help project an image of heightened emotionalism which the vocal persona requires as commensurate with the magnitude of its concerns. This is a skilfully executed aesthetic that serves to focus attention upon—and elicit empathy for—its narrative voice, achieved by means of what might best be called an intensified level of prosodic gesture.

Shifting one’s attention from the focal *subject* toward other aspects of musical organisation, however, reveals a striking contrast. Here, the sound discloses a minimalist bent that is especially evident in songs with solo keyboard accompaniment. Melodically severe, these pieces cling to their harmonic centres with dogged determination. Currents of broken-chord filigree and little melodic snippets—dotted by a steady sprinkling of syncopation in the manner of much “new age” pianism—provide for a flow that does little to articulate structure beyond the first few seconds of its onset. Unlike the minimalism of a Terry Riley or Steve Reich, this music is obstinate in its refusal to evolve; indeed, the prevailing state is not so much one of redundancy as *perseveration*, of being locked in patterns that cannot yield to alternative modes of behaviour. Above all, it is this juxtaposition of inflated vocal histrionics with static generic ambience that warrants special notice.

We are, in effect, being coaxed to ignore the latter level of organisation as irrelevant to the ritual at hand. Amos is a troubadour, and hence what counts are the relevance of the words, and the passionate conviction of their delivery; as a result, any

critical misgivings must be attributed to an inappropriate application of attention to “background” features of the performance. In other words, the purely “musical” function is conceived as providing continuity for a ritual incantation, as well as attentional cues for a *visual* level of theatrical gesture. This kind of explanation in some ways echoes the theory of Rouget (1980), for example, as elaborated in his book on the relations between music and possession rites.

We thus confront a collection of sounds, organised so as to render the application of close attention to most levels of its structure irrelevant. This does not imply that the non-verbal dimension of Amos’ auditory offerings remains completely obscured behind the task of linguistic comprehension. Sudden onsets, offsets, changes in dynamics, shifts in frequency range and vocal sonority render an eventful soundscape, but can rely upon involuntary attention shifts in order to stake their claim to consciousness. The sound, in short, is built to “take care of itself”. From this perspective, the artefact is beautifully designed to accomplish its objective; it does not readily lend itself to other uses, other than that which invites the listener to come to terms with the narrative ruminations of a fervent subject.

On one level, this allows for considerable creativity; after all, poetic excellence stands as one of the most profound human accomplishments, whether placed in an overt musical setting or not. Nonetheless, there are reasons why the foregoing analysis intimates a considerable constraint upon what appears a field of vast possibility. Again, the answer lies in the manner in which dualism is exploited, serving to continuously justify the role of the “body” as ultimate arbiter of musical significance. One is not being called upon to react to sound in a manner that could create a state of ambiguity or dialogue; rather, the sound is unproblematic, reliable, and sure to create its salutary effects in the broadest range of circumstances.

What is the context that seeks the brunt of one's attentive energy? It is the narrative voice, along with its concerns, frustrations, analyses, triumphs, and despairs. Consequently, the manner in which these structures exploit our attentional capacities can be seen as monologic in character. With respect to the example offered, musical structure *does* play an important role; it is truly "conserve-ative", in terms of both its facile demands and its ability to create a functionally resonant unanimity between listener and voice. The words may be of the most "radical" nature imaginable, but the underlying musical gesture remains benignly the same.

Here we see the beauty of dualism in action. Any critique of the music *per se* is deemed an affront to the "body": a repressive attack, in other words, against the individual and the sanctity of one's indivisible image, one's "natural" desires. The incessant rhetoric of dualistic rebellion thus masks a dynamic of the self, with its endless quest for control. What is being nurtured is largely an aesthetic of certainty, sanctioned by a specific split of body and mind whose primary principle is self-determination.

To those who would question the banality of this musical activism, however, dualistic ideology provides yet another rejoinder. One need only look across the great divide at the opposing, "classical" alternative: an abstract formalism that denies the corporeality of the body and its corresponding world of material relations. This is a matter that deserves careful consideration, for the views it encompasses emanate from a number of divergent contexts. Interestingly, the musician whose work best facilitates the practices promoted in this thesis—J. S. Bach—is often cited as just such a conservative exemplar.

These issues need to be considered in detail. For the moment, I merely wish to suggest a contrast between the fundamentalist cast of the specific material considered above, and that posed by works of the popular baroque composer. Critiques that refer disparagingly to the use of Bach's oeuvre at the present historical moment are often logically coherent and reflective of real practices. The complexity of his material, in other

words, lends itself to a variety of uses, each of which tends to highlight a different field of meaning. One of these “functional systems”, however, is claimed to be especially dialogic in character. Further, I shall maintain that it is precisely in its status as a complex organisation of *sound* that the baroque artefact effects transactions of such dynamic psychological implication.

A final comment about dualistic thought is in order. The distinction being drawn does not conform to the hackneyed dichotomy of highbrow versus lowbrow art. There is nothing elitist about advocating a form of perceptual discipline. Such an attitude is an affront to the native abilities of most humans and can only serve as a deterrent to growth. What is disturbing about the current trend of marketing so-called popular culture is its insistent linkage of hedonism with a social activism that speaks for the marginal and hence for the repressed. We are all products of various types of social conditioning but, by their nature, these biologically instantiated behavioural constraints cannot be overcome without a concomitant degree of vigilance and dedication that is incompatible with undisciplined modalities of ecstatic abandon.

The concept of attention is offered here as a means of exploring a field of musical meaning that is inaccessible to the kinds of analyses the dualistic ideology permits. Meaning is not simply an undifferentiated crop, quantitatively harvested as a function of the act of attending; the kind of meaning that emerges from an aesthetic transaction is related to the differential manner in which that attention is employed. In other words, what specific information is ultimately selected and further processed in a given situation is, in the parlance of the scientific literature, *task-dependent*. This fact alone has enormous implications for the study of culture. With respect to the present topic, it implies that neither “music” nor “listening” adequately specifies the task in a given situation.

The way a particular style of music is constructed will impose different kinds of perceptual demands upon the listener in order for it to make sense, to become something

other than a mere random collection of sounds. Of course, even “random” sounds are not lacking in structural significance, to the extent they elicit reactions from the perceptual apparatus, and subsequently from structures of evolutionary and cultural learning. Music cannot be seen to exist apart from the biological structures that constrain its possibilities. But, in addition to what is perceptually possible, different levels of memory generate further dimensions of meaning. The type of auditory events that trigger automatic attention switches represent a biological memory of what is salient for the organism to respond to quickly. In addition, individual history and cultural learning represent further mnemonic levels that contribute to meaning. Even the notion of what constitutes random noise is susceptible to change in terms of these larger associative contexts.

Clearly, the notion of cultural difference must be an integral part of any musical consideration, for higher level structures of social learning place distinct constraints upon the process of perception as well. As discussed above, even a discrete composition such as a Bach fugue can present any number of tasks, each of which may be meaningful in a different way. Given both the multiplicity of factors involved, and the tremendous access to information that has resulted from the proliferation of communications technology, however, it becomes increasingly difficult to define these tasks in terms of ethnic or economic groupings. Some practices, furthermore, may be historically novel, revealing a process of exaptation that parallels the hermeneutic inexhaustibility of literary texts.⁸

Considering the multiplicity of interacting levels these concepts imply demands a holistic approach such as the one that the study of attention commends. As Näätänen (1992, p.392) explains, attentional activity “depends on the subject’s motivation and momentary ability to concentrate on task performance [response-set, Picton et al, 1978], probably also on temporal expectancies with regard to the occurrence of the relevant

⁸ The term exaptation I believe was coined by S. J. Gould, and meant to specify evolutionary circumstances that utilise some existing function or structure in a context or manner quite distinct from that for which it

stimulus [stimulus-set, Picton et al, 1978]". A number of relevant points can be derived from this. As previously noted, the present moment embodies the confrontation of numerous structures with varying temporal frames. Critically, however, what distinguishes the attentional process at any moment is a sense of contingency, a dynamic situation that reflects the realities of a complex, constantly changing environment. The evolutionary rationale seems fairly self-evident: the organism must cope with various levels of indeterminacy within the context of a hierarchy of values, and hence must exhibit varying degrees of behavioural flexibility.

This dynamic situation of multiple contexts, time-frames, and the need for proper resource allocation is reflected in the intersection of high-speed, bottom-up processes and slower though often pre-set top-down influences within the widely distributed functional systems of nervous organisation. The allegedly discrete compartments of "nature" and "culture" are intertwined in a much more complex process than dualistic thought acknowledges. What is important is the dissemination of techniques that will increase sensitivity, both conceptually and experientially, to a transactional field harbouring a greater range of behavioural possibilities. Behaviour must accordingly cease to be regarded as an uncompromising struggle between two "opposing" forces before such an alternative regime can take root within the human organism. The study of attention adds a level of specificity that can serve to deconstruct these monolithic edifices.

Examining the hierarchical stratification of processes involved in complex behaviours suggests that there is not simply one task but many sub-tasks involved in the execution of a given ritual. Moreover, if one starts with the highest level objectives of a given practice, it does not follow that others can be easily specified as a self-evident, algorithmic sequence of procedures. This must be particularly true when the aim is dialogic in nature, for the open-endedness of the desired situation means that it cannot be

completely controlled from the outset. Of course, no ritual would even be possible, much less desirable, if it represented a product of total control. The dynamic nature of life prohibits the realisation of such utter stasis. Just as in the living organism, a balance exists between what is relatively invariant and what is novel.

B. Ritual and Functional Systems

Within the domain of artistic endeavour, however, there exists an objective in which certain stable, high-level structures are opened up to the possibility of alteration. This is the goal of dialogue: to institute a targeted level of indeterminacy. In particular, concern rests with certain rigidly conditioned patterns of behaviour. As discussed in chapter three and elsewhere, however, there is resistance to this line of inquiry. How can we be agents other than ourselves? Isn't this some fanciful, logically impossible notion of transcendence?

The answers lie, in part, in the structure of the ritual experience. Here, I wish to propose a hypothesis central to my thesis: it is only in surrendering autonomy to a meta-logic that self-transformation becomes plausible (e.g. Mahrer, 1978; Allport, 1961). In order to cede control, however, the ritual activity must appear as a credible means of achieving the desired objective. It should come as no surprise, furthermore, that credibility should be gauged in the present epoch by an appeal to the empirical sciences. Nor does this conflict with the ritual's imperative for a full commitment, based on a notion of faith. In other words, willingness to participate and give one's self over to an external dynamic can only be enhanced by an appreciation that such a regime poses no affront to our primary historical modality of understanding.

Such an appreciation of ritual design also assuages fears that "letting go" within the context of the experience is merely abandonment to lower levels of function. Eliciting

behaviour that will isolate component activities in order to weaken the unity of higher conglomerates may be a necessary step, but this “deconstruction” must be seen within the overall context of both the specific activities and the motivational structures that engage them. These two combined categories can serve as an overarching mechanism of *reintegration*. The task of enhancing one’s understanding of the entire process acts finally as a means of granting assent, of comprehending that the forfeit of self-autonomy on one level has salutary effects of a more global order.

Our hypothesis is as follows: in the multi-level terms suggested by cognitive science (e.g. Luria, Sokolov, Näätänen, Picton), one can broadly view ritual behaviour as a “functional unit” comprised of environment, biological organism, ritual activity, and motivational field.⁹ In the present case, the overriding goal is that of increasing dialogic potential as a means of facilitating communication and behavioural flexibility. The goal of this level is to establish a stable, long-term attentional focus that can integrate the ritual activity *per se* into a general pattern of living. In other words, if the ritual event serves to heighten awareness of the complex dynamic quality of the present moment through a temporary suspension of the “self” and its conditioned structures, then the ultimate effect is an extension of this modality beyond the “control” environment of the ritual setting.

Consideration of the constructed nature of human subjectivity must adopt a multi-levelled, global approach. One virtue of using the topic of attention as an organisational tool is the opportunity it provides to forego the dualistic terminology of nature and culture. Concepts of automaticity, temporal sequencing, selection, mental set, task demands and the like explore some of the complexities of human cognition in a manner that resists division into traditional, monolithic camps.

⁹ Luria (1973, pp. 27-9) refers to a functional system as comprised of an invariant task dedicated to an invariant goal, but accomplished by variative means. In higher forms of behaviour, especially, the

C. Automaticity

The question arises as to just how much sensory and perceptual processing can be deemed fully automatic, thus operating independently of the effects of voluntary attention. In Näätänen's view, "task-independent sensory analysis" (p. 388) is a "hard-wired" process that qualifies as automatic. Here, then, is an aspect of nervous function that seems to fall unambiguously into the category of "nature". None of this short-latency responsiveness is deemed to attain the status of semantic processing. Does this mean that the rest of our perceptual behaviour can be understood as "cultural" in origin? Not entirely: that is to say, culture broadly influences how the underlying systems will be employed, but deeper understanding of a particular behaviour requires analysis that is inclusive of the underlying biology. Otherwise, a given set of cultural assumptions may place unacknowledged or even undesirable constraints upon the realm of the possible. This is indeed the alleged effect of the particular ethos described above.

Why might this be so? Näätänen states that "task-dependent sensory processing is based on sensory mechanisms of early stimulus selection. This means that the organism can voluntarily "tune" its sensory systems so that certain kinds of stimuli become automatically selected for further processing, while the other stimuli are rejected [Näätänen refers here to attentional stimulus-set as demonstrated scientifically by Picton et al, 1978]" (p. 390). The critical point here is that this selection mechanism is thought to work on the basis of "preset sensory criteria, those defined by the task" (390). As discussed above, one heavily promoted style of musical culture is based on ritual activities that highlight verbal meanings and varied forms of social interaction demanding a high degree of kinesthetic and vocal response. In terms of task requirements, moreover, these activities call for a relatively low level of auditory perceptual discrimination for their

complexity of the sub-tasks requires afferent feedback.

success. This pattern of attentional deployment is enhanced, as previously mentioned, by the dualistic ethos.

An additional question arises: is the practice of devoting attention to a greater range of stimulus features adequately characterised by a culture that is so intent upon dismissing it? Is it possible, furthermore, to speculate upon the kinds of meanings that such an alternative aesthetic task might be capable of producing?

D. Ritual and Perception

Let us briefly identify the immediate objective of this ritual as “the conscious discernment of simultaneous patterns of auditory information”. Stated in this way, a contrast appears with reference to the aesthetic task, represented by a shift away from high-level structures that define the ritual response to a perceptual process focused upon unfolding physical characteristics of auditory stimuli. The postulation of two discrete modalities or sets of attentional deployment is meant to reflect this fundamental difference in the requirements posed by specific tasks. Broadbent and Gregory (1964) define what they term *response set* as “a set to make certain responses, rather than a set to react to stimuli from a certain source” (p.30). This particular distinction delineates two types of selection criteria. When responses are driving the perceptual process, they establish what is irrelevant by creating specific templates of expectation. On the basis of the task—especially if it is highly learned—a large field of stimuli can be effortlessly eliminated. However, Näätänen is careful to term this acquired facility *automatized*, in order to differentiate it from fully *automatic* processes discussed earlier (p.19).

The ability to establish high-level associative units that can be implemented in a reflexive manner is in fact learning itself; as such, its value to the organism hardly needs

elaboration. This very automaticity, however, so enabling within an economy of time and information, stands as part of a crucial interface between culture and organism that is misconstrued by the habits of dualistic thought. Regarding the subject as a composite of language and biological desire, the latter is dismissed as a stable constant, leaving the former to be dissected in words.

Directing attention to organisational levels more granular than language is thus seen as a denial of history, a fruitless leap into the allegedly rigid determinism of instinctual behaviour. In this manner, the collective human subject becomes monologised, the product of an indivisible realm of socio-linguistic conditioning. Herein lies a great conundrum for reductionist thought: the very conceptual milieu that is used to understand behaviour and analyse the causal influences of culture is itself a product of this propensity for complex reflexive chains. Because there appears no way out of this circular logic, however, the rush of analysis often simply continues unabated.

In order to permit the formation of novel multi-levelled learned functions, we propose that attention must be focused in a manner that creates awareness at a different point in the sequence of information processing. The path to such a goal begins with a realisation that the habitual situation is not immutable, but rather represents the result of extensive cultural *training*. It is the embodied results of this virtuosity—that is, the automaticity inherent to the thought process—which needs to be addressed with reference to our biological endowment. Rephrased: the biological does not simply represent a value-sphere of the “body”, a “primitive” domain of metabolic drives; what is more, both the self and the creative process must be considered with reference to their complex bio-social organisation.

On the surface, it may appear as if the world of musical sound offers easy access to an experience untainted by the symbolic resonance of cultural mediation. This is not the position advanced here. Nonetheless, we submit that a sense of direction has been

indicated through insistence that “attention to sound” become a primary goal of the listening experience. The objective is not a transcendence of culture per se, but rather of a particular modality of cultural practice. And this very broad ethos exerts its influence over the musical moment in a whole variety of ways.

Returning to the behavioural concept of “response set”, validated neurophysiologically by Picton et al (1978), helps to clarify this predicament. It is not only the structural characteristics of a given social ritual that can impose such a method of perceptual transaction. Even in the absence of words or overt behavioural entailments, music can offer an opportunity to create preferential conditions for ritually eliciting a particular emotional response, thus selecting for appropriate events from amongst an on-going array of auditory options. This can be done in part by choice of repertoire. For example, homophonic music presented in the context of certain harmonic patterns and sonorities is well suited to any number of emotive valences whose committed pursuit distinctly narrows one's attentional focus. Even the polyphony of Bach can be exploited on just such a receptive level by limiting focus to relevant events. A task may nominally be one of “listening to sound”, in other words, while still being controlled by specific classes of response.

The abstract templates of musical analysis provide yet another option for directing attention. But these structures, which are so useful from a performance standpoint—as well as interesting in their own right—exist independently from the dynamic, real-time experience of music. It is not simply that such reductions cannot fully express the semantic implications of the musical process; more critically, they cause attention to be apportioned in a way that can prevent the realisation of these “additional” aspects of meaning. Monitoring unfolding sound events for conformity to large-scale temporal structures can divert resources from the apprehension of more ephemeral—but no less significant—levels of mental function.

E. Alternative to Dualism

Whatever the merits of assorted high-level expectations—perceived as either “emotional” or “intellectual” constructs—the present thesis wishes to inquire into the possibility of an alternative mode of participation. Such a process does not transpire without expectation, but rather attempts to confine it to its own field of specification. Here the notion of limited resources comes into play, for one of the virtues of fugal writing is the rapid delivery of information that serves to functionally limit the temporal window with which one can effectively deal. In order to follow this dynamic onslaught, it is necessary to keep a high level of “on-line” vigilance to the desired stimulus attributes. In Näätänen’s terms, this “attentional trace [akin to the neurophysiological stimulus-set demonstrated by Picton et al] is a recognition mechanism for relevant stimuli that is more sharply “tuned” to relevant stimuli for [a] more advanced phase of processing of input” (p. 284). The relevant stimuli here are the musical sounds.

The question arises, however, as to the nature of the “advanced processing” required by the task under consideration. In this context, the nature of our ritual can be clarified. The goal is to hold such higher-level specificity in abeyance, without relinquishing attention to the auditory stimuli. In the “normal” situation, the functional requirements of directed behaviour automatically tune the system; here, however, the object is to inhibit the selection process through the task design itself. Some of these attributes have been previously discussed. Musical sound does not immediately portend the categorisation of external objects or events that would elicit a particular practical, patterned response. In addition, we have noted the importance of studiously avoiding the mediation of abstract analytical templates or fixed emotional programs. Finally, a high density of information serves to inhibit “irrelevant” intrusions of thought. But the successful

implementation of these constraints does not imply a total cessation of memory or expectation, which would render the musical experience an incoherent succession of sonic events.

F. Musical Isomorphism and Culture

Melody, harmony, and rhythm are all elements that have cultural implications. Let us focus first upon melody. Without resorting to ethnographic data, it seems safe to say that the practice of presenting discrete temporal sequences of varying pitches is a very widespread human activity. Further, exposure to such forms presumably provides extensive training that allows for the effortless perception of these constructs. Unfolding in time, melodic chains acquire both past and future within the window of working memory, thus resonating with their own histories. Yet other levels of memory can be exploited. Because of their unique mnemonic properties, melodies can be used to evoke nostalgic recollections or any number of culturally induced associations. Bach, for example, could utilise his audience's familiarity with the Lutheran hymn to create "extra-musical" meanings within a purely instrumental setting.

Nonetheless, melodic material need not rely on such devices, which can be minimised through the practice of strict attention to the physical features of the auditory stimuli, a task of concentration greatly facilitated by the concurrent challenges of the polyphonic setting. In other words, subtracting certain associative elements hardly leaves the field of melody bereft of semantic potential. According to the gestalt theorists (e.g. Wertheimer, 1959; Kohler, 1947), musical structure—like that of mathematics—is often resonant with isomorphic relations. But such formal transactions need not manifest themselves as *explicitly* mathematical (as suggested by the structuralist psychologist Tichener, 1973) in order to convey their import.

Takemitsu (1995) makes a pointed comment regarding the need for explicit formal coherence: “[i]f music consisted only of inventing and constructing sounds I could well do without being a composer. If there is a sound that is alive, some kind of order will naturally exist. That is why we think the singing of birds is beautiful, truly beautiful” (p.14). In other words, Takemitsu is pointing to a special status for the aesthetic act of “construction” that is especially reliant upon intuitive capacities. Need these inner biases refer to only culturally specific factors, however? The point is not to deny a shaping role for culture, especially given this composer’s acute self-consciousness as a Japanese-born practitioner of “western” music. But sound is not necessarily or completely legitimated through its articulated relations to either mathematics or social custom. Instead, Takemitsu refers us to a general concept of “life”.

If avian symbolism reflects a fairly universal intercultural ability to draw isomorphic connections from the notion of flight, for example, it seems reasonable to assume that melodies can exploit similar comparative attributes with respect to patterns of frequency and rhythm. Indeed, one might expect the non-linguistic character of such constructs to facilitate this process. By the same token, melodies occur within various modes that do reflect higher degrees of geo-cultural specificity. It is quite possible to enact a ritual focus upon factors of political or cultural identity. Nevertheless, due to the development of mass communications technology, it must be noted that the western diatonic scale has been internalised by an enormous population. This means that the melodic/harmonic idiom of the baroque fugue poses no unique challenge to a host of listeners who remain differentiated from a number of perspectives. In short, the phenomenon of melody can be meaningful without the accoutrements of specific cultural association.

Such a basic level of learning provides the listener with a rich compendium of contrasts and expectations. The role of *harmony* within the fugal situation will be discussed in more detail later. For the moment, it need only be stressed that harmony is

not being considered here as a primary focus of voluntary attention. To this extent, its contribution results from its status as a behaviour that has been considerably automatised through enculturation. Returning to the notion of task, then, the perceptual objective with which we are concerned is the layered presentation of melodic material.

Similar statements can be made with respect to rhythm. Bach often employs historical dance forms, but within these general metrical patterns the rhythmic flow of materials might best be described by the term *regularity*. Messiaen (1976) writes:

In Bach's music there are harmonic colors, and extraordinary contrapuntal craftsmanship; it's marvelous and inspired, but there's no rhythm.... The explanation is this: in these works an uninterrupted succession of equal note values plunges the listener into a state of beatific satisfaction; nothing thwarts his pulse, breathing, or heartbeats. Thus he is very much at ease, receives no shock, and all this appears to him to be perfectly "rhythmic." (p. 34)

Again, no concerted effort to attend to this aspect of organisation is required. But as Messiaen implies, this might have some interesting consequences. Näätänen suggests that "reduced temporal uncertainty attenuates the general cerebral excitability" (p. 130). This seems consistent with the pursuit of a mode of perceptual vigilance that is not geared to activate specific response patterns: a state of repose, in other words, in which attention itself is enhanced. Such a possibility is further supported by work of Näätänen and Picton (1987), who entertain the possibility that "the brain possesses a general gain control over its own sensory input" (p.407).

In contrast to a widespread ritual objective of maximum arousal in an environment of low information achieved by means of redundancy and receptor abuse, we are putting forward a practice that strives for low arousal in a setting of high information and heightened sensory acuity. Everything has been utilised in order to focus attentional resources upon the unfolding stream of concurrent melodic materials. From the standpoint of attention, however, our ritual objective has not yet been reached. The

realisation of this final step can only be comprehended with reference to the fugue and its specific organisational attributes.

What is most interesting and surprising about the program being advanced is its apparent unfeasibility, a situation necessitated by the forced confrontation of fugal logic and perceptual apparatus. What the fugue requires—conscious apprehension of simultaneously presented voices—is beyond the purported capabilities of the resource-limited, serial processing of voluntary attention. We have been systematically led, in other words, to the precipitation of a *crisis*, one in which the steady piling on of information is entrusted to an apparatus that is unable to *select* for necessary input commensurate with its task.

The critical point is not the failure, however, but the way in which it is handled. Two alternatives are immediately apparent. First, the task can be simplified in such a way that voluntary attention is maintained. For example, one could selectively listen for the subject on the basis of templates formed during its initial presentation or its prior analysis. Second, attention can be diverted to other auditory aspects such as rhythm or harmony, or simply left to “wander” into matters completely outside the scope of the ritual framework.

A third alternative to the fugal dilemma, however, seems to involve the maintenance of an extraordinary level of sensory vigilance in the absence of focal attention. Such a state might be depicted as a partially arrested version of the attentional process, a kind of functional limbo hovering between the realm of full parallel obligatory sensory processing and that of the serial, task-dependent semantic processing, both discussed in the theory of Näätänen and Picton. These ideas are put forward to explore the potential ramifications of a core of subjective changes relating to a somewhat fragile auditory experience, most easily evoked by the contrapuntal mastery of J. S. Bach.

A number of summary points might be helpful at this juncture. First, the auditory sensory system is brought to a high level of arousal. Second, voluntary attention is

confined to a very narrow focus. Third, fugal logic precipitates a crisis, which can, in some instances, culminate in the subjective conviction of a shift in one's processing modality, hypothesised as dissociative in nature. Fourth, the latter point is reinforced by a subjective feeling that one has "let go". Fifth, the resultant state persists only when left "on its own": that is, any reinstatement of focalisation immediately terminates it. This is why it is also an inherently unstable condition, often fluctuating back and forth between states.

From the standpoint of attention theory, this conceptualisation appears somewhat paradoxical for, in Näätänen and Picton's terms, the notion of voluntary memory is task-dependent. But task is precisely what seems to be removed in the present instance: in other words, the impossible chore is abandoned without finding a suitable replacement in its stead. This is where the notion of discipline might exert its greatest effect. It appears that the cumulative effects of practice can sufficiently automatize the sensory process such that a new, self-sustaining mode of behaviour is permitted to transpire. In this sense, the fugal logic is an indispensable route to the desired goal: it is only through constant effort to master the imposed demands that enough procedural skill will be acquired to "chance" upon the solution.

Certain hypothesised characteristics of nervous function lend support to the possibility discussed here, in particular the ability of attentional processes to develop selective patterns of functional coherence. In a crowded room of people talking, for example, a few voices singing in unison will quickly drown out the noise. Scientists have discovered that the brain uses a similar principle to enable its neurons engaged in critically important tasks to win out over neurons essentially processing distractions. Picton's evoked potential research on the effect of notched white noise on the amplitude of potentials evoked by a threshold stimulus illustrates that synchronous neuronal firing may be a fundamental mechanism for boosting the volume of brain signals representing behaviourally relevant stimuli. This finding in humans was recently cross-validated by P.

Fries et al (2001); the study pinpointed the responses of brain neurons in monkeys attending to a particular stimulus while ignoring nearby distracters. Using electrophysiological recordings, the scientists monitored groups of neurons in the visual processing area at the back of the brain (V4). They showed that neurons activated by features of the attended stimulus conspicuously synchronised their activity in the gamma (40-90 Hz) range. Meanwhile, neurons activated by features of the distracters, in effect, continued to speak with disparate voices. The researchers suggest that such synchronous ensemble firing produces an amplifying effect that telegraphs the oscillating signal representing the attended stimulus to downstream processing areas in the brain. These areas, such as the inferior temporal cortex, will, in turn pass on the signal to brain areas involved in the highest levels of visual cognition and awareness, creating, in effect, a chain reaction through the visual processing pathways.

Such processes are required in the foreground/background hearing of music. Ritual design in the present context aims to increase the gain for a specific pattern of selective processing. Moreover, the objective is also dependent upon the inhibition of habitual constructs. Research is presently being targeted by Baribeau et al (2000) that concerns the timing of neuronal signals and the neuronal choir going out of sync. Future studies will examine possible underlying mechanisms, such as the role of mental sets in synchronising activity of neuronal ensembles. Again, ritual activity is structured in a way that can facilitate specific kinds of processing.

The combination of operations being pursued does not necessarily correspond to traditional practices. As with any artistic artefact, the fugue originates in a specific cultural context and follows a distinctive historical trajectory to the present moment. Whatever ways it has been variously employed, however, the particular properties we are intent upon exploiting here are more dependent upon exercises of a procedural, rather than a hermeneutic nature. More accurately, perhaps, one might say that the present

hermeneutic objective is somewhat negative in scope, concerned with socio-historical factors that *prevent* a particular usage, in contrast to forging an interpretative text per se.

Because a critical level of the ritual is said to involve a non-linguistic state of consciousness, emphasis is placed upon process rather than discursive content. Arcane knowledge of neither a musical or sociological order is required, as the task involves skills concomitant with a general degree of enculturation. Granted, the present thesis ultimately remains an interpretative enterprise, but the above distinction is meant to underscore the emergent, multi-levelled nature of the meaning being pursued. And from this viewpoint, the most interesting social issue is the systematic alienation of a demographically diverse public from activities in which they are largely culturally conversant.

G. Attention and Moral Discipline

The current ethos of "instant gratification" has been widely observed. Such a statement is pertinent to the issue at hand because the problem is not fundamentally one of vocational training, but *attentional discipline*. This attribute is the major pre-requisite for cultivating both the special state advocated here, as well as the communicative process as a whole. Short-cut forms of ecstasy may be subjectively pleasurable, but achieve their rapid results by simply utilising extant patterns of conditioned automaticity. By contrast, productive ecstatic abandonment is predicated upon the instantiation of new learned regimes that can shape the process in a less self-indulgent way.

By focusing attention upon a specific, complex sensory perceptual task, the immediate goal is to increase sensitivity to incoming stimuli and to prepare the sensory apparatus for a temporary period of greater functional autonomy. But such a form of independence implies that the forms of memory associated with voluntary attention are not accessible to the system. Consequently, performance of the assigned task would be

confined to the temporal window defined by capacities of the sensory system. As previously noted, the organisational characteristics of the fugue are conducive to such usage. Lack of large-scale structural contrast and development, plus a high density of information, means that salient aspects are indeed confined to the window of the unfolding present.

But "present" must have duration in order to pose a meaningful task. Is there any theoretical perspective that could fulfil such a requirement in the absence of the normal application of voluntary attention? In Näätänen's terms, such an auditory sensory trace is found in the generation of a component of evoked potential phenomenology--derived from the stimulus-set process (Picton, et al)--called "the mismatch negativity" (MMN). With this mechanism, "current sensory input is compared with traces that depend only on very recent auditory events, those occurring up to a few seconds, maximally 15-20 sec, prior to that input.... The most recent results, however, might considerably widen that time window" (p. 192). In addition, it is theorised that "[t]he neural trace underlying MMN encode all auditory stimulus features, irrespective of their relevance to the task to be performed..." (p. 304).

This full, parallel sensory processing thus achieves what the voluntary process cannot: "attention" to Bach's profusion of sounds. Of course, the fact that these traces occur even in the absence of semantic activation makes for a rather undiscerning type of "listening". But the point is important, as it temporally preserves a great wealth of information from which the task-dependent mechanism can choose. In Näätänen's theory, task requirements set up the parameters of an attentional trace against which incoming stimuli are compared, a process that ultimately allows for a separation between irrelevant features and those that are preserved for further processing. This process, akin to stimulus-set, must be differentiated from that of response-set, which involves context and highly conditioned or over-learned experience (Picton et al, 1978).

How do such concepts apply to our moment of musical "crisis", wherein the fugue's perceptual demands exceed the capacity of the voluntary system? Task simplification would involve a choice to alter the trace based on a set of new criteria, among which could be included the activation of patterns of association that underlie verbal thinking. If attention is allowed to "wander", however, two contrasting possibilities seem to arise. On one hand, control could fall to the exigencies of the external environment and the obligatory processing that leads to an automatic attention switch. In the absence of any sustained focus, this procedure would cause the mind to alight momentarily on whatever stimulus asserted its presence. On the other hand, wandering could take another course. In the presence of a redundant environment, conscious vigilance might relax to the point where the highly automatised language capacity would wander through the maze of its own internal relations, driven by whatever recently activated or highly travelled pathways it met. In this situation, the lack of coherent task would represent a dissociation of verbal thought from the process of consciously directed attention.

These ideas provide a context in which to consider what was labelled a "third option" to the perceptual dilemma of the fugue, one that was subject to neither the task-bound control of voluntary attention nor the inner and outer contingencies of wandering. This might be seen as a highly organised process that is distinguished by its unusual modality of control. On the sensory side, vigilance might be maintained through the auspices of over-learned procedures. With respect to attention, however, the novel discipline might be conceived as an ability to curb a propensity to wander, despite the sudden dissolution of the current task. The result would be a dissociated awareness, no longer driven by higher-level programs but, instead, fixed upon monitoring the interface between automatic and serial processing systems. Such an eventuality might be predicated on a partial spread of activation from sensory input that cannot be attended to

in the habitual task-dependent condition, with its early selection (à la stimulus-set, Picton et al).

As mentioned above, this speculation is informed by the need to understand the possible ramifications of an experience presenting itself as a subjectively discrete state of processing. The following considerations, drawn once more from the work of Luria, Sokolov, Näätänen, and Picton further attempt to lend credibility to the basic direction established for this inquiry. One phenomenon involved in the sudden disengagement of structured activity is the “orienting response”. In this situation, pre-attentively processed information of a biologically salient nature can suddenly overrule current activity in order to assume an investigative attitude poised for ready response. In this scenario, there is presumably a small window of time before the automatic “hunch” is confirmed and translated into specific patterns of action.

But what if the flexibility of human culture could create an environment that effectively removed most biologically salient signals? It is common experience that intense concentration upon a difficult mental task can largely dissociate attention from one’s surroundings; such, indeed, is the ritual situation provided by the fugue. When the logic of the task reaches an impasse, however, and serial awareness is faced with its impotence, might there not occur a sudden hiatus in operation, wherein no alternative options have yet appeared? I suggest that here, in this suspended moment, a possible “discovery” might be made.

Such an insight does not represent a literal solution to the task at hand, a problem that is, as we have suggested, a perceptual impossibility. Instead, the problem becomes irrelevant. For in that interval—between the arrest of thought and its embarkation upon a new course of action—an entirely unexpected vista of experience emerges. Consequently, the novel strategy—or more accurately, anti-strategy—does not reengage attention, but simply leaves it in its current state of quiescence. It turns out that in these

particular circumstances a greater density of information and intensity of effect is perceived *without* the intervention of a voluntarily maintained processing task.

An intriguing comparison comes to mind here: both the orienting response and the moment of "fugal crisis" are marked by a sudden disengagement of voluntary attentional focus. In the former case, cessation prepares the nervous system to embark upon an alternative behaviour pattern with the shortest possible delay. By contrast, the latter becomes the harbinger of what will become an extended interlude of uncommitted attention. In physiological terms, furthermore, the orienting response effects a number of changes, including a heart-rate deceleration, when orienting is accompanied by an exploratory reflex, as opposed to one of defence or surprise. The lack of peripheral arousal is shown by Pavlov to be concomitant with high temporal certainty in his experimental dogs. Couldn't the lack of rhythmic unpredictability characteristic of Bach's music be compatible with exploratory reflex? This would be consonant with my hypothesis.

At any rate, the above is cited to suggest that certain patterns of nervous activity, associated with the OR, might be commandeered by the cultural realm for its own ends: moved, that is, from a context of survival to one of aesthetics. Yet, if such a state does truly represent a cessation of focal attention, the question of awareness would seem to be intimately linked to any understanding of the possible significance of such an achievement. In other words, something on the semantic side of the ledger must be evident beyond the level of a purely automatic sensory processing. And indeed, subjective experience is strongly distinguished by a sense of heightened sensitivity to the salience of the auditory events it encounters, a "sublimated" level of exploratory reflex linked to the orienting response.

A possible direction toward better understanding of these phenomena lies with the idea that some level of awareness is not co-extensive with the mechanisms of task-

dependent processing. In the situation posed by the concept of "wandering", for instance, we find a kind of undisciplined switching from task to task, which connotes varying degrees of automaticity and loss of conscious control to the environment. With the constancy of focus represented by the voluntary maintenance of complex tasks, however, it appears that the notion of awareness is linked to an imposition of order that is "internal" in nature. Is this inference completely justified? Cannot it be said with equal conviction that "tasks" are in some sense external artefacts? Granted, the motivational constructs that provide a measure of directed, stable constraint *appear* to be functions of an internal organisation, but these can also be viewed as the highly automatised expressions of past experience.

In short, we are bound by the habitual assumption that awareness is best characterised as an expression of a voluntary, self-monitored execution of behavioural programs. What the special aesthetic conditions suggest, however, is that awareness is not *inextricably* linked to this process, as both volition and selfhood can be understood as fixed constructs in their own right. If we are correct in assuming that our dissociated musical state does indeed reflect a temporary inhibition of task-driven processing, we are left with a modality of consciousness that is neither fully automatic nor voluntary. It is also, as has been noted, experienced as an acute blurring of the subject/object distinction.

Immediately, certain questions reflexively surface. How are we to deal with the seemingly paradoxical notion of "*involuntary awareness*"? Again, is not awareness inextricably linked to what is deemed most essential to the human endowment, the existence of an ability to initiate behaviour at the behest of an essentially internal, unified agent? Further: if no self is operative, what is the entity that is exhibiting the alleged awareness?

As suggested earlier, such awareness might be linked to an internal process monitoring the interface between automatic and serial processes. As such, the output of

such processing would be a kind of a dynamically occurring semantic field, tied irrevocably to present events and hence not existing as external knowledge in the conventional sense. But this loss of communicability might be compensated by the intensity of an experience that is unmediated by certain long-term memory constructs, due to the fact that a greater range of obligatory processing is being utilised than that allowed by the task-dependent system. A loss of selfhood fits well with this interpretation. In other words, the composite nature of mind allows for the possibility that some forms of memory could be selectively inhibited without the conclusion that nothing could therefore be processed in a meaningful way.

The above thus points to a processing domain that lies between that of the non-conscious and the fully motivated, a bio-social field of cognitive-emotional transactions, transpiring without overt voluntary control and endowed with an ability to deal, in its own manner, with a greater amount of incoming information. This explains why the “discovered” modality would work so well with the music of Bach, with its high degree of simultaneity and perceptual ambiguity. Indeed, it is above all an ability to accept—even relish in—the inescapable presence of the ambiguous that lends this particular form of awareness its profound implications for both creative and ethical behaviour.

These benefits are thought to stem from a highly productive form of self-knowledge, not of the constructed self as discursive system or desiring body, but as organism with inherent, subtle capacities to perceive meaning through the complex process of living. Picton and Näätänen’s theoretical perspective on attention begins to clarify some of the factors that contribute to—as well as hinder—human efforts to communicate, gain insight, and initiate effective change. It also helps to demonstrate why a fuller understanding of these processes cannot simply rely on objectified descriptions of artefacts, cultures, histories, and individuals, but must discriminate some of the exquisite contingencies that shape and constrain the flow of information and behaviour.

B. ETHICS AND MORAL DISCIPLINE

1. Evolution

A. Introduction

The evolutionary perspective developed by Donald (1991) forms a bridge between the concept of dissociation, developed in section A of this chapter, and the ethical theory to be pursued below. Donald insists that any credible theory of mind must be plausible from an evolutionary standpoint as well as a functional one; accordingly, his work assembles information from a wide disciplinary palette. This eclectic approach is especially necessary because of the significance of human culture, which serves as a reflection of biological adaptations that have occurred, but further, as an increasingly active determinant in its own right. In offering a complex hypothesis as to the genesis of symbolic language and its position within the overall architecture of human cognition, Origins of the Modern Mind provides support for some basic tenets of the present research.

The book begins by paying homage to Darwin for conceiving certain germinal ideas. Several points are worth noting. First, "Darwin argued that we tend to underestimate the cognitive abilities of animals..." (p. 27). This need not imply an attempt to minimise either the distance between the human estate and that of other creatures, or the impact that language plays in the overall contrast. The point is borne out by a second Darwinian hypothesis, postulating a "pre-linguistic change in primate cognition" (p. 34). Far from undervaluing the impact of speech, this transitional stage

simply raises the bar for its appearance. This “new level of expressive development” (p. 36) is specified by Darwin’s suggestion “that the first aspect of voice control to evolve was prosody, not phonetics” (p. 38).

In effect, Donald asserts that language *per se* cannot fully account for the uniqueness of human cognition. He amplifies this view by theorising that an entire hominid culture developed on the basis of an intermediate, pre-linguistic phase of evolution, a pattern of activities, moreover, that survives in vestigial form to the present. It is partly within the domain of artistic endeavour that Donald finds clear evidence for these surviving “mimetic” capacities. However, support is recruited from other quarters as well. Neuropsychological evidence concerned with the dissociation of language function and the example of illiterate deaf mutes both serve to reinforce the assertion that language comprises a critical but nonetheless circumscribed addition to the overall cognitive architecture of the species.

Ultimately, what this work imagines is a series of coherent, integrated adaptations conceived as separate depictive systems. In Donald’s words, “[e]ach style of representation acquired along the way has been retained, in an increasingly larger circle of representational thought. The result is, quite literally, a system of parallel representational channels of mind that can process the world concurrently” (p. 357). This inspires one to consider the possible flexibility inherent to such a situation. How might these somewhat discrete processes differentially interact within the total conglomerate of thought? What are the possible relationships of language within the overall cognitive framework, as well as the ramifications that contrasting configurations might hold for the status of ethical being? To grapple with these questions, it is necessary to consider the proposals of Origins of the Modern Mind in somewhat greater detail.

B. Mimesis

Undue attention paid to the socially or linguistically constructed nature of the human self runs the risk of reductively severing cultural activity from biology and history. A priori assumptions regarding the relations between consciousness and language, moreover, can serve as self-fulfilling constraints upon behaviour. As Donald asserts, “[t]he symbols of language denote things and events that are known primarily in presymbolic or nonsymbolic ways. Without a knower, the symbols themselves are meaningless...” (p. 23). Donald’s work aims at greater understanding of this unacknowledged “knower”. In addition, there may be opportunities for self-knowledge that require special procedures for their realisation: that, at any rate, is the suggestion we shall ultimately append to his thesis. And though such knowing cannot be abstracted from embodied experience, it should not be judged a purely subjective matter on that account.

The transition from the “episodic” culture characteristic of chimpanzees to the “mimetic” culture of homo erectus is portrayed as a revolutionary step in awareness. Donald’s point of departure is the chimp’s ability to pass a mirror test for self-recognition, accomplished by means of tactile exploration. As he elaborates:

Since, like all higher animals, it has a capacity for comparing and relating two simultaneously present visual events, it has a starting point for making the connection between the visual image and *its own actions* (not merely between two external visual events). The point is, there is a step from the limited visually guided hand movements of most primates to the more general use of the hands in the exploration of both self and world that is found in chimps. Such exploration could have taken the next step, in hominids, to a completely new kind of self-representation, if extended to the whole body. (p. 147)

The relative autonomy of hand use afforded our closest relatives thus allows-- through the expedience of a reflective surface--a rudimentary form of self-recognition. With the advent of the proto-human situation, however, the image is in a sense reversed. Starting out with an awareness of the entire body as both subject and object, self now serves as mirror, reflecting or re-presenting those parts of the external world towards which it turns its mnemonic gaze. "The representation of event sets in terms of actions requires a parallelism between models of self and models of event sets and a common destination whereby they can be compared and evaluated. When a mimetic mind "interprets" an event in terms of action, this comparator process is at the heart of the interpretation" (p. 193).

Together, higher levels of memory and self-reference combine to shatter the constraints of situation-bound consciousness. "The limitations of episodic culture are in the realm of representation. Animals excel at situational analysis and recall but cannot represent a situation to reflect on it..." (p. 160). By contrast, the new cognitive predicament is marked by an order of "conscious, self-initiated, representational acts" (p. 168). This novel modality of volitional behaviour warrants consideration: although it seems to mark an unprecedented development in the apprehension of the person as independent agent, it somewhat paradoxically constitutes a movement away from the parochialism of the individual organism. This is evident in the games of the young, who spend a good deal of playtime acting out a variety of social roles. As Donald points out, "chimps only learn how to react to each individual in the larger group; human children model the *group* structure" (p. 174). Thus the emergence of mimetic culture "demands a break with an egocentric episodic view of the world" (p. 174).

Collective social modelling within the context of ritual activity emphasises the advent of a field of meaning that is external to immediate individual experience; its "representations are coordinated social efforts, dependent upon the actors', and the audience's, sharing a

global cognitive model of the society" (p. 176). In developing this notion of exteriority, however, the contrast is not simply one between meaning that is socially constituted and that which is confined to the inner signals of a localised biological unit. More precisely, there is something "occult" inherent to the mimetic revolution: a conjuring of events, that is to say, a *bringing forth of the unseen* in an absolutely unprecedented way.

Previously, the past was only experienced by the organism as a mercurial tenor of the visible present. With the new situation, what was hitherto inaccessible can now be entreated into the mental landscape, populating its world with an unimaginable host of invisible, potentially realisable relations. From this perspective, the dawn of a conscious involvement in meaning is the opening out onto a vast field in which unknown dynamic forces and events can suddenly manifest themselves and their effects. The fact that mimesis is predicated upon systems of *action*, moreover, gives an indication of the kind of thinking it engenders. Above all, neither the individual, nor the community, nor the meanings enacted are reified: rather, it is the concept of *participation* that best describes the fundamental relation at play. Granted, this novel pattern of evolution exhibits the genesis of both self and society in more complex form; but these must be seen as subordinate phenomena partaking of a process of *movement* through which a limitless world of efficacious connections are established and made manifest.

Moreover, it is not merely that the past is in some sense brought to conscious life. The voluntary resurrection of events no longer present bestows a kind of immortality; what re-appears once can do so repeatedly, so that the cognitive endowment of the mimetic is imbued with a kind of appeal to futurity as well. Indeed, both the notion of time to come, and the revivification of events gone by, are linked through a basic insight revealing the world to be fraught with an implicit level of *potential, realisable relation*. Yet it is *participation*—and not authorship, either individual or collective, that best characterises the manner of these transactions. Turning away from the immediacy of what episodic

mind/environment undergoes is not to resort to abstract mastery, but rather to exhibit an eagerness to form action-based (i.e., mimetic) alliances with the greater domain of efficacious movement.

In effect, the sudden appearance of a plethora of potential relations for enactment opening out before the ancient mimetic mind stands as the quintessential, constitutive human event. Two basic aspects of Donald's presentation lend substance to this particular hypothesis of emergence. First, any major adaptation must exhibit benefits to survival. On this front, there is much to choose from. The ability to rehearse, for example--essential for the development of complex motor skills required by tool manufacture--"demands an ability to self-cue and reproduce or re-enact the scenario leading to the tools' manufacture in the absence of immediately present materials or even an immediate need for the tool" (p. 180). And the list of cognitive attributes that Donald cites as integral to the new thought-mode is impressive: "properties of individual mimetic acts include intentionality, generativity, communicativity, reference, autocuing, and the ability to model an unlimited number of objects" (p. 171).

It is not hard to envisage a pragmatic dimension to the behaviours these properties afford. The possibility of more complex group structure and co-ordination, for example, is a broad facility that bears unquestioned advantages. One aspect of this social capacity can be found in communal ritual. Donald cites a widespread practice of Paleolithic cultures involving the ritual acting out of conquest. In such a case, "the essence of the mimetic act...is not in the action of a single individual but in the orchestration of several actors. Such representations are coordinated social efforts, dependent upon the actors', and the audience's, sharing a global cognitive model of the society" (p. 174).

For Donald, successive representational systems share this property of forming *gestalts* within the limits of their particular structure. For the moment, let us consider the mimetic *weltanschauung* on its own. From a survival standpoint, the chief attribute of

mimetic ritual would seem to lie with the concept of social cohesion: enabling members of the collective to be— speaking anachronistically —“on the same page”. As to the fundamental notion of an entreaty to the realm of invisible forces and relations, of an attempt to participate in the complex choreography of the universe, we are more apt to identify this activity as the naïve, archaic context within which such practical relations were enacted.

Issues of natural selection initially appear, then, as inseparably linked to what are now deemed outmoded “religious” elements. But is it appropriate to make such a distinction? That is to say, do those elements identified as religious merely represent an immature stage of thought without functional significance? As Donald asserts, each successive reorganisation of cognitive systems based upon a revolutionary development spawns its own globally integrated style of thought. What is noteworthy to the mimetic mode, consequently, are not merely the isolated connections it is able to make, but its method of expression, a totality that is distinguished above all by an incorporation of potential relation into its patterns of action.

Once again, the specific kind of representational procedures may be used for clarification. In this instance, the practice of *invocation* does not reflect a mythical or theoretical understanding of the cosmos but a psychological opening out to the reality of the possible. As such, it expresses a novel revelation concerning the significance of self-action and its relation to power. In effect, it amounts to an unprecedented form of intentionality that attempts to harness meaning as one would the wind: it recognises, that is, that certain gestures help align the participant with the world's source of efficacious energy.

In an article entitled “Speculations on the City and the Evolution of Consciousness”, Thompson (2000, pp. 35-42) considers the “social evolution of mystique into politique as a three-stage process in which the ceremonial centre grows into the imperial city.

1. **The gods rule (stage of the *Ensi*)**

2. **I rule for the gods (stage of the shepherd-king)**
3. **I rule! (stage of the emperor)" (p. 35)**

Even though the emergence of the city presumably post-dates that of language, the chronology is useful in drawing attention to the drift of human thought with respect to the notion of autonomy. What is interesting in the context of Donald's work is an insistence upon preservation of the mimetic as a discrete, vestigial component of the modern mind. Specifically, it seems worthwhile considering here whether what we now call the religious dimension might yield a pragmatic service as part of a coherent adaptive pattern. Even though the original innovation no longer serves as consummate cognitive model, in other words, it may still perform an important functional role within an expanded universe of thought processes, crucially, one whose significance is *epistemological* as well as political.

Such a possibility arises from the kind of hierarchical model that Donald espouses. In terms of control processes, older systems of representation can input newer ones, but not visa versa. The episodic system sends its input to the mimetic, for example, but the mythic—which is the first to employ speech—cannot do likewise. The exertion of voluntary control over behaviour, moreover, is seen to reside at the top of the cognitive hierarchy. But this top-down control is by no means absolute. There is, instead, a partial autonomy and spontaneity to each form of thought that renders what Donald ultimately deems a system of parallel representational modalities.

It is here that the notion of dissociation has a potentially productive role. A general conception of creativity seems to necessitate the temporary inhibition of normative frames through which the work of higher, intentional processes are conducted. The purposive relaxation of these constraints may permit an altered form of experience, one more vague, perhaps, but also more sensitive to the spontaneous movement of relations that harbour potential for alignment into new gestalts. In her study of intuition, for example, Petitmengin-

Peugeot (1999) cites notions of letting go, internal listening, and increased awareness of embodied phenomena as stable components of intuitive experience.

The larger ritual context has an important role to play in shaping cognitive activity. As discussed earlier, however, the specific category of moral discipline has as its objective a uniquely holistic transformation with respect to the personality. In such an instance, ritual characteristics are structured to maximise a condition of unknowing: the attempt to disengage current knowledge structures, whether these be considered conceptual or affective in thrust. In terms of Donald's schema, this may in part be effected by means of a dissociation from linguistic consciousness. In terms of the present discussion, the global dimension of mimetic thought—that primordial opening out towards a sensed universe of meaningfulness—just might correspond to such a state of mental affairs.

Such a situation could be compatible, furthermore, with the concept of vestigial survival. That is to say, the role of the mimetic has obviously diminished in the overall cognitive picture of humankind, particularly in the area of overt practical knowledge. But this does not imply that its survival has been relegated to a somewhat peripheral fulfilment of aesthetic or spiritual needs. Put another way, its true importance might only be approached by revalorising these domains with epistemological import. The new essential function of mimetic ritual, from this perspective, would be to facilitate the evolution of behavioural determinants: to enable more recent systems of representation, in other words, to become embodied in a more flexible—and ultimately more ecologically responsible—manner.

The difficulty in envisioning the use of music for such a purpose lies in its gradual usurpation by more recently evolved systems of representation. Mythic and theoretical conceptions have come to mediate the musical experience, making it a tool for postulating identity and promoting power. What we are exploring here is the manner in which exposure to sound patterns might be fused to a mimetic sensibility as *mystique*. In this

modality the self's dominance might be thwarted and an alternative form of control allowed to take root. Accordingly, we briefly turn attention toward the mimetic and its relationship to behaviours that form the fundamental basis of what is now considered "music".

Donald states that "the controlled use of emotional expression is an integral part of mimetic behaviour, even in today's society" (p. 180). In this view, mimesis represents a general set of cognitive innovations that can exert control in a number of areas, including vocalisation. From an evolutionary standpoint, "the logical first step up from limbic speech to some form of voluntary voice modulation would have been prosodic modulation" (p. 183). In addition to this rudimentary ability to create sequences of sound varying in pitch, intensity, and even timbre, mimesis could also have allowed for another intrinsic dimension of musical behaviour: rhythm. "Rhythm is, in a sense, the quintessential mimetic skill, requiring the coordination of disparate aspects and modalities of movement (p. 186). At the same time, however, it is "different from other mimetic devices; it does not directly reproduce, represent, or signify any aspect of the natural world. It has to be regarded as a mimetic game..." (p. 187).

Such a depiction corresponds with many modern accounts of music and reference, as noted earlier. Thus, the intimacy between music and ritual meaning appears to be a historical constant. In other words, there may always have been an important connection between the character of music as a non-referential cognitive exercise, and that form of communal experience dealing with the character of meaning itself. This is not to impugn the mimetic mind as fundamentally primitive, but to grant it imposing intelligence. Music is deeply organisational; it not only gives time coherence by way of extension, but also by way of simultaneous depth. As such, it deepens awareness; its layered, dynamic patterns give complexity and multiplicity to the present, opening it up as a function of mind.

A refusal to foreground positive knowledge is not simply the ritual expression of ignorance. We are not questioning that music has probably always served overtly

purposive ends, or that it reflects historically embedded social traits, forms of communication, and relations of power. But this does not preclude it saying something about the open-endedness of human consciousness, and the basic need to indulge this indeterminacy despite an equally powerful drive for security. Further, these vibrant, multi-dimensional sound patterns may shape the mind in a more concrete way. Perhaps conscious engagement with them lays down neural relationships that might serve as a kind of self-organising repository of abstract relations for use by higher thought processes. In such a manner, invoking the realm of hidden presences in the age of neuroscience can be transposed as an appeal to the simultaneous proliferation of meaning, spontaneously spawned by the human brain.

This need not imply that the music involved in such a ritual of decontextualisation would remain developmentally static; indeed, it might well imply the opposite. If so, the realities of historicity would not be incongruent with an ongoing intercourse with unknowing. Instead, the latter would only be realised through sensitivity to the concrete qualities of the conditioned present. Donald is interested to demonstrate both the independence of mimetic consciousness from linguistic thought and its survival as a discrete component of the modern mind. In the context of a discussion in which he lends assent to Arnheim's work on visual arts, for example, Donald comments that "visual thinking is now seen as largely autonomous from language. The same may be said of non-literate, or naïve, musical invention like much of early jazz..." (p. 167).

For present purposes, I would only add that the manner of engagement becomes a critical aspect of the issue; our assertion is that genres like the baroque fugue, while dependent upon literacy for their conception and performance, are not *necessarily* so adjoined with respect to the act of listening. Thus the essential ritual objective can be maintained despite an advanced technical level of sophistication out of which the aesthetic artefact arises. And, as a corollary, as has been repeatedly emphasised, the kind of

listening—even to the so-called primitive object—is dependant upon how the experience is mediated by factors based in language.

C. Language

What is to be understood by a ritual isolation of the mimetic mind? And how would such a cordoned consciousness function within the larger processes of cognition? The way such questions are approached depends upon one's broad theoretical orientation. The view promoted here does not treat the phenomenon of non-linguistic experience as a kind of biological sanctuary of selfhood, a position that perpetuates the very dualism we are at pains to discredit. We would agree with Bruner (1990), for example, that "selves are not isolated nuclei of consciousness locked in the head, but are 'distributed' interpersonally" (p. 138). It is only when the practice of a cultural psychology adopts a rigid distinction between the biological and the cultural, or between the invariant and the historical, that certain problems arise.

These distinctions might be said to reflect a commonplace of scientific method, wherein problems are reduced to manageable proportions. Yet, limiting attention to "interpersonal" matters hardly alleviates the myriad complexity attendant upon an understanding of the distributed entity in question. This is even more the case, in light of the proliferation of what Donald refers to as modalities of external memory, a web of social and discursive relations that has mushroomed with the advent of electronic technologies. Still, these developments seem to have heightened the reality of an external locus, lending it a palpable structure in which to reside. Does this not, in the end, render any conception of a biological contribution—except as a perpetual engine of homeostatic propulsion—rather trivial?

There is no doubting the existence of vast symbolic networks in which the modern subject is constituted. What needs to be scrutinised with greater clarity is the nature of the interface between the organism and its surroundings. Such a query is predicated on the assumption that such transactions are not embodied in a uniform, static manner. Without the possibility of varying degrees of reciprocity between organisational levels, the interpretative pursuit of selfhood becomes trapped in its own brand of solipsism. Self-understanding is not merely an issue of deciphering cultural programs installed upon the hardware of human anatomy. Attention to the nuances of first-person experience can provide embodied constraints that both curtail the abstract excesses of the hermeneutic process and facilitate a liberating sense of ecological coherence. This is a sorely needed corrective, for even when the absolutes of thought have been allegedly swept aside, ego seems to have adapted by changing its historical allegiance from veracity to one of virtuosity.

Before considering the problem of external memory further, it is necessary to jump back chronologically and review the emergence of phonetic language as elaborated in Donald's theory. Two areas of emphasis are relevant here. Firstly, the non-linguistic human mind is assigned a very high level of competence. Secondly, the relative autonomy that mimesis and language display in terms of their functional embodiment does not diminish the significance of their linkage.

As discussed earlier, Donald uses a number of sources to promote the idea that language by itself cannot account for the distinctive higher abilities of our species. In addition to skills which he claims mimesis would have afforded, the author points to examples of deaf mutes, as well as certain neurological impairments that deprive subjects of language without compromising other facets of human intelligence. For example, evidence is cited with reference to three cases of global aphasia. "The range of their cognitive competence is impressive: it includes intentional communication,

mimetic and gestural representation, categorical perception, various generative patterns of action, and above all the comprehension of social relationships, which implies a capacity for social attribution and considerable communicative ability” (p. 167).

In addition, Donald points to opinions—admittedly speculative—crediting the Neanderthals with only a form of protolanguage, even while attaining cultural achievements such as “clothing, body decoration, burial rites, and religious ritual” (pp. 204-5). Regardless how this particular debate may be resolved, Donald professes belief that the arrival of full-blown phonetic speech evolved from—and remains, in some respects, deeply rooted in—the cognitive culture that preceded it. This view is in part expressed through his description of linguistic evolution as “the programming of a highly complex anatomical change by forces largely ensconced at the sociocultural level of selection pressure” (p. 261).

Related to this notion is the idea that the creation of language is driven by extralinguistic knowledge and need. Over and over, Donald’s discussion touches upon the fact that the language adaptation must be viewed as working in concert with the rest of the mental ensemble. It is this entire background that enables the dynamic process of *invention*, which stands at the heart of the human symbolic enterprise. This becomes clear from a review of some current research involving apes, who “can obviously be taught to use symbols to signify things. But this ability did not get them a language; it did not even get them a mimetic culture. The ability simply to link an arbitrary sign with its signifier evidently does not lead to language of any sort” (p. 218).

Moreover, it is not only the more rarefied occurrences of lexical invention that stand in need of such knowledge; conducting verbal communication on a basic level requires it as well, especially when ambiguity comes into play. In such a case, “context is absolutely necessary for the resolution of lexical ambiguity, and ambiguity is the *rule*, not the exception” (p. 229). Donald goes on to state that “access to the referential

context, in the outside world, is the only way to resolve the issue; the internal logic of the language system does not contain the answer" (p 229). This reinforces his insistence that the lexicon *per se* is only one analytical element in the linguistic picture; it "must have been a by-product of evolving narrative skill, a necessary device in the formulation of commentaries upon experience" (p. 252).

In short, isolating notable features of language risks losing sight of the dynamic process from which it arises. This global style of making meaning is characterised as a tendency toward mythic thought. Like the mimetic revolution before it, language constitutes a new, coherent set of adaptations that is motivated to make sense of things in the most comprehensive manner at its disposal. Donald muses that "[w]hat the Gestaltists said about perception might also be true of language....The primary objects of language and speech are thematic..." (p. 216). Initially, language "was evidently tied to the development of integrative thought—to the grand unifying synthesis of formerly disconnected, time-bound snippets of information" (p. 215).

This is an intriguing way of looking at the genesis of language and myth. We are accustomed to imagining a variety of concrete selection advantages that speech might have afforded and, from this perspective, myth subsequently developed as a crude first attempt at philosophy and science. What Donald is suggesting, however, is that myth itself—conceived as an irrepressible urge to organise and model experience—may have led to language in all its pragmatic splendour. Furthermore, such a drive would have been inherent to the mimetic situation: that is, it would have developed as a consequence of the concrete cognitive and cultural demands that a successful mimetic adaptation came to provide.

Many of the anatomical features involved in speech "have separate innervations and must serve other, nonlinguistic purposes such as swallowing, smiling, and breathing. Therefore the speech system requires a neural integrator..." (p. 239). In

terms of control mechanisms, language stands above mimesis on the cognitive hierarchy. In Donald's terms, moreover, its primary function is clear: "the linguistic controller is a representational process whose products are narrative models" (p. 259). From the foregoing comes a complex picture: on the one hand, language is a somewhat discrete system, operating in parallel to those denoted by episodic and mimetic cultural forms. Yet, in terms of mythic thought, at least, it is also very much dependant upon its predecessors. This may help explain why Donald does not place great emphasis on global dichotomies with respect to lateralisation of brain function. While there are clearly aspects of language that are localised in this manner, it may be the case that a more holistic view of the language process will favour a more inclusive anatomical schema.

What mythic culture ultimately produced was "a unified, collectively held system of explanatory and regulatory metaphors" (p. 214). Seen from this perspective, then, myth represents the best efforts of language to construct a meaningful, coherent view of the universe. Again, however, this mode of representation is not merely an archaic relic that has since been superseded by more recent developments. "Myth governs the collective mind. This remains essentially true today, even in modern post-industrial cultures, at least in the realm of social values" (p. 268).

It is interesting to compare the evolution of language presented in Origins of the Modern Mind with Bruner's (1990) ontogenetic theory. Both authors stress the importance of world-knowledge as fundamental to the process of acquiring language. For instance, Bruner writes that "the acquisition of a first language is very context-sensitive, by which is meant that it progresses far better when the child already grasps in some *prelinguistic* way the significance of what is being talked about or of the situation in which the talk is occurring. With an appreciation of context, the child seems better able to grasp not only the lexicon but the appropriate aspects of the grammar of a language" (p. 71).

To reiterate, it is the operative frame of the child's understanding--into which the technical categories of language are imported--that provides a motivated co-ordination to the formidable choreography of learning. In Bruner's words, "[t]he subtlety and complexity of syntactic rules lead me to believe that such rules can only be learned *instrumentally*, as instruments for carrying out certain priority operative functions and objectives" (p. 72). And what are these objectives? They are expressed, in short, in terms of the concrete needs of the organism. "Sentences as grammatical entities...are not the "natural" units of communication. The natural forms are *discourse units* that fulfill either a 'pragmatic' or a 'mathetic' discourse function..." (p. 76). The former involves the need for forging efficacious social relations, while the latter refers to a compelling urge to make sense of the world (p. 72).

Thus Donald and Bruner, from their respective contexts, each share a belief in the importance of prelinguistic knowledge and narrative as primary to the acquisition of language. For Bruner, both factors are intimately related to the process of assimilating what he refers to as "folk psychology". Embedded in this mode of understanding is basic knowledge about the forms of human interactions, the ascription of intentional agency to others as well as oneself, etc.: in short, a kind of "theory of mind" that governs the communication process. Prior to the function of language *per se*, folk psychology provides the child with a "readiness of selective classes of meaning" (p. 73). Moreover, while this knowledge is acquired through the experience of social praxis, it is also rooted in a biological endowment. "Certainly reviews of shifting and opportunistic primate social coalitions and of the use of 'deceit' and 'disinformation' in maintaining and augmenting these coalitions speak to prehuman origins of the kinds of folk-psychological representations that I am proposing..."(pp. 73-4).

This acknowledgement of underlying predisposition is consonant with Donald, as we have seen. So is the conception that acquisition is driven by "the human push to

organize experience narratively..." (p. 79). Folk psychology has an important role to play here. In particular, Bruner contends that its deeply embedded notion of "the canonical" helps frame and stimulate the act of narrative invention, which in turn enables the narrator both to make sense of the world and its aberrant events, and ultimately to become an effective social agent. Parallels with the function of mythic narratives are suggested here, insofar as the provision of coherent understanding and social conduct are a vital part of their task. Thus, in a sense, both the individual and the collective, as discrete entities, appear to be constituted through their mastery of the thematic structuring of language. We shall return to this comparison shortly.

D. External Memory

The advent of external mnemonic devices precipitates the most recent revolution in human cognitive history. The underlying changes are primarily technological; biological accommodations are accounted for by the plasticity of human brain function rather than deviations in heredity. Nonetheless, the implications are enormous. As Donald explains, the "symbiosis of human working memory and the EXMF [external memory field] is basic to modern thought" (p. 331). Learning to interact with this domain is a lengthy process, and the shift from orality to literacy is not without its trade-offs.

In addition to external memory, moreover, two significant aspects are also cited as integral to the emergent mode of thought: graphic invention—"which signalled a shift in the relative importance of the two major distal-perceptual modalities, from auditory to visual representation"—and "theory construction" (p. 272). The latter reveals how profound a departure these changes represent from traditional ways of thinking. "Where narrative and myth attribute *significances*, theory is not concerned with significance in the same sense at all.... The first step in any new area of theory development is always antimythic: things and

events must be stripped of their previous mythic significances before they can be subjected to what we call “objective” theoretic analysis” (pp. 274-5).

The momentous benefits of this novel modelling process, however, have not been able to avert the strife that accompanies its antimythic imperative. Donald refers to Denny’s claim “that the major new thought pattern attributable to literacy is a property called ‘decontextualization’...” (1993, p. 747). The benefits here are linked to the virtues of abstraction. External memory fixes huge amounts of information that can be subjected to iterative processes, allowing connections to be forged that would be impossible within the dynamic context of biological working memory. However, the context this new realm of information claims to override is a deeply embodied one: there is hardly anything with more implication for the organism than the world of *significance*. This new process of abstraction, in other words, is anything but abstract in terms of its effects.

The work of Bruner may be helpful in this context. At first glance, the evolutionary scenario just depicted might seem to offer further congruence between his views and those of Donald. That is, the concept of external memory might serve to underscore the “distributed” nature of the self, located “not in the fastness of immediate private consciousness but in a cultural-historical situation as well” (p. 107). Nonetheless, are not myths, by definition, also concrete, socially constituted linguistic artefacts?

A salient difference thus begins to emerge. Despite the importance of narrative as a social phenomenon that drives the acquisition of language and helps render the world intelligible to its participants, we seem to be dealing with a fundamental divergence, one that straddles the breach between worlds of mythic and theoretic culture. As we have seen, moreover, this gulf has served to sever the notion of “significance” in two as well. In terms of Donald’s hypotheses, this is not merely a clash between oral-based and literate peoples, or between idealist and historicist visions. At the heart of Origins of the Modern

Mind lies the notion of simultaneity. As a result, the problem we are beginning to approach is one that seems internal to the modern subject in general.

The conflict can be described as follows. Mythic mind—like the mimetic stage before it—continues to exist and to process the world, alongside a recent cognitive adaptation that is distinguished by its employment of an external memory field. At the same time, values propagated by the latter seem predicated upon an antimythic bias. The resulting ensemble is discordant. As Donald puts it, “the loss of one’s myth involves a profoundly disorienting loss of identity. The myth stands at the top of the cognitive pyramid in such a society...” (p. 258). Yet, if mythmaking really operates as a coherent, contemporaneous process, strife must be internal to the organism itself. What is at stake, then, is the distress accompanying two simultaneously held but incompatible versions of identity.

These are not being construed as differing *theoretical* versions of self or reality; they are, more accurately, two qualitatively contrasting cognitive processes. Phrased in this way, the possibility that one is simply a more primitive or inaccurate form of the other seems less credible. As pinnacle of the current cognitive hierarchy, however, is it not the prerogative of the theoretical to impose its own level of interpretation? And does the claim of objectivity not justify its exercise of such supremacy? To pursue these questions, a closer look at the two conceptions of narrative is required.

For Bruner, as discussed earlier, the push for narrative competence is one that fosters understanding and agency in the social world; in pursuing these ends, children learn to master the cognitive intricacies of language use. Of especial importance to this process are the canonical precepts of folk psychology, absorbed from the cultural milieu. Such knowledge enables one to deal, by extension, with the anticanonical: for example, “making sense of a cultural aberration by appeal to a subjective state in a protagonist” (p. 82). Here

we see the necessity of attributing intentional behaviour to others, employed in the service of comprehension.

In addition, a grasp of these fundamentals is essential for becoming an effective agent in ones own right. As Bruner explains, “[g]etting what you want very often means getting the right story” (p. 86). And “a ‘right’ story is one that connects your version through mitigation with the canonical version” (p. 86). Ultimately what emerges with a facility for storytelling is a sense of identity as player in the social game. “All narrative environments are specialized for cultural needs, all stylize the narrator as a form of Self, all define kinds of relations between narrator and interlocutor” (p. 84). It should be clear from this presentation, moreover, that active participation in narrative does not end once acculturation has been accomplished. Immersion in narrative culture, the spinning of an autobiographical tale, is a lifelong activity: it comprises, that is to say, “the act of *constructing* a longitudinal version of Self” (p. 120).

Bruner refers to the disciplinary approach that situates subjects in a dynamic but concrete narrative milieu as *cultural psychology*: an attempt “to show how human minds and lives are reflections of culture and history as well as of biology and physical resources” (p. 138). From this brief review, it is possible to draw a distinction between two approaches to narrative. Most importantly, the “cultural-historical situation” can be seen as the “theoretical” one: that is, its narratives are products of thinking derived from an interface with the external memory field. Given the explosion of media that has occurred with the advent of electronics, this can no longer be confined to the realm of traditional literacy.

The nature of this diverse array has changed the notion of competence as well. Different media call for different kinds of literacy skills. Above all, these developments have made it necessary to define the notion of oral culture more precisely. The existence of a social group that is unaffected by external information webs, for example, must be rare indeed. Luria (1973) has demonstrated, moreover, that even a small amount of contact

with literate individuals irrevocably changes the thought processes of those previously unexposed. However, the fact that the amount of traditional literacy may be declining has little bearing on the issue at hand. Present cultures, with increasingly fewer exceptions, are permeated with the effects of the theoretic revolution. This must be so, even with reference to the case of so-called "folk psychology". As Bruner explains, "the Self as narrator not only recounts but justifies" (p. 121). Negotiating one's identity as an effectual agent worthy of respect means to be conversant, on some level, with the modes of legitimation that currently inhabit a culture's narrative pool.

So the question arises as to whether such a thing as mythic consciousness presently exists at all. To ask may seem contrary to Donald's assertion, cited earlier, that "at least in the realm of social values" (p. 268), myth is still very much operative. Denying this affirmation, moreover, entails a rejection of the spontaneity that Donald accredits to his proposed representational systems. Yet the question as posed may be inadequate. Perhaps it is not the existence of the mythic mind *per se* that concerns us, but rather the manner in which it is manifest or mediated within the total cognitive context.

It is possible to attribute a mythological dimension, for example, to the arena of contemporary spectator sports. There, events transpire in a kind of mythic time, replete with its own dynamic and coherence, set apart from historical temporality. The acts required of the epic hero, moreover, are paradigmatic: they are, in the end, about *significance* itself. Indeed, the sporting contest is designed to steadily intensify the meaning of successive gestures, culminating with the end of epic time itself. In a sense, then, each heroic act ultimately aims at bringing about salvation.

Nevertheless, for the modern spectator, this ritual does not bear a truly cosmological dimension. There can be poetry, celebration of the human form, and exhilaration at the skill, sacrifice, and presence of mind of the hero. But beyond this lies the knowledge of a painful fiction: not a real myth, in other words, but one that is, ironically, *only*

“make believe”. There is something all too corporeal about the hero, the contest, and its result. Unlike the truly epic, this is one that cannot sanction the world in which we live, for it is too much a part of it. In fact, the inner struggle between the mythic and the theoretic is nowhere better portrayed than in the social context surrounding the sporting ritual. Here, heroism puts on its most contemporary garb: the wealth, desirability, and fame of the “successful” personality. Perhaps we may even attain such status ourselves, if only through the semiotic expedient of a clothing purchase, through which we attempt to wrest some identification. And finally, at the extreme end of the materialist spectrum lies the social critic, an impartial observer who sees only a playing out of the game of economy, patriarchy, or some such material imperative.

But the larger historical conflict remains, as two kinds of irreconcilable meanings vie for attention. In the end, however, the vestigial mythology this particular scenario represents seems deprived of any deeper substance. Indeed, one hallmark of the present culture is the insistence with which this inner schism is reproduced. Does this not ultimately demonstrate, once again, the utter eclipse of the mythological? Is this not conclusive evidence that the only meaning these forms possess is that which the theoretical mind imputes to them by way of their status as metaphors? And is not the only other option an opting out of history, as it were, a wholesale and unreasoning surrender to the mindless eternal verities of fundamentalist dogma?

E. Ethics and Integration

If there is a level of meaning that is unique to the mythological—one, moreover, that cannot be reduced to the language of “theory”, in Donald’s sense—it is clear that such a dimension is not approachable through the calculation of demographics alone. Perhaps, however, it is possible to differentiate between types of narratives, and the uses to which

they are variously put. Some narratives, for example, are spun in order to make sense of the social world and of one's activity and standing within that world. In this case, identity is a function of the historical consciousness embedded in external memory, and the self is that instrumental context that attempts to narrate a uniquely embodied history. Actor and world are simply different perspectives in the same process; the former is presented both as an efficacious force and an inexorable product.

In other words, there appears to be a dynamic global reservoir which innumerable local configurations employ to substantiate their own identity and pursue their vested interests. The resultant process is one of negotiation: while things are subject to endless interpretation, such activity is never completely arbitrary, and hence there are grounds to support some form of mediated dialogue. Consensus develops through the precepts of folk psychology and the persuasiveness and artistry of narrative performance.

This highly pragmatic business is enmeshed in the external memory field. Because identity is so irrevocably a function of socio-historical conditions, moreover, one's status is enhanced through assimilation, not only of the canonical forms of narrative but of *information* that its causal sequences are able to exploit. It does not matter that exegesis is no longer rooted in a domain of absolute truth; plenitude is a function of the degree to which knowledge can be acquired and used to elicit assent for one's story. If there is an essential gap between the subject and total self-realisation, it is only a kind of quantitative shortcoming; the breach can be reduced through a continual process of acquisition and mastery.

The notion of an objective disinterest here must be illusory. The very concept of a self is differentiated from the whole to the extent it comprises a limited perspective, a core of commitments it must defend. As a localised entity, it can never make the transcendent leap to a state of perfect knowledge; instead, it must be constrained (and enabled) by the process of negotiation that social being entails.

These comments upon the narrative process can be used to clarify a significant contrast between the worlds of canonical and mythological archetypes. Above all, the latter is distinguished by its irreparable breach with the human predicament. Myths are patterns offered to reflect essential characteristics of the cosmos. The protagonists are not human and the *mise-en-scène* is not that of concrete historical time. Obviously, this does not mean that mythological events bear no relation to worldly ones, otherwise they would not be perceived as vehicles of import. As a result, however, the relation they pose cannot be the same as that with other narrative forms.

Folk psychology provides a means of harnessing language to procure one's status as an active agent in human society. Consequently, the ability to participate in narrative culture is a deeply personal matter; in effect, it is fraught with ontological significance. This direct, hands-on stake in the affairs of language is very different from that which defines the subject's relation to myth. For the individual, a sense of linguistic agency is tantamount to self-genesis; to be a speaker and to be a subject are one and the same. As with Thompson's "I rule!" stage of the city cited earlier, individuals also evolve toward a state of self-autonomy.

The tools of mythic narrative, by contrast, are not to be actively manipulated for purposes of self-construction or -promotion. The absolute gulf between the two realms insures such an outcome. Myth is not intended for personal exploitation, but rather for fostering accommodation. There is a sense of inscrutability about its subjects and their behaviour that cannot be bent to the whims of mortal beings; instead, it demands that the exigencies of human life be somehow correlated to its higher standard of meaning. The kind of explanation it provides, then, is open-ended; if it is a system of metaphors, this is not to construe it as embodying a kind "poetic" imprecision that is unworthy of the "real" world.

Indeed, one might argue that myth is terribly objective, in the sense it does not pander to the bias of human desire; the onus remains on the subject to become reconciled

to a more significant level of meaning. Yet, if myth is not about personal identity in the modern sense, how can the loss of one's myth, as Donald insists, imply such a profound loss of identity? The answer lies with myth's role as an instrument of the collective mind. But in such a resolution lies another problem: today, the individual is seen as an expression of this same collectivity; in other words, it is in the nature of "theoretic" culture to spawn the phenomenon of the private self, and hence to replace an earlier form of identity with one of more recent origin. Does this not imply—again—the inescapable triumph of the antimythic imperative? Or, alternatively, is the vestige of an archaic mind simply evidence of an irreconcilable division in the human mind?

We are attempting to arrive at a more integrative approach to this dilemma. In order to do so, it is necessary to give a slightly different interpretation to the vestigial configuration. If the mythic outlook exists on its own terms, it is not in the public marketplace of theoretical culture, but rather within the potential experience of the biological organism. That is, it comprises a separate cognitive process that cannot be mastered theoretically, but must also involve an *embodied praxis*. It is therefore an alternative style of engagement that best articulates the possibility of a truly spontaneous mythic experience. In short, myth represents a separate modality of language use.

This idea is supported by Donald's discussion of literature, where words can be "used *mimetically* [emphasis added], in the broader sense of formulating the shape of a myth or story and its attitude. In such cases, it is as though the mythic theme was, at a deeper level, driven not strictly by verbal rules and ideas but rather by an underlying mimetic form in which language is embedded" (p. 170). The mythic may thus be considered a narrative elaboration of that primordial felt significance or sense of potential relation which has its roots, as discussed earlier, in the consciousness of the mimetic mind. This way of thinking is about the whole; it encompasses not just the known, but the unknown. In this sense it embodies an awareness that is situated in a vast, dynamic field

of forces that must be acknowledged, placated, and even worshipped. Pertinacious self-concern is not feasible in such a predicament.

The cosmological mode is neither an abstract conceptual one, nor a disembodied state of transcendence. What it implies, however, is a shift in cognitive functioning, and ultimately, a different attitude towards language: even—or most especially—towards one's "own". Indeed, it is the idea of *ownership* itself that must be relinquished, either as an individual, or as representative of a particular social grouping. As the Tao Te Ching (1988) so eloquently begins:

The tao that can be told

is not the eternal Tao.

The name that can be named

is not the eternal Name. (p. 1)

The immediate response of the theoretic mind is both compelling and highly conditioned. "What is the point of this vague experience, so removed from the material realities of living?" it asks. Posed in this way, however, the outcome has been pre-ordained; there *is* no point from such a perspective. The mythical view does not simply present a naïve or incompetent version of a more recent worldview. Nor is it merely a kind of irrational, social glue that can be exploited for sundry purposes. What the integrative approach encourages is the active, full participation of the mythic as a legitimate component of a larger process. This temporarily enhanced autonomy produces a powerful, linguistically engaged experience that is free from the habitual concerns of the theoretical "self". The end result is not a greater theoretical understanding, but a consciousness that can be altered with respect to its own linguistic acts. Why is this? Because the nature of the organism's commitments change as the contrast between two modes of meaning become increasingly embodied.

Mythic significance is not merely the contrivance of a sovereign, transpersonal system of discursive activity. Nor is its presence an impediment to the healthy function of instrumental understanding. This is not a question of either/or, but of being able to profit from a diversity of viewpoints. Without the context of significance as guiding motivation, life becomes an empty game of calculation, and its victories, an endless series of way stations on a road to oblivion. The cosmological mode is not a philosophical or emotional frill, but the foundation of a truly human existence.

Donald's contribution to this discussion lies with his vision of simultaneous representational systems, each with their own coherence and evolutionary history. The spontaneity and relative autonomy of these modalities, moreover, may be the key that permits couplings leading to qualitatively different outputs. Among these may be cooperative classes, in which the theoretic perspective acts neither as indissoluble autocrat nor as unyielding combatant in a civil war. Donald sketches enough structural detail to envision a more viable alternative: one, moreover, that adds a further layer of consideration to what Bruner calls "the contextual revolution" in social science.

Implementing a cognitive "complementarity", however, must overcome the social conditioning of an era deeply marked by the antimythic imperative. The theoretic mind has such a stranglehold upon the epistemic ethos that solutions to problems—even in the area of self-critique—are largely stamped with its implicit logic. Thus the challenge of human communication continues to be posed in terms that do not permit a productive solution. The work of Donald bears ethical implications, for it suggests we must be cognisant of the embodied dimension of our values if we are to succeed in putting them into practice.

Martin Buber's I and Thou (1958) speaks directly to these issues. In delineating his two primary forms of relation, I believe Buber is addressing phenomena that correlate to concrete cognitive processes. This is important, because it switches initial emphasis away from the problem of *what* to think towards that of *how*. So much habitual thought concerns

itself with issues of lexical definition, logical coherence, and historical accuracy that the manner in which it transpires is taken for granted. For I and Thou, however, the essential distinction is a procedural one, tending to underscore the contrast between process and content: a difference, moreover, that can be mapped in terms of the evolutionary schema discussed above.

The instrumental understanding of theoretic mind has historically conceived the human being as a thing—a self, an identity, a disembodied essence, a set of discourses or programs, etc. This perspective has its roots in the characteristics of external memory, which reduces and stores *linguistic acts* as discrete artefacts. In this form, language is removed from the complex, ephemeral bio-social context from which it arises, lending it a deceptive aura of stability, precision, and self-sufficiency. In the area of memory, for example, Ong (1982) suggests that the collective “store” of oral cultures evolves over time to suit the exigencies of the present. Such mutability should not be interpreted solely as a function of storage capacity or degradation of trace. Rather, it reflects the nature of biological memory itself as a pragmatic tool in a constantly changing universe.

To reiterate, Donald has pointed to the utility of performing iterative operations on material that has been symbolically frozen; the results are obvious. Still, these methods have proved less effective in the pursuit of self-knowledge. This is in part because the questions framing the inquiry make untenable assumptions about the nature of selfhood. Communication that attempts to form consensus upon the basis of such grounded knowledge is likewise misguided. Harmonious relations can only emerge when the semiotic process is released from the futile grasping of self-assertion conducted at the theoretic level. This implies a modification of cognitive function that, in Buber’s terms, involves the “whole being”: the human person, that is, as an historical instantiation of biological polyphony. In this way, religion ends its exile as the pathological abstraction of dualistic thinking and henceforth resumes its rightful place as a concrete functional reality.

2. *Phenomenology of Shame*

Lynd's prescient study *On Shame and the Search for Identity* (1958) serves as both a critique of reductionism in the social sciences and a plea for process-oriented thinking. More specifically, the book offers an insightful comparison of the phenomena of guilt and shame, conceived as two distinct axes of human experience. The reader is offered rough definitions as a point of departure. "Guilt is centrally a transgression, a crime, the violation of a specific taboo, boundary, or legal code by a definite voluntary act" (p. 23). By contrast, "[s]hame is defined as a wound to one's self-esteem, a powerful feeling or sense of degradation excited by the consciousness of having done something unworthy of one's previous idea of one's own excellence" (p. 23-4).

In everyday terms, both guilt and shame seem bound together by virtue of the censure that is brought to bear upon the individual, whether issued by self or society. But Lynd is able to draw a remarkable series of distinctions that resonate across the field of human self-understanding. For example, "guilt is more concerned with the codified act involved, shame with the uncoded detail and with the diffused feeling" (p. 64). This contrast between precise articulation and vague emotionality is important, and begins to suggest the two words refer to processes that can be distinguished from a cognitive standpoint.

"Sin, guilt, punishment—each is, in one sense, an affirmation of order and significance. Shame questions the reality of any significance" (p. 58). Two experiences are being delineated here: one rooted primarily in positive knowledge and volitional behaviour, the other emphasising loss of certainty and conscious control. For different personalities, moreover, these general aspects can carry fundamentally divergent emotional valences. "Naming, structure, social norms, ritualized detail, and closure or

correspondence between stated cultural goals and ways of realizing them give security and protection. Except for the person sufficiently deep-rooted in his own identity to be freely exploring, whatever cannot be codified, classified, labelled is potentially threatening..." (p. 65).

The puzzling nature of the identity that permits "free exploration" will be discussed in due time. For the moment, it is interesting to entertain the possibility that susceptibility to the shame experience is not equally distributed, and further, that vulnerability to it may be due to personality traits considered admirable. Indeed, this seems implicit in the language: "Guiltless is quite clearly an honorific term....Shameless, however, is a term of opprobrium. To be shameless is to be insensible to one's self..." (p. 24). This is an extraordinary situation, for unworthiness is a trait from which the self shrinks in denial, and yet we are told that the capacity for self-awareness, at least in part, consists in precisely such a negative realisation. The crux is that this knowledge is not grounded in judgements exercised upon the social norms and practices of the society in which one lives.

This point is underscored by the nature of shame, which often "overwhelms us from without and 'takes us' unawares" (p. 32). What then, is the "without" to which the author appeals? Part of the difficulty of isolating this lies with the fact "that the experience of shame is itself isolating, alienating, incommunicable" (p. 67). The non-specific quality arises from the eruption of a *movement that undermines meaning*, whether as a function of the individual, or of the social and discursive context out of which that individual is said to be constructed. To have self-awareness in this sense is to possess something not derived from positive structures of knowledge: in short, a *revelation of inadequacy*.

As Lynd expresses it, "aspects of the phenomenon of shame can be understood only with reference to transcultural values, and...this awareness of values beyond one's

own society is one of the distinctions between shame and guilt" (p. 35-6). The present intellectual climate is one that regards any reference to "transcultural values"—somewhat justifiably—with the greatest of suspicion. Accordingly, such usage must be accompanied by a desire to supply the clearest supporting context. To this end, let us once again reiterate—at the risk of redundancy—the fundamental problem at hand. Lynd is asserting that the potential for experiencing shame, as a profound disenchantment with one's existential commitments, exists as an intrinsic feature of selfhood. The nature of this experience, however, cannot be understood from within the context of the self per se: there is a level of indeterminacy, a gap, between the self's internal logic, and factor's which trigger and direct the movement.

Attention to various clues offered during the course of the book, however, suggest that these phenomena display features that may be compatible with the behaviour of complex systems. This is important, because it could provide the language of "externality" with an alternative framework to that of transcendental idealism, with its ready potential for abuse. Along these lines, for example, Lynd notes that the shame axis cannot be conceptualised within a reductionist perspective:

Increasing attention to relative wholes has special relevance to the understanding of shame if I am at all right that a guilt-axis interpretation of shame tends to be atomistic, with emphasis on each separate act, with personality conceived as built by a series of additive steps, whereas a shame-axis interpretation is more related to the whole self. (p. 132)

Another feature is the fact that situations evoking shame "are often occasioned by what seems a 'ridiculously' slight incident" (p. 40). This recalls instances where tiny perturbations are able to trigger global changes in large systems. And "[b]ecause of this over-all character, an experience of shame can be altered or transcended only in so far as there is some change in the whole self" (p. 50). The self may represent an apparently stable entity, but this is only a relative condition, susceptible to unexpected

upheaval. And this in turn leads to a choice, either to try and reassert the integrity of the initial state, or permit what amounts to a self-revelation to occur (p. 71). "Guilt can be expiated. Shame, short of a transformation of the self, is retained" (pp. 50-1). Unlike the former, with its atomistic structure, shame cannot be managed at the same, volitional level of organisation. Of course, control may be exerted by imposing a regime of informational closure, but this expedient would run contrary to the open nature of the complex system.

The element of indeterminacy and lack of equilibrium which the personality construct exhibits makes the shame experience difficult to describe from both experiential and theoretical vantage points. As Lynd confesses, "I am not trying to build up any logical, or perhaps even consistent, definition of shame" (p. 27). Instead, it is the process of "exposure" that predominates: "exposure of peculiarly sensitive, intimate, vulnerable aspects of the self" (p. 27). As part of a concrete history, moreover, these points of vulnerability cannot be predicted in any general, universally applicable way.

Perhaps it is control itself that forms the core issue: that is to say, the need to articulate and conform to oneself as an enduring, rooted entity. Shame certainly speaks to the individual qua individual: "[t]he thing that has been exposed is what I am" (p. 50). The problem is that this thing is precisely that which is being called into question. Thus shame only seems to confer identity to the extent that such a structure is berated as insufficient, unworthy, and ultimately insubstantial.

How, then, is it possible to reach a higher ground, when all identity seems to contain the seeds for its own unravelling? That "[b]lushing manifests the exposure, the unexpectedness, the involuntary nature of shame" (p. 33) speaks to the reality of its embodiment. This is not to reduce the experience to a generic feeling of anxiety, however. The process also exhibits a cognitive dimension, involving concrete conditions of a life in a concrete, historical setting. But there does seem to exist yet another level of

organization whose stability rests upon the voluntary effort to impose it, and with which the subject perennially attempts to *identify*. It is this process of attachment—in addition to a specific content—that the shame experience undermines. This does not remove the element of historical specificity from the process; it does mean, however, that changes cannot be determined from *within* the internal dynamics of historical thinking.

What is most interesting about Lynd's presentation is that, even though the subject is overcome by something involuntary, the experience has the potential to shed light upon the social milieu out which the individual emerges. Because there are no absolute boundaries, however, the language of "outside" can become an obstacle to understanding. It is the fluidity, wherein parts and whole undergo an emergent process of mutual influence that makes any attempt at conceptual fixity misguided. Reference to complex systems points to the possibility that the whole domain with which we are concerned can reflect coherent structural processes without appearing completely deterministic from a local perspective; nor does this admission of limitation prevent the attempt to institute alternative forms of influence: what is implied, however, is that any plan of action must be cognisant of the need for a multi-levelled approach.

Lynd recognises that such sensitivity requires the cultivation and participation of more than one specific mental set: "[a]n emotional response or a diffused experience such as shame may be dwarfed or falsified if it is too early or too exclusively confined to a particular label or category" (p. 119). This amounts to the need for a discipline that is not linguistically based: one that heightens receptivity to the "nuances of emotional communication" (p. 179). Ultimately, moreover, this may have implications for the way that language itself is conceived and utilised. "Insistence on unambiguous, minute precision of language as the sole criterion of responsible use not only diverts attention from, but precludes by axiom, the development of a language through which more multifarious, complex experiences can be expressed" (p. 171).

Allusion to different styles of usage brings to mind the evolutionary scenario of Donald discussed earlier. Is it possible that guilt and shame might exhibit close affiliation with different representational systems? Consideration of Lynd's criteria does seem to lend itself to such an interpretation. Accordingly, guilt is primarily a function of the theoretical mind, with its propensity for abstract verbal analysis and desire to establish identity. Shame, by contrast, seems related to the field of mythic significance, in that it exposes the infirmity of impostor foundations.

Above all, this deconstruction is not a judgement of theoretical intelligence, not, that is to say, the laboured outcome of a philosophical scepticism or socio-historical exegesis. It is rather, as Lynd demonstrates, the product of an involuntary, catastrophic upheaval that throws one's habitual self-image into sudden relief. The authority with which such revelation speaks, moreover, is manifest in a deeply embodied reaction. This does not sanction a dualistic relation; Lynd is insistent that the guilt and shame axes are not *oppositional* in nature. Specifically, accepting that there is a loss involved in concentrating "on a language of signs of unequivocal meaning" (p. 243) does not necessarily spell abandonment to the "pleasure principle" or some such process of "pure emotion". Perhaps it must be admitted that "our whole life is spent in an attempt to discover when our refusal to bow to limitations is romantic escape from actualities and when it is courage and rational faith" (p. 203). Note, however, that the embrace of "actuality" is not effected by an act of rationality per se. Faith is the requisite qualifier in this context, suggesting that the unknown represents an integral psychological component in the process of world engagement.

As discussed, it is the mythic modality that best fulfils this role. Further evidence of a connection between shame and myth is provided by some intriguing facts about the primary religious texts of western civilisation. Lynd relates that "[t]he word guilt occurs twice in the Old Testament, and guiltless appears twice, neither is found in the New

Testament" (p. 25). By comparison, "[s]hame appears frequently in both the Old and New Testaments. It is contrasted with glory" (p. 25). Clearly, for the redactors of the Judaeo-Christian sacred texts, much closer than us to the oral culture from which our common tradition springs, it is shame that occupies the centre of their moral concern.

This situation provides such a dramatic foil to the contemporary predicament that at least one illustration is worth mention. I use the example of a recent television "talk-show" phenomenon in which various "real-life" guests, chosen for traits symbolic of their status as members of a social underbelly, brutally contest their interpersonal problems before a highly judgmental audience in the most debased, undialogic atmosphere possible. Such proceedings are invariably "moderated" by an individual whose reasoned demeanour attempts to create the illusion that some kind of genuinely therapeutic process is being administered. These sage celebrities, in turn, legitimise their clinical practices by appearing on other media venues allegedly committed to more polite forms of social inquiry.

Whether this entire spectacle is contrived--with respect to the authenticity of the contestants, the sincerity of the hosts, or the journalism that purports to examine them--is irrelevant. What is interesting is the kind of self-justification the producers are wont to promote. The concept of an inherent "entertainment value" is the most culturally pervasive rationale for all forms of media activity. The beauty of this argument is its generality, for under its logic virtually anything can be offered as a diversion from the hard "realities" of the economic world. In other words, the weakened ontological status that all forms of entertainment possess also disqualifies them as real moral acts: their very existence is predicated on the shared assumption they are of no "real" consequence. It is, in short, in its capacity to suspend reality that entertainment derives its only possible utility.

Closely allied to this is an interpretation of catharsis which deems any kind of heightened arousal in the spectator a valuable "escape valve". The use of hydraulic imagery as psychological metaphor requires no comment here. A sociological approach of more recent origin, however, does demand comment. There are two aspects to this apologia. From the perspective of the "marginalised" individuals whose problems are under scrutiny, television offers a form of empowerment: a chance to "air" their very real dilemmas—with an implied prospect of resolution—and the conferral of dignity that comes with the realisation that their personal crises are worthy of broader public attention. The second point is concerned with viewer edification: by exposing hidden extremities of behaviour, this reasoning goes, genuine social ills are brought to light, and with them, the potential for productive analysis and insight.

This attempt to impart gravity to what might otherwise seem a sordid carnival is not as self-serving or far-fetched as it may seem; such a reticence to pass judgement, moreover, stems from the nature of sociological endeavour itself. Regardless of how depraved any component of the productions in question may be considered, they still exist, on another plane, as objective manifestations of historical forces. Whereas the economic motive may wish to deprive entertainment of any moral efficacy—apart from its cathartic or vaguely spiritualistic value—the standard intellectual approach tends to revalorise culture by treating it as an economic or political act. When social science is forthright in admitting its value-laden status, consequently, it must be careful to articulate values in terms of its own mechanisms of legitimation. The question of advocacy is a difficult one. Exactly what is being promoted, and on whose behalf? The result of this situation is a diverse array of theories that all sanction consumption, regardless of the moral equations they are ultimately able to derive. Ultimately, every viewer is encouraged to aspire to the status of sociologist: as long as analysis is congruent with its stated aims, the act of engagement stands redeemed.

The convulsive critique of shame manifests its verdict in an entirely different manner. As an unbridled display of ignorant self-assertion, television's confessional circus degrades both participants and witnesses alike. Here, legal niceties of social caste, cultural relativism, and the like are swept aside before an overpowering sense of humiliation. We are faced with the distinct possibility of a transgression that is transcultural in scope. "Experiences of shame were described as sudden awareness of incongruity between oneself and the social situation, of exposure, in which an unexpected light is thrown on who one is. But this is a time that sharpens awareness that it is one's society, as well as oneself, that stands uncovered..." (Lynd, p. 215).

From this perspective, the event in question precipitates a profound sense of alienation, not only from society as an abstract concept, but from oneself as a concrete instantiation of that society. This is not an opinion arrived at through a voluntary process of reasoning, but the sudden possession of an uncomfortable certitude. As a consequence, shamefulness is likely processed in a manner that is qualitatively distinct from everyday discursive activity. Yet it would be mistaken to imagine the two domains as entirely independent. As Lynd suggests, undue emphasis upon what is in effect the theoretical mode of thought tends to inhibit the expression and apprehension of the shame experience.

The problem with the suggestion that certain activities might be shameful is that there is no compelling argument to support it. Those engaged in a given situation, in other words, must undergo an inner experience that is not primarily conveyed by the expedience of language. Indeed, the greater a participant's attachment to the discursive context as ultimate arbiter of the values at stake, the less likelihood the shame phenomenon will come into play. This is precisely the ethical dilemma posed by the attempt to become rooted in the "material realities" of socio-historical thinking.

The alternative is to open up to a framework of meaning that is not absolutely bound by “facts”, and this incorporation of indeterminacy serves as vehicle to a more cosmically oriented worldview. When identity is shackled to the known and self-construction confined to manipulations of the discursive system—no matter how rigorous or clever—another level of material function may become lamentably disabled. One way of conceptualising a potential for individual diversity within the historical context is through the adoption of “roles”. But from the perspective of self-awareness that Lynd is pursuing, this approach remains inadequate. “Finding oneself is something different from finding one’s role or roles, and if this distinction is lost, we have blocked off an essential road to the understanding of identity” (p. 170).

The concept of identity is a troublesome one. Derrida (1988) enumerates these difficulties with respect to language, but since our words bear much of the burden of establishing personal image, the two are deeply intertwined. For Derrida, language is a function of a dynamic reality that prohibits the possibility of absolute self-identity; in a similar vein, Lynd’s use of identity must also be interpreted as including a level of inherent unpredictability. For example, “a sense of identity would seem...to demand bringing unconscious identifications into conscious awareness...” (p. 210). Even at the level of the social role, then, identity can be conceived as a process, and not simply as a fixed entity. However, Lynd’s use of the term is more complex. As previously noted, the phenomenon of shame “points beyond complete cultural relativism toward the possibility of more universal human values” (p. 227).

Again, the problem of reconciling identity as inherently fixed or essential with the need to acknowledge some kind of developmental process becomes focal. Considering the individual as a distributed product of a specific socio-historical milieu shifts emphasis from a static view to one based on knowledge acquisition. To the extent that concrete conditions are accurately elaborated, one approximates to an entity whose ground may

be defended. This situation is somewhat modified when an inexhaustible exegetical element is added to the mix. Yet, despite the fears this tends to raise, emphasis on interpretation does not necessarily spell extreme relativism. Indeed, it can be argued that sensitivity to context may be *more* critical for exploring discursive limitation than it is for attempting to anchor meaning in an absolute way. According to this view, the interpretative approach requires greater reliance upon subtle temporal nuances, marginal events, and inadvertent consequences than on normative schema, lexical values, and intentional action.

Be that as it may, both these approaches tend to foreground a process of *specification*. Accordingly, the notion of transcultural values becomes an anathema; it seems to suggest a level of meaning that bypasses concrete historical process, along with its legitimate means of evaluation. However, the kind of structures which the shame phenomenon activates may be of an entirely different variety. Rather than imparting discourse that is imagined as universal, shame seems to foreground unacknowledged motivational constructs around which one's habitual discursive activity is centred. The action is a negative one in that the experience serves to undermine an operative level of positive belief. As Lynd explains, “[p]art of the difficulty in admitting shame to oneself arises from reluctance to recognize that one has built on false assumptions about what the world one lives in is and about the way others will respond to oneself” (p. 43).

The disposition which facilitates the possibility of shame is in keeping with its negative character. We are reminded, for example, that “throughout our Western civilization shame is related to the uncovering of nakedness” (p. 28). Architects of contemporary consumer culture have exploited the literal rendering of this attitude ad nauseam. However, there may also be a psychological truth being expressed, dealing with the nature of self-knowledge. Insight into one's own predicament may be intimately related to a process that renders the subject vulnerable.

This special character, moreover, is not something that posits the eventual emergence of the self as a positive construct; rather, it enables the subject to more fully append the realm of the indeterminate. The function of shame, in other words, does not simply throw light upon the hidden aspects of a pre-existent entity, but rather permits a more continuous, unfettered realisation of the world to transpire. Vulnerability, nakedness, the willingness to expose oneself to “the risks involved in going beyond fixed signs” (p. 244): these are emblematic of a kind of non-interference with which the greater domain of meaning is effected, and this is the gesture that makes a claim to universal validity.

“The recurrent attempt to affirm a principle that has no immediate result, no measurable pragmatic outcome, is an affirmation of possible meaning in life, a reaffirmation of significance” (p. 255). Once more it appears that the discourse of Lynd may be congruent with Donald's conception of mythic significance. The psychological modality no longer exclusively focused upon the subject and its theoretic understanding expresses itself in terms of cosmic relations. “Failure to reach our own aspirations, our own possibilities, is intimately related to the way we see our place in the universe, and hence to the way we conceive the universe itself” (p. 63).

Confining mental activity to the legalistic minutiae of thought serves to inhibit the kind of dramatic perspectival shift that underlies the shame experience. What we have been referring to as the cosmic or mythic dimension must be intimately related to the manner in which motivation is embodied. In a sense, the anti-mythic imperative has succeeded in forcing this modality underground, where it lies with a kind of explosive potential that is released when inadvertently triggered. The result is not manifest as an analytic conclusion, justified by its adherence to verifiable fact and application of proper sequential logic. Instead, the subject undergoes a reaction which asserts itself with a force of certainty that is linked to felt implications of a global nature.

A more overt involvement with the whole must include both the unknown and the unknowable, but these categories cannot be expressed discursively; instead, they serve as mechanisms of vulnerability, as means for priming the psychological apparatus for the precipitation of certain types of mental transactions. Lynd is particularly eloquent in expressing these points. "When we ask the ultimate questions, whether about the direction of our own lives or about the meaning of existence, the outcome of thinking is not an answer but a *transformed way of thinking*, not propositions to assent to but heightened power of apprehension" [emphasis added] (p. 251).

This is a compelling depiction of what might be meant by an order of universal value, and of how such a concept can be misconstrued. It also helps to interpret the statement that the "heightening of oneself beyond cultural demands is precisely what is involved in discovery of identity" (p. 228). It is clear that Lynd is using the word identity in a non-traditional sense: that is, the act of self-discovery does not simply yield an objectified content, but a procedural awareness that cannot be divorced from the locus of biological processes in which the subject is situated.

In conclusion, the shame phenomenon can be divided into three areas of interest. The first concerns the capacity to experience it; the second deals with the specific nature of the experience; and the third speaks to the issue of how it is received. In terms of the latter, Lynd depicts the subject as having a definite choice. She writes: "[c]onfronting, instead of quickly covering, an experience of shame as revelation of oneself and of society—facing 'actual life'—requires an ability to risk, if necessary to endure, disappointment, frustration, and ridicule" (p. 232).

This notion of choice relates to the concept of moral discipline being developed here. The ability to consciously abet a process of either "confronting" or "covering" represents a discipline, in the sense of voluntary exertion directed toward a particular goal. The question arises, however, as to what kind of behaviour, if any, could constitute

a fundamental discontinuity with the self's behavioural patterns. In other words, self-discipline seems to intrinsically entail a sacrifice that is in some sense undesirable but is nonetheless tolerated because of a more primary objective. Presumably this overriding goal is one that has been sanctioned by the context that is the subject: that is what imparts the character of a voluntary act.

Such analysis eventually runs into the complexities of unconscious motivation. Here we have a case that by definition admits discontinuity into the decision-making process. Becoming conscious of hidden operatives is admittedly envisaged as a process that reunifies the subject, and hence recoups the authorial prerogative. But psychoanalytic concepts, long circulating in popular discourse, do make clear a kind of volitional gap that seems to accompany growth, evidenced both by the required external agency of the therapist, and by temporary "slips" through which the interpretative process is seen to advance. To this extent, what Lynd is advocating is similar.

There may be a point of divergence, however, as to whether a full reinstatement of the subject is possible or even desirable. From the perspective of shame, as we have seen, the thrust is essentially negative. This does not imply that positive growth is impossible, pursuant to the disarming experience, but the goals are not quite consonant. For Lynd, the presence of the unconscious does not simply connote a state of disharmony within the individual to be rectified; instead, it stands as an intrinsic component of human interaction that must be accommodated through the cultivation of faith.

Such a proposal lays claim to a radical sense of discontinuity. Under this regime, the self no longer acts as ultimate sanctioning body; instead, faith takes over as the gradual, disciplined process whereby such a demotion finds acceptance. Far from representing a road to certainty, this trust implies a greater level of comfort with the unknown—including the experience of shame—which is, in Lynd's terms, a powerful

annulment of the ground of the habitual self. The discontinuity that shame portends is, by its very nature, the product of an involuntary action. However, the confrontation with it, the ability to seize upon it as an opportunity for growth, is something for which the notion of volition holds validity. From the present point of view, *listening* stands as the paradigmatic act of moral discipline. That is, once the shame episode has occurred, it is imperative to do nothing but observe for a requisite period of silence. In so doing, there is nothing paradoxical involved here. The conditioned self is not condoning its own demise; rather, the very act of listening allows a process of transformation to begin, so that the entity that might be said to be "choosing" in fact no longer exists in precisely the same form.

The cultivation of silence or space—whatever descriptive epithet one uses—is also in a sense a negative act. The moral discipline of withholding action is necessary to combat the highly conditioned and hence automatic reactivity of the self, but the assertion of positive insight is part of a different dynamic, one that represents another level of spontaneous processing. This negative nature of the self's input is what allows the cultivation of alterity; without it, the emergence of discontinuity is interrupted before it has time to develop a fully sustainable, autopoietic dynamic. Once this has happened, however, the subject begins to experience the positive effects of a new regime and this tends to fertilise a motivational construct dedicated to a repetition of the entire cycle in future circumstances.

The value of Lynd's thesis is its presentation of a discontinuity of the most dramatic order. As such, shame becomes part of the larger group of situations that questions the utility of conceiving the subject as essentially unified. The musical ritual with which this thesis is concerned is an attempt to pursue a level of discontinuity in a self-conscious, systematic way. The ability to undergo such experiences within the relative safety of a ritual activity can be utilised to develop sensitivity to the kind of skill

required in the broader field of human action. In particular, the combination of dissociation and disciplined observation practiced in the context of aesthetic behaviour can be used to demonstrate how an alternative mechanism of evaluation can be set in motion: one that is not as fully congruent with the habitual self or the identity it purports to reflect.

What the shame phenomenon also suggests is that methods of judgement can be embodied in disparate ways; this, in turn, may relate to the highly complex workings of the language function. Examination of these issues, moreover, suggests that the expedient of discursive negotiation may not, in itself, represent the most adequate model of communication. There are simply other factors, non-discursive in nature, that must be taken into account. Finally, as necessary as the ability of "letting go" is to the process of self-knowledge, its benefits can only be realised within a larger theoretical and practical context that sanctions a specific regime of discipline. In this respect, the notion of intentional behaviour, while circumscribed by ritual requirements, still commands its due as an indispensable component of the ethical demand for responsible action. Ultimately, we have come to the conclusion that responsibility is not merely an issue of control.

The idea of art as self-expression, whether of a specific individual or an individual culture, may be entirely too limited. Moreover, great art neither defies the historical processes shaping it, nor exists merely as a kind of cipher for the discursive content it is groping to express. The claim here is that certain artefacts, when augmented by specific rules of engagement, have the potential to serve as mechanisms that sensitise the organism and make it more susceptible to dialogic transaction. This is in part due to the kinds of cognitive activities these objects demand, and for which we have attempted to suggest some avenues of understanding. Such an analysis, however, has only begun to scratch the surface. The quality of awe that the most profound aesthetic experiences evoke continues to defy our attempts to conceptually encompass it, and hence it

continues to act as a beacon that both disrupts human complacency and provokes creative effort.

CHAPTER V. CONCLUSION

A. SUMMARY

As stated in chapter three, the primary objective of this thesis has been the examination of a field of inquiry—exemplified by the career of Glenn Gould—that links an experience of musical fugue with issues of moral practice. A chief methodological tool has been the application of concepts borrowed from cognitive science, and in particular those related to the phenomena of dissociation. A number of areas have been elaborated as relevant to the focal task, the most immediate being that of the musical activity itself. Such a depiction must be specified in the context of ritual, however, which represents a coming together of many disparate levels of function.

Accordingly, I have described not only salient characteristics of the musical genre under discussion, but also those concrete circumstances necessary for generating the desired field of ritual meaning. These include an understanding of the setting, motivation, and cognitive tasks that define the participant's activities. Successful execution of these elements is claimed to be instrumental in producing an experience with certain invariant properties. In addition to correct liturgical procedures, then, a further attempt has been made to specify the kind of first-person events these rites are said to precipitate.

Cognitive science, in the first instance, has been surveyed in order to reconcile the specific ritual with its alleged effects; to this end, the concept of dissociation has been most widely employed. Secondly, however, the scientific context has been further exploited in an attempt to suggest certain implications for the aesthetic activity, which lie in the realm of ethics. In order to do so, it was necessary to provide a very broad but

historically sensitive interpretative context, presented as a recurring commentary upon the role of language in human affairs and the effects of dualistic thinking upon contemporary culture.

Finally, discussion as to what constitutes the ethically charged arena of dialogic relations has been provided in order to demonstrate how the ritual and its cognitive by-products may be able to facilitate such a style of communicative behaviour. The varied nature of this material, interrelated and yet representing a locus of vastly differing temporal frames and disciplinary perspectives, necessitated a non-linear expository style, interspersed with an occasionally more poetic turn: language's answer to the problem of simultaneity. This latter quality is above all the province of the fugue.

B. CONCLUSIONS

The reigning dualistic regime has long found in music an unruly subject. This is largely manifest as a disjunction between an intuitive sense of significance and the public discourse permitted by the system of thought. On one side of the ledger, reference is made to either objective socio-historical conditions or formal structural relations that a particular music embodies; on the other side lies an unavailing concern with emotion, physical elation, or spiritual edification.

The point is not to decry the resourcefulness and utility of all analyses conducted under the rule of dualism; rather, it is to stake a claim for phenomena that are exiled by its particular logical policies. In surveying a sizeable amount of material, I have been gratified to find an emergent picture that lends support for the intuitive basis from which this work began. Musical fugue, that is to say, shares family relations with a large range of phenomena that are not fundamentally musical in character. This context runs the

gamut from gross brain injury, to functional pathological disorders, everyday lapses of attention, intense episodes of aesthetic exaltation, and even mystical experiences.

As a somewhat generic term for functional uncoupling, dissociation provides a whole spectrum of phenomena harbouring more or less implication with the world at large. We have noted how a theorist such as Hilgard, for example, uses the concept of depth as indicative of this variability. Regarding dissociation as a psycho-physiological mechanism of discontinuity, furthermore, one could imagine that the order of dissociative magnitude would have significance for a metrics of creativity as well. Clearly, however, the relation is not a simple or sufficient one. I have proposed that the ethically charged field of dialogic transaction is a means of envisioning a continuum that encompasses the category of moral creativity at its apex.

This thesis has considered how self-conscious employment of musical fugue can assist in attaining such a modality. Does this imply, consequently, that the "monologic" end of the scale might be distinguished by an utter paucity of dissociative function? A glance at the broad range of phenomena considered in chapter four suggests otherwise. Indeed, it is no coincidence that the main form of 'dissociation' in psychology refers to a condition known as 'fugue state' (DSM-IV). Once again we encounter a contrivance for escape or flight, this time in the context of a supremely non-dialogic situation. The tragedy of psychogenic fugue is marked by its underlying lack of flexibility. It is as if identity coagulates into an impervious whole, which, when subjected to undue stress, is summarily banished to the emptiness of an amnesic wasteland.

In light of this, a scale of dissociative depth would seem to be related to a continuum of dialogic potential in the form of a u-shaped function (fig. 1, pg. 354): in other words, the most potent dissociative phenomena are seen to occur at both ends of a spectrum graduating from static fragmentation to fluid integration. What lends the pathological fugue state such symbolic value is the absolute nature of the temporal

division it poses: identity is not fractured, but functionally obliterated on behalf of an allegedly new one. It is this dramatic—one might even say creative—ploy to salvage the integrity of unity that sets the fugue state apart and imparts its antithetical relation to the process of dialogic evolution.

This does not deny that the entity that survives such a cataclysm has a real level of coherence as an organism, for how else could its continued survival be effected? However, few would deny that such an “escape” is deleterious, for the amnesia that inundates one’s past is fraught with practical problems. Regardless of the nonessential nature of the subject’s identity, or the fallibility of memory, we understand a critical level of mnemonic continuity as indispensable to our state of wellbeing. Still, the fact that one can indeed survive an imposition of such devastating magnitude points to a critical insight: instrumental success and pathology cannot be mutually exclusive. From a certain perspective, moreover, one could say that *all* instrumental action depends upon closure and the temporary annulment of possibility that it represents.

This predicament is reflected in figure one (pg. 351). On the one hand, it is acknowledged that an increasing sophistication of consciously applied discipline allows for a process of growth, as well as added security against the eruption of the arbitrary. On the other hand, our diagram depicts some important qualifications. Disciplinary creativity, while it may be critically dependent upon dissociative function, rests upon a differentiated base of normative relations: in short, it is historical in nature. Even though an insight spells growth to the extent it brings more phenomena into greater communion, its very concreteness implies a simultaneous flowering of division. Consequently, the baseline of dissociation can never be zero: that is to say, belief that the field of the everyday is a unified volitional state must be an illusory one.

The discipline underlying the most profound form of integrative movement is thus distinguished by a radical discontinuity, thought to be dependent upon the deeper strata

of dissociative experience. In the most succinct terms, what dissociation affords us is the possibility of silence. What emerges from such a silence, however, is not a theoretical perspective, but a more direct experience of the underlying embodied reactions through which the world is mediated. It is this novel awareness that acts as irrepressible catalyst for the process of psychological change.

The uniqueness of silence lies in its negativity. The moral challenge is whether lapses are to be void of consciousness, invisible boundaries that distort the free flow of information, or rejuvenating spaces of boundless potential. In either case, we have identified the concept of dissociation as a significant common denominator. This is far from an arbitrary ascription of unity, based on a series of surface similarities. Rather, dissociation both as an “experienced” and “psychologically validated” phenomenon seems to express a degree of specificity about the nature of underlying structural and functional relations within the human nervous system. This is important, because dualism—by virtue of both its content and its normative status—presents itself as a profoundly naturalistic portrait of the world. It is this alleged grounding in basic ontological categories that comes into question with a consideration of dissociative phenomena. In other words, what are considered irreducible modes of being are only particular constraints imposed upon a realm of far greater potential.

In the prevailing popular aesthetic discourse, music is above all a conduit for the spontaneous, standing in stark “opposition” to the measured sobriety of rational discourse and understanding. To this extent, it is in closer proximity to the natural, with its biological legacy of powerful, unconditioned response. Greater appreciation of the systemic diversity and flexibility of the human cognitive endowment provides an important critique of this attitude, summarised in two points. Firstly, the kind of segregation that dualism attempts to enforce through discursive and ritualised praxis does not reflect a set of irreducible natural artefacts. Secondly, spontaneity can occur in

situations that fall outside the purview of “the natural” as conceived by dualistic concepts, but which is no less dependent upon non-volitional processes as a result. In short, all tasks both impose constraints upon and exploit an underlying substrate of dynamic, self-organising functions.

The significant question—and one that brings the discussion into the realm of the ethical—concerns the ecological validity of any given behavioural regime. I believe that the detailed consideration of dualism provided in the course of this investigation reveals a fundamentally disharmonious set of practices. In other words, the highly naturalised and ritualised opposition between body and mind, subject and object, self and other, etc., imposes a sense of inevitability that serves to mask both the internal conflict it enjoins and the genuine possibilities for growth it inhibits. The further issue—and perhaps the most difficult to address—is that which deals with the instantiation of viable alternatives.

Both the ‘real’ process and the concept of dissociation allow the decomposition of what might appear indissoluble, but is it possible to “construct” in a manner deemed discontinuous with habitual emotional/analytical alliances? I believe the fugue is highly suggestive of the manner in which such an integrative state might be pursued. The most significant analogy stems from the fact that the state of depersonalisation it effects occurs in the context of an extreme vigilance to sensory difference and, further, that it provides the organism with a means of beneficially coping with high degree of perceptual ambiguity.

The assertion that skills and insights afforded through involvement with musical fugue could be successfully transplanted outside the ritual arena through a comparable regime of attention and auto-cued dissociative experience is certainly not one that has been demonstrated as empirical certainty. Nonetheless, there are grounds for taking it seriously. Again, it is the developing discourse of dissociation that lends credence to our

hypothesis. In brief, one great virtue of such a perspective is its inherent tendency to deconstruct the aesthetic realm as an autonomous function. But this cannot be assimilated to the approach that reintegrates artistic creation and ritual through a discursive demonstration of the socio-historical determinants of the productive process.

What is revolutionary about the dissociation approach is the articulation of a family resemblance that serves to unite the field of powerful aesthetic anomaly, not only with the wayward flights of pathology, but precisely *with normative consciousness itself*. In other words, by bringing them into proximity, by revealing common mechanisms and processes upon which their function rests, dissociation theory serves to deconstruct not only the aesthetic, but *the special status of the everyday as a ground from which anomalies must be seen to be judged*. Anomaly, then, must be seen as an inescapable and indispensable part of the dialogic process. From this perspective, aesthetics is no longer grist to be processed by a sociological mill in order to be rendered epistemologically useful; rather, it is an essential component in the conduct of thought itself.

The importance of this distinction demands further elaboration. What we are referring to as aesthetic space is bracketed as a distinct entity that acts as a laboratory of the mind, providing a functional context for experimentation and elicitation of various states of consciousness. These are not to be considered extracurricular practices that lend enrichment to life; rather, they provide essential tools for successful communication and flexibility of thought.

From this perspective, the presumption of "the everyday" as sober basis for judgement—even when distinguished by a highly disciplined, well-informed linguistic virtuosity—is misguided. The ubiquity of dissociative phenomena points to the fact that the alleged unity is neither an accurate assessment nor a desirable goal: inaccurate, because it denies the reality of processes that continuously puncture and disrupt, and

undesirable, because it asserts a form of agency that is incapable of creative perception. Of course, this does not mean that creative thought does not transpire; rather, it does so in spite of the general theoretical ethos. Yet, if the picture suggested here is indeed a more accurate reflection of communicative process, then a more self-conscious utilisation of dissociative technique would seem to be in order; this is the larger goal of the aesthetic ritual practices under investigation.

The multi-levelled, spontaneous reorganisation that a dedicated experience of silence eventually initiates is indicated in figure one as a shift from self-discipline to moral discipline. In the present terms, moral discipline represents a migration of the fugal experience into the world of the everyday. The quality of observation that silence engenders serves to reveal the normative domain as a space of collapsed possibilities and fragmented consciousness; it also yields intimations that this impoverished reality is in essence the product of the self. Once more, the fugue prepares us for such an insight, for as I have tried to demonstrate, its very structure is designed to paralyse the dominance of linear consciousness, revealing in a most dramatic and convincing fashion both the limits of the self's inner logic and the wonders that emerge beyond the pale of its control.

Let me once again reiterate that these conclusions draw validity from a pattern of converging constraints that emerged in the process of a broad cross-sectional survey. The service that has hopefully been rendered is one that lends encouragement and viability to the kind of interdisciplinary dialogue this work represents. In short, one objective is the establishment of an agenda for future research.

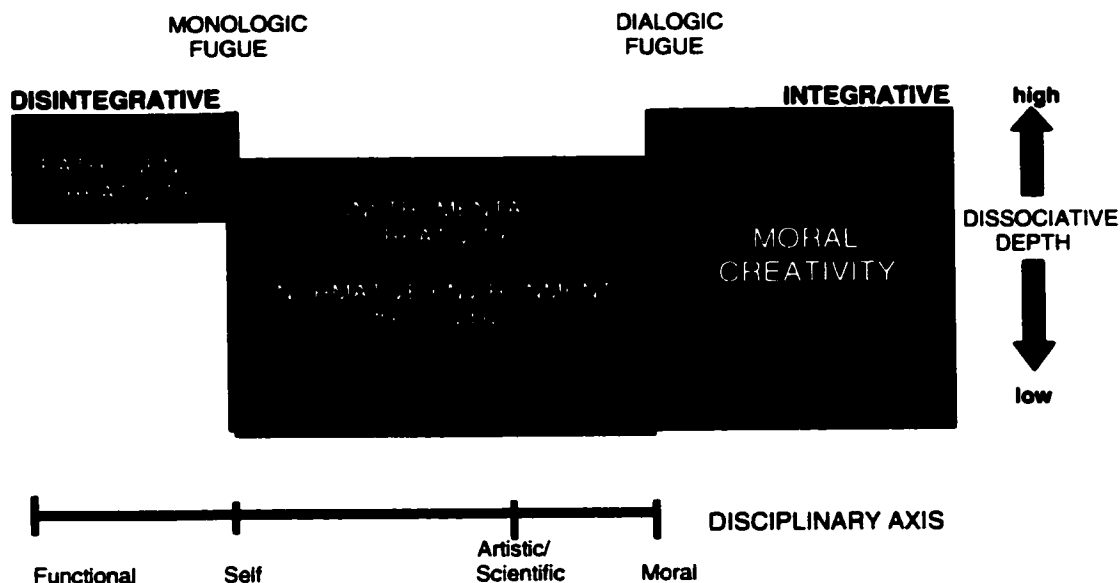


Fig. 1. Discipline, dissociation, and dialogism: schematic diagram of the overall thesis.

Discipline is depicted as a progressive axis, beginning with a level of *functional competence* that organises behaviour coherent enough to permit survival. Due to the nature of the human social environment, this covers a wide range of possibilities, including subjects--often prominent on the streets of large urban areas--with obvious psychotic disorders. *Self-discipline* represents an attentional and behavioural focus that emerges through assimilation of the normative environment and motivated by a history of painful and pleasurable experiences. This combination can achieve remarkable, long-term results through constant application of energy and deferral of immediate rewards. *Artistic and scientific discipline* concerns not only the execution of difficult tasks of extended duration, but the adoption of an agenda that specifically aims at uniting disparate phenomena in meaningful relation through a process of growth. *Moral discipline* is designed to subject the self to a process of dynamic reorganisation through a cultivated state of functional inhibition, often designated as *silence*.

Dissociative depth relates to the axis of discipline as a u-shaped function. Note that both ends, which represent the greatest dissociative depth, are involved with heightened creativity, viewed as a level of discontinuity from the status of the everyday and its application of habitual executive programs. At one end, effects of extreme physical or emotional trauma, virulent double binds, and the like, create situations in which the application of discipline and normative reasoning processes is ineffectual and ultimately disrupted. Dissociation offers a form of creative solution that can ameliorate disabling levels of pain. At the other end of the spectrum, deep dissociation is self-consciously combined with a disciplinary focus and ritual practice. Note that dissociative depth does not graduate to a zero baseline; such an outcome, according to the theory presented here, would be a functional impossibility.

Communicative style. Requirements of action dictate that temporary closure of possibilities is a perennial necessity; as such, monologic and dialogic are not oppositional terms. As a label for general communicative styles, however, they adequately reflect a series of important differences related to the two fugue states, with their respective dynamics of fragmentation and integration.

C. PROSPECTS

There is undeniable risk in applying material culled from the reductive field of empirical knowledge to the great problems of human behaviour. Caution remains warranted, despite unprecedented advancements in knowledge. Nonetheless, the need exists for greater dialogue between the biological sciences and the humanities. Genuine concern about the excesses of over-generalisation must not curtail an embrace of empirical inquiry, and the historical demise of a detached objectivity need not sanction the relativism that many decry in the present culture.

A genuinely dialogic stance represents a middle ground in the debate between universal and local value, because the dialogic process is dependent upon both. When left to its own devices, the approach that regards aesthetic activities as politically charged expressions of local difference does not end the despotism of hegemony, but merely fractures it into a multitude of tiny fiefdoms. From the present perspective, the rise of fundamentalism does nothing to foster a more sustainable form of communication.

This thesis has not been primarily concerned with art as either self-expression or group expression. Surely the merits of these approaches, however, do not cancel those that devolve from a different level of analysis. That concern is directed toward more universal aspects of experience does not automatically make it a-historical, or insensitive to systemic socio-political and economic problems. The field of cognitive science is opening up new avenues for exploring music: ways, moreover, that can bring the dimension of sound back into focus, without necessary reference to the occupational concerns of traditional formal analysis.

When Stravinsky tells us that a “composer works through a perceptual, not a conceptual, process” (1981), this might be applied to the listener as well. Emphasis

upon music as perceived sound is immensely important and far too often overlooked. In this respect, the fugue is an advantageous place to begin: over the centuries, composers have turned to it again and again, not because they wish to eschew any sense of contemporaneity, but because all are captivated by the salience of the interface it provides. This alone speaks to a certain cross-cultural validity. Let us rebut the charge of escapism a final time: as discussed, the fugue's effects are precisely historical to the extent they can ultimately facilitate awareness of an embodied level of non-verbal conditioning and cognition.

Opening up the cognitive system to a greater degree of simultaneity, ambiguity, and flexibility, moreover, serves to foster compassion. Understanding the virulence of the self-construct, the magnitude of the forces that support it, and the poverty it inflicts serves as humbling reminder that neither bondage nor freedom can be conceived with reference to the individual will or intellect alone. We may seek mastery over history, but only an act of compassion can liberate the evanescent present from its disputatious clutches.

Recognition of the cognitive implications of music is fraught with exciting possibilities. As this thesis tries to demonstrate, auditory patterns affect the brain in complex and unexpected ways. Fugue is only one of countless ways in which a world of sound can be organised. The door is open for all sorts of interesting research combining cognitive science and other musical genres or styles. With respect to the topic of rhythm, for example, Hébert and Cuddy (1999) have differentiated what they call "figural" and "metric" perception as discrete processes. As these concepts become more explicit in terms of their neural substrates, what bearing will they ultimately have upon our understanding of music that features the temporal aspect much more prominently than that of Sebastian Bach?

The fact that artists produce their work in the context of concrete ritual settings does not lessen the independent level of science their work implies. Nor must artistic creation be reduced to a level of abstract organisation, however interesting that may be. The mental phenomena associated with the fugue are interesting and powerful enough to be transported into ritual settings for which they were never conceived. It hardly needs saying, moreover, that further secrets will be revealed as this kind of dialogue continues between other genres of music and newer theories of cognition.

In the mid-twentieth century, inheritors of the western musical tradition sometimes dubbed their compositions "experimental" in order to advertise a bold commitment to the new. To herald a return of aesthetics into the mainstream of human life and thought, however, is to universalise this epithet. *All* music is experimental, for each time a subject willingly submits to an act of audition, he or she is conducting research into the nature of mind, with all the responsibility and care that this entails. Yet, having said this, the creative works of the present can be used to fulfil a special role. Confronting novelty deprives the listener of certain expectations, and hence of resources that might be wilfully employed to make sense of things. The imposed vulnerability offers a unique opportunity for witnessing the workings of one's mind.

Milan Kundera describes his initial encounter with the works of Xenakis as follows: "though I could, if necessary, grasp the structure of a composition by Bach, faced with the music of Xenakis I was completely helpless, untrained, uninitiated, in fact a completely naïve listener" (1981). Such moments are treasures. In a similar vein, Gould celebrated the non-educated amateur, naturally free from the constraining expectations of analytical paraphernalia. And yet, on another level, we have asserted that vulnerability is not merely the gift of a wholly external benevolence. It is the role of moral discipline, in other words, to advance its appearance. By contrast, dissociation in

its more normative context is equipped to do just the contrary: to keep the unwanted at bay, well outside the fortress of conscious control, with its need for imposed coherence.

The lesson of the fugue points to a more dynamic harmony. But, because the mechanisms it exploits are not unique to it alone, the possibility arises they might be utilised in other contexts as well. Indeed, that is precisely the point: the so-called “everyday” is using them continuously. By acquiring a level of experience at the ritual level, the initiate can be trained to turn the tables, as it were, learning to pry apart what might have seemed an ineluctable whole. It is one thing to do this in the artificial safety of a ritual enclosure. Moral discipline is the energy devoted to its recreation in the world at large, where the unity of the self takes on the lustrous tenseness of a diamond. Armed with the new motivation that flows from even a partial success in this endeavour, the ritual graduate at last embarks upon a new calling, a committed servant of the dialogic process and the free flow of information it represents.

It seems imperative, moreover, that this new role for aesthetics be reflected at the institutional level. In this regard, I would mention two primary areas for future activity. The first is the recruitment of scientific researchers, specialists who could contribute to the overall program. Close examination of a variety of aesthetic forms and genres has been mentioned; to this should be added the general problem of demonstrating more rigorously how internal cues can recreate states of consciousness with greater independence from the specific environmental factors that initially helped precipitate them. This, of course, is a long-term phase of research into learning and consciousness.

The second major area is that of education. Once again, two broad policy issues are immediately apparent, attendant upon the changed epistemological status of music. First, music could be taught—at least to the non-specialist—in the context of the kinds of procedural ritual pursuits explored herein. This augurs a change in the whole way that

music pedagogy could be approached on a general level. Second, the role of music within the overall concept of a proper education must be firmly reinstated. This is a matter of political and sociological import; it speaks to the future of the species and the kind of civilisation towards which we are heading.

Both art and religion have historically been colonised by a practical mode of language which, in seeking to minimise ambiguity, has destroyed their utility in the process. The pursuit of linguistic control has so asserted its legitimacy—becoming so utterly over-learned—that it no longer permits a rightful place for the realities of the non-linguistic mind. Ionesco was right: cessation of the incessant reflexive twitching of the verbal command centre has become a frightening prospect. However, it is not a demonic ogre, lurking in the biological basement, that arouses our greatest fear. What we dread to find most of all, sitting impassively behind the noisy din of our clever symbolic chatter—is intelligence.

Confrontation at the level of language alone, with those who seek to rule it, is a pre-ordained defeat. Nothing distracts so much as a good argument, with all its illusion of work and self-assertion. This is why the emphasis on education must be altered. The virtues of silence do not transpire by themselves, especially in an environment designed to eradicate their possibility. The truest form of society may be born in seclusion; the firmest sense of purpose may be found in being lost. Dissociation, as described in the context of the musical ritual, is precipitated by a crisis for which the focal mode of processing has no satisfactory answer. What initiates a transition between two contrasting styles of cognition depends upon this "breakdown". Here we find convergence between religious thinking, such as that of Buber, and biological mechanisms of dissociation explored above. The human condition is at once an acute consciousness of unlimited potential and perennial limitation. At every moment, the mind is faced with ultimate crisis. The resultant dissociation can lead one astray, but

also into fertile lands. One thing is certain: without this crisis, and the "wandering" it provokes, one remains master of a vehicle that is doomed to traverse the eternal causeways of mechanism.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Adorno, T. W. (1981). Prisms (S. Weber & S. Weber, Trans.). Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press.
- Allport, G. W. (1961). Pattern and growth in personality. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.
- Anokhin, P. K. (1974). Biology and neurophysiology of the conditioned reflex and its role in adaptive behaviour (S. A. Corson, Ed.; R. Dartan, J. EPP & V. Kirilcuk, Trans.). Oxford: Pergamon.
- Anokhin, P.K. (1968). Cybernétique, neurophysiologie et psychologie. Information sur les Sciences Sociales, 7, 17-58.
- Bakhtin, M. M. (1984a). Problems of Dostoevsky's poetics (C. Emerson, Ed. and Trans.). Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P.
- Bakhtin, M. M. (1984b). Rabelais and his world (H. Iswolsky, Trans.). Bloomington: Midland-Indiana University.
- Baribeau, J., Le Beau, M., Roth, R. M., & Laurence, J.-R. (1994). Hypnotizability and strop performance: An out-of-context ERP investigation. Unpublished manuscript.
- Baribeau, J. Dissociation: L'autre de la technique, Fides, (Ed. Mager R.) In press
- Bassin, F. V. (1969). Consciousness and the unconscious. In M. Cole & I. Maltzman (Eds.), A handbook of contemporary soviet psychology (R. Glickman, D. G. Nichols, E. Schuman & L. Solotaroff, Trans.). New York: Basic Books
- Bateson, G. (1979). Mind and nature: A necessary unity. New York: Bantam.
- Bear, D. M. (1983). Hemispheric specialization and the neurology of emotion. Archives of Neurology, 40, 195-201.
- Belvaux, R. (Director). (1992). Man bites dog [Film]. Roxie Releasing.
- Bernstein, E. M., & Putnam, F. W. (1986). Development, reliability, and validity of a dissociation scale. Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease, 174, 727-735.
- Bernstein, L. (1976). The unanswered question: six talks at Harvard. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard.
- Bohm, D. (1980). Wholeness and the implicate order. London: Ark-Routledge.
- Borod, J. C. (1993). Cerebral mechanisms underlying facial, prosodic, and lexical emotional expression: A review of neuropsychological studies and methodological issues. Neuropsychology, 7, 445-63.
- Brack, G., Brack, C. J., & Bagwell, M. K. (1994, April). An exploration of the underlying mechanisms of dissociation as a modification of consciousness. Paper presented at the Towards a Scientific Basis of Consciousness Conference, Tucson, AZ.
- Broadbent, D. E., & Gregory, M. (1964). Stimulus set and response set: Two kinds of selective attention. Quarterly Journal of Experimental Psychology, 16, 309-317.
- Bruner, J. (1990). Acts of meaning. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard.
- Buber, M. (1958). I and Thou (2nd ed.; R. G. Smith, Trans.). New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. (Original work published in 1923)
- Butler, J. P. (1990). Gender trouble: Feminism and the subversion of identity. New York: Routledge.
- Cage, J. (1961). Silence. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT.
- Cambridge dictionary of philosophy. (1995). R. Audi (Gen. Ed.). Cambridge: Cambridge University.
- Campbell, J. (1972). The hero with a thousand faces. Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University.
- Cilliers, P. (1998). Complexity and postmodernism: Understanding complex systems. London: Routledge.
- Coons, P. M. (1999). Psychogenic or dissociative fugue: A clinical investigation of five cases. Psychological Reports, 84, 881-886.

- Crawford, H. J., & J. H. Gruzelier. (1992). A midstream view of the neuropsychophysiology of hypnosis: Recent research and future directions". In E. Fromm and M. Nash (Eds.), Contemporary perspectives in hypnosis research. New York: Guilford.
- Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1991). Flow: The psychology of optimal experience. New York: HarperPerennial-HarperCollins.
- Damasio, A. R. (1994). Descartes' error: Emotion, reason, and the human brain. New York: Avon Books.
- Deikman, A. J. (1971). Bimodal consciousness. Archives of General Psychiatry, 25, 481-489.
- Dennett, D. C. (1991). Consciousness explained. Boston: Little, Brown and Company.
- Derrida, J. (1981). Dissemination (B. Johnson, Trans.). Chicago: University of Chicago. (Original work published 1972).
- Derrida, J. (1988). Limited Inc (S. Weber, J. Mehlman, & A. Bass, Trans.). Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern UP.
- Dewey, J., & A. F. Bentley. Knowing and the known. 1949. Westport, CT.: Greenwood P, 1975.
- Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders: DSM-IV. (1994). Washington, D.C.: American Psychiatric Association.
- Dixon, M., & J. R. Laurence. (1992). Two hundred years of hypnosis research: Questions resolved? Questions unanswered! In E. Fromm and M. Nash (Eds.), Contemporary perspectives in hypnosis research. New York: Guilford.
- Donald, M. (1991). Origins of the modern mind: Three stages in the evolution of culture and cognition. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard U.
- Donald, M. (1993). Précis of *Origins of the modern mind: Three stages in the evolution of culture and cognition*. Behavioral and Brain Sciences 16, 737—791.
- Eckhart, J. (1981). Meister Eckhart: The essential sermons, commentaries, treatises, and defense (E. Colledge, & B. McGinn, Trans.). New York: Paulist Press.
- Edelman, G. M. (1992). Bright air, brilliant fire: On the matter of the mind. New York: BasicBooks-HaperCollins.
- Ellenberger, H. F. (1970). The discovery of the unconscious: The history and evolution of dynamic psychiatry. New York: Basic Books.
- Foucault, M. (1979). Discipline and punish: The birth of the prison (A. Sheridan, Trans.). New York: Random House. (Original work published in 1975)
- Foucault, M.. (1970). The Order of things: An archaeology of the human sciences. New York: Pantheon. (Original work published in 1966)
- Fries, P., Reynolds, J. H., Rorie, A. E., & Desimone, R. (2001). Modulation of oscillatory neuronal synchronization by selective visual attention. Brain, 291, 1560-63.
- Frith, S. (1988). Music for pleasure: Essays in the sociology of pop. New York: Routledge.
- Gauld, A. (1992). A history of hypnotism. Cambridge: Cambridge U.
- Gendlin, E. T. (1978). Focusing. New York: Everest House.
- Genet, J. (1958). The balcony (B. Frechtman, Trans.). New York: Grove.
- Giddens, A. (1991). Modernity and self-identity: Self and society in the late modern age. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford U.
- Gould, G. (1984). The Glenn Gould reader. T. Page, (Ed.). Toronto: Lester and Orphen Dennys.
- Gould, G. (1992a). The idea of north [CD]. In Solitude trilogy: Three sound documentaries. CBC Records, PSCD 2003-3. (Original CBC radio broadcast, 1967)

- Gould, G. (1992b). The quiet in the land [CD]. In Solitude trilogy: Three sound documentaries. CBC Records, PSCD 2003-3. (Original CBC radio broadcast, 1977).
- Gould, G., & Davis, C. (1983). The well-tempered listener. In Glenn Gould variations. J. McGreevy (Ed.). Toronto: Macmillan of Canada.
- New grove dictionary of music and musicians, the. (2001). (2nd ed.). London: Macmillan Publishers.
- Harris, L. M. (1993). Fighting duel-ism: A Glenn Gould context. Unpublished Master's Thesis. Carleton University, Ottawa.
- Hébert, S., and Cuddy, L. (1999). "Figural and metric structures in temporal pattern discrimination". Unpublished manuscript. The new grove dictionary of music and musicians. (2001). (2nd ed.). London: Macmillan Publishers.
- Hilgard, E. R. (1986). Divided consciousness: Multiple controls in human thought and action. (Rev. ed.). New York: John Wiley and Sons.
- Illich, I. D. (1971). Celebration of awareness: A call for institutional revolution. Garden City: Doubleday Anchor.
- Ionesco, E. (1958). The bald soprano (D. M. Allen, Trans.). New York: Grove. (La Cantatrice chauve)
- James, W. (1984). The essential writings. B. W. Wilshire (Ed.). Albany: State University of New York.
- Jantsch, E. (1980). The self-organizing universe: Scientific and human implications of the emerging paradigm of evolution. Systems Science and World Order Library. Oxford: Pergamon.
- Johann Mouse [78-rpm vinyl audio discs]. Based on the M.G.M. cartoon; F. Quimby, Producer.
- Judd, T. (1992, November). Reflections on the evolution of music and neuropsychological rehabilitation of the brain injured musician. Paper presented at the Music and the Brain Symposium, Chicago Art Institute, Chicago.
- Judd, T. (1988). The varieties of musical talent. In L. K. Opler, & D. Fein, Eds. The exceptional brain: Neuropsychology of talent and special abilities. New York: Guilford.
- Judd, T, Gardner, H., & Geschwind, N. (1983). Alexia without agraphia in a composer. Brain, 106, 435-457.
- Kauffman, S. (1995). At home in the universe: The search for laws of self-organization and complexity. New York: Oxford U.
- Kivy, P. (1990). Music alone: Philosophical reflections on the purely musical experience. Ithaca: Cornell Paperbacks-Cornell U.
- Kohler, W. (1947). Gestalt psychology: An introduction to new concepts in psychology. New York: Liveright.
- Kosslyn, S. M., & Koenig, O. (1995). Wet mind: The new cognitive neuroscience. (Rev. ed.). New York: The Free Press.
- Kubrick, S. (Producer and Director). (1980). The shining [film]. Warner Brothers.
- Kuhn, T. (1970) The structure of scientific revolutions. (2nd ed.). Chicago: University of Chicago.
- Kundera, M. (1981). Regards sur Xenakis. Paris: Editions Stock.
- Laborit, H. (1977). Decoding the human message (S. Bodington & A. Wilson, Trans.). New York: (Original work published 1974)
- Ligeti, G. (1983). György Ligeti in conversation with Péter Várnai, Josef Häusler, Claude Samuel, and himself. London: Eulenburg Books, 1983.
- Luria, A. R. (1973). The working brain: An introduction to neuropsychology (B. Haigh, Trans.). London: Allen Lane-Penguin.
- Lynd, H. M. (1958). On shame and the search for identity. New York: Harvest-Harcourt, Brace and World.

- Mahrer, A. R. (1978). Experiencing: A humanistic theory of psychology and psychiatry. New York: Brunner/Mazel.
- Messiaen, O., & Samuel, C. (1976). Conversations with Olivier Messiaen (F. Aprahamian, Trans.). London: Stainer & Bell.
- Mondor, T. A., & Bryden, M. P. (1992). On the relation between auditory spatial attention and auditory perceptual asymmetries. Perception & Psychophysics, *52* (4), 393-402.
- Näätänen, R. (1992). Attention and brain function. Hillsdale, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Näätänen, R., & Picton, T. W. (1987). The N1 wave of the human electric and magnetic response to sound: A review and an analysis of the component structure. Psychophysiology, *24*, 375-425.
- Ong, W. J. (1982). Orality and literacy: The technologizing of the word. London: Methuen.
- Oxford classical dictionary. (1970) (2nd ed.). London: Oxford University.
- Peretz, I., & Morais, J. (1993). Specificity for music. Handbook of neuropsychology, *8*, 373-390.
- Petitmengin-Peugeot, C. (1999). The intuitive experience. In F. Varela & J. Shear, (Eds.). The view from within: First-person approaches to the study of consciousness. Thorverton, UK: Imprint Academic.
- Picton, T. W., Campbell, K. B., Baribeau-Braun, J., & Proulx, G. B. (1978). The neurophysiology of human attention: A tutorial review. In J. Requin, (Ed.), Attention and performance VII: Proceedings of the seventh international symposium on attention and performance. Sénanque, France. Hillsdale, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Revonsuo, A., & Kampinen, M. (Eds.). (1994). Consciousness in philosophy and cognitive neuroscience. Hillsdale, N. J.: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Ricoeur, P. (1970). Freud and philosophy: An essay on interpretation (D. Savage, Trans.). New Haven: Yale University.
- Rieff, P. (1979). Freud: The mind of the moralist (3rd ed.). Chicago: U of Chicago.
- Roederer, J. (1982). Physical and neuropsychological foundations of music: The basic questions. In M. Clynes (Ed.), Music, mind, and brain: The neuropsychology of music. New York: Plenum.
- Rouget, G. (1985). Music and trance: A theory of the relations between music and possession (B. & G. Rouget, Trans.) Chicago: U of Chicago P.
- Rückert, F. (1987). Do not eavesdrop on my songs. (W. Mann, Trans.). CD Liner notes. Mahler: Lieder eines fahrenden gesellen; Kindertotenlieder; Rückert Lieder. EMI, CDC 7 47793 2. (Original German: Blicke mir nicht in die Lieder)
- Russell, B. (1979). History of western philosophy and its connection with political and social circumstances from the earliest times to the present day. London: Unwin Paperbacks. (Originally published in 1946)
- Sergent, J. (1994). Brain-imaging studies of cognitive functions. Trends in Neurosciences, *17.6*, 1-6.
- Sergent, J. (1993a). Mapping the musician brain. Human Brain Mapping, *1*, 20-38.
- Sergent, J. (1993b). Music, the brain and Ravel. Trends in Neurosciences, *16.5*, 8-12.
- Sergent, J., Zuck, E., Teriah, S., & MacDonald, B. Distributed neural network underlying musical sight-reading and keyboard performance. Science, *257* (1992): 106-9.
- Simonov, P. V. (1986). The emotional brain: Physiology, neuroanatomy, psychology, and emotion (M. J. Hall, Trans.). New York: Plenum.
- Sloboda, J. A. (1985). The musical mind: The cognitive psychology of music. Oxford: Clarendon.
- Sokolov, E. N. (1975). The neuronal mechanisms of the orienting reflex. In E. N. Sokolov, O. S. Vinogradova, A. Pakula, & A.L. Yarmizina (Eds.), Neuronal

- mechanisms of the orienting reflex (E. N. Sokolov, Trans. Supervision; N. M. Weinberger, Eng. Ed.). Hillsdale, N. J.: L. Erlbaum.
- Spiegel, D., & Cardena, E. Disintegrated experience: The dissociative disorders revisited." Journal of Abnormal Psychology, 100, 366-378.
- Stravinsky, I., & Craft, R. Expositions and developments. London: Faber Music.
- Subiela, E. (Director) & Pfaum, L. (Producer). (1987). Man facing southeast [Film]. FilmDallas Pictures. (Original Spanish, Hombre mirando al sudeste)
- Takemitsu, T. Confronting silence: Selected writings (Y. Kakudo, & G. Glasow, Ed. and Trans.). Berkeley: Fallen Leaf P, 1995.
- Tao te Ching. (1988). (S. Mitchell, Trans.). New York: HarperCollins.
- Thompson, W. I. (2000). Speculations on the city and the evolution of consciousness. Journal of Consciousness Studies. 7.7, 35-42.
- Titchener, E. B. (1973). Lectures on the experimental psychology of the thought-processes. New York: Arno.
- Tolkien, J. R. R. (1966). The lord of the rings (3 vols., 2nd ed.). London: G. Allen & Unwin.
- Tucker, D. M., & Williamson, P. A.. (1984). Asymmetric neural control systems in human self-regulation. Psychological Review, 91(2), 185-215.
- Volosinov, V. N. (1986). Marxism and the philosophy of language (L. Matejka, & I. R. Titunik, Trans.). Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard U. (Original work published in 1973)
- Vygotsky, L. (1986). (Rev. ed.). Thought and language (A. Kozulin, Trans., Ed.). Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press. (Original work published in 1934)
- Wallin, N. L. (1991). Biomusicology. Stuyvesant, N.Y.: Pendragon P.
- Ward, C. A. (1989). The cross-cultural study of altered states of consciousness and mental health. In C. A. Ward (Ed.), Altered states of consciousness and mental health: A cross-cultural perspective. Newbury Park, Calif.: Sage.
- Webster's ninth new collegiate dictionary. (1984). Markham: Thomas Allen & Son.
- Wertheimer, M. (1959). Productive thinking. (M. Wertheimer, Ed.). New York: Harper.
- Whorf, B. L. (1956). Language, thought and reality: Selected writings of Benjamin Lee Whorf. Cambridge, Mass.: M.I.T.
- Wilson, E. O. (1996). In search of nature. Washington, D.C.: Island Press.
- Wolff, J. (1992). The social production of art. (2nd ed.). New York: New York UP.