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**TRANSCENDENCE OF AVANT-GARDE NEGATIVITY
AS A DETERMINANT OF THE SOCIAL POSITION
OF EUROPEAN MUSIC IN THE 20TH CENTURY**

Abstract: Starting with Adorno's negative dialectic and his consideration of musical material as the crucial theoretical notion that implies the negative dialectic core, we examine in this study the deconstructive potential of materialization of some musical antinomies of the 20th century. We follow this materialization from the aspect of transcendence of the antinomy considered as a certain musical 'unit' of negativity. This process is investigated here in reference to the concepts of musical material and the dual determination of music and musical-aesthetic experience, as well as to the musically concrete levels regarding musical substance and language of the avant-garde and postmodernity, as representatives of a further possible antinomy: respectively, between the phenomenological and the hermeneutical. Functioning within all these levels individually, the process of transcendence brings about consequences which in our view can be considered as general criteria affecting the social position of European music of the 20th century.

Key words: Avant-garde, transcendence, avant-garde negativity, Theodor Adorno, aesthetics of music, philosophy of music, postmodernity, Postmoderne.

I

The social position of music up to and including the 20th century is the consequence of a complex interaction and 'reversible' hierarchy. On the one hand, the social environment – understood here both in the sense of global socio-economic formations and of particular cultural communities – always establishes and demonstrates a certain relationship with its spiritual spheres, including music. On the other hand, music itself shows its own attitude towards the social context. It is therefore not always easy to establish whether the position of music in society is a consequence of a view of society represented in music, or *vice versa*: whether the treatment of music in society is a reaction to how society is treated in music or whether the treatment of society in music is a consequence of the position that society accords music within its ideological and aesthetic priorities. No matter which of these two directions is 'older' – under the initial assumption that music, like any other art form, does not produce its sense out of society – the position of music in society witnesses the sovereignty of society; the position of society in music witnesses the sovereignty of music.

It is clear that the sovereignty of society has both positive and negative aspects. The positive aspect refers to the distinguishing properties and autonomy of a system of social organization, the inviolability of institutions of the system, with the entire field of the superstructure belonging naturally to a corresponding system of social organization. We would say that this positive aspect actually implies a basic general congruence between the spiritual sphere of a society and its institutions.

The negative aspect of social sovereignty refers to the interference of ideological and political state mechanisms in the field of the superstructure and the direct influence of these mechanisms on the field, including compositional production. In other words, by means of these mechanisms state institutions can issue certain demands and prescribe strictly controlled norms. The result is an oppressive political system, through which the state demonstrates its sheer force over music and subjects music to its own needs and aims.¹

The sovereignty of music relies on autonomy and logic in the use and development of its specific means. But, it also implies the possibility that by these means music can affect how society is perceived, sparking events that acquire forms and social character and purpose. Such effects can also be positive or negative. They are positive whenever there is a constructive critical relationship to a certain social environment, a relationship that focuses on society's failings and the need to rectify them. The effects are negative, however, when music submits itself to a repressive political system², and in this way destroys not only the ethical and moral norms of a corresponding culture, but also its purely musical standards.

Since events in a society affect the sphere of 'its' music, and events in music can incite reactions from a society, musical issues connected with the sovereignty of society and social issues connected with the sovereignty of music cannot be strictly separated. While accepting that these categories always imply each other, our focus here is on the critical nature of music as an autonomous, aesthetic sphere, particularly on that social sense of the critical aspect of music which can be projected on a wider range as a possible indicator of the social position of music in Europe during the last century.

¹ Oppression in music, particularly contemporary, is the subject of my treatise "Aspects of Oppression and Resistance in European Music of the 20th Century (consequences of cultural policy)", Pretoria, 2005 (in print).

² Cf. *ibid.*

II

One of the basic theses of Adorno's theory is that music can and, in the name of truth, must also permanently demonstrate a critical attitude towards society through its particular means, which of course are not of extra-musical nature. Within this theory a considerable critical potential is ascribed to music. According to our interpretation of the thesis, the possibility of music fulfilling its potential is found in a logical analogy between the relationship of music and society. It is a thesis that holds that social relationships have their own forms of existence and development – 'dramaturgy', dynamics and 'sharpness' – which find analogies in the logic of musical expression and shaping. In this way music of every historical period 'absorbs' characteristic conflicts and expression, and retains them as "sediments" in the musical means by which they are embodied.³ So, precisely through an organization of sound material, the prevailing emotions and crucial misconceptions of a period can be 'materialized', revealed and in this way 'brought back' to a society and its critical evaluation.

A well-known example, which Adorno uses to explain his thesis, is the output of Arnold Schönberg, with which the expressionism of Viennese school enters a certain exchange of logic with society. However, this exchange is not accomplished only in fragments: it is not accomplished through the intentional musical coding of some negative moments of the current social practice referring only to particular social strata and / or classes, as is, for example, the case with the music of Kurt Weill.⁴ It is accomplished beyond any deliberate action: through an unconscious musical materialization of the essence of the entire class conflict situation.

According to Adorno, Schönberg's output points to the thesis of the dependence of musical material on bourgeois capitalistic social *totality*.⁵ In

³ "Das geschichtliche Moment ist den Kunstwerken konstitutiv; die authentischen sind die, welche dem geschichtlichen Stoffgehalt ihrer Zeit vorbehaltlos und ohne die Anmaßung über ihr zu sein sich überantworten". (Theodor W. Adorno, *Ästhetische Theorie, / Zur Theorie des Kunstwerks*, Geschichte konstitutiv; "Verständlichkeit", *Gesammelte Schriften*, Band 7, Gretel Adorno – Rolf Tiedemann (eds.), Frankfurt am Main, Suhrkamp, 1970, 272). And further: "Fortgeschrittenes Bewußtsein versichert sich des Materialstandes, in dem Geschichte sich sedimentiert bis zu dem Augenblick, auf den das Werk antwortet." (Ibid., *Zur Theorie des Kunstwerks*, Entfaltung der Produktivkräfte, 287)

⁴ Cf. Theodor W. Adorno, "Zur gesellschaftlichen Lage der Musik", *Gesammelte Schriften*, Band 18, *Musikalische Schriften V*, Rolf Tiedemann – Klaus Schulz (eds.), Frankfurt am Main, Suhrkamp, 1984, 729–777.

⁵ Cf. Peter Bürger, "Das Vermittlungsproblem in der Kunstsoziologie Adornos", in: Burkhardt Lindner – W. Martin Lüdke (eds.), *Materialien zur ästhetischen Theorie Th. W. Adornos – Konstruktion der Moderne*, Frankfurt am Main, Suhrkamp, 1979, 169–184.

other words, the material is a form of embodiment of the social totality, which the subjectivity of a composer makes possible, but through a process of which he is unaware during his composing. True, he is aware of his work on the musical material itself, its compositional-technical shaping, but not necessarily of the fact that this material he reshapes and develops as historically inherited in itself already ‘hides’ the ‘ingredients’ of a certain social-historical substance.

So, a social dimension is inherent in music. Schönberg’s expressionism reveals this dimension according to its most negative features in the way that it actually ‘duplicates’ these features by its own means, in the medium of sound. In its ‘by analogy suffering’ and destructive character, which are marked by alienation, exactly like suffering and destruction in capitalist society, Schönberg’s music is a critique of ‘its’ social system from the aspects of its own assumptions. In this sense, his music is an immanent criticism of the social environment in which the music is composed and in which it acts.

According to Adorno, therefore, music is critically immanent and as such truthful only when it identifies itself by its own means with the shortcomings of a society. From the viewpoint of the developmental logic of musical material, this means that music exposes the negative posture of its own heritage. At the same time, it is in this way that music accomplishes its progress. This negative attitude is considered in Adorno’s aesthetic theory and philosophy of music primarily from the viewpoint of the changes in the sphere of musical material accomplished along the stylistic path *post-romanticism – Schönbergian expressionism*. More precisely, Adorno had in mind modern West European music and its autonomous project, which relies on the inner demands of the very musical material: the demands of the “thing in itself” (*die Sache selbst*), more precisely, of the “musically real” and “musically possible”.⁶ Following these demands, modern music achieves autonomy also in the notions of “Technizität, Produktionslogik, Konstruktion”.⁷ At the same time it shows the spirit of the social totality by which it is determined.

So, the very notion of musical material, crucial in Adorno’s theory, is based on the antinomy between the musical in itself and the *fait social* of music⁸: between the musically sovereign and the latently critical. Since this

⁶ Ivan Focht, “Muzika u stavu negativiteta” [Music as Negativity], preface to the book Theodor W. Adorno, *Filozofija nove muzike* [Philosophy of the New Music], transl. from German into Serbian by Ivan Focht, Beograd, Nolit, 1968, 14. Quotations and titles transl. from Serbian into English by M.V.H.

⁷ Cf. Burkhardt Lindner, “‘Il faut être absolument moderne’ – Adornos Ästhetik: Ihr Konstruktionsprinzip und ihre Historizität”, in: *Materialien zur ästhetischen Theorie Th. W. Adornos...*, op. cit., 298.

⁸ I wrote more extensively about this Adornian aspect in my book *Pred muzičkim delom – ogledi o međusobnim projekcijama estetike, poetike i stilistike muzike* 20.

relationship is the root of the dynamic of negative dialectic, we treat the mentioned antinomy as its basic musical 'unit'. And since, as we have already stressed, material is Adorno's central musical-aesthetic notion, the antinomy on which it relies reflects itself in many other levels of his theoretical context, including his notion of the dual character of music and art in general. Directly connected with this, the antinomy is reflected also in the nature of the musical and aesthetic experience in general.

This experience can be fulfilled through recognizing the social context that a piece of music refers to; more precisely, through approval or disapproval of the purely musical way in which the piece affects this. But this approval or disapproval need not be only of an aesthetic nature because, just by being aesthetic, they can stimulate responses of listeners' minds. Roughly speaking, it concerns that aspect of negativity in which the aesthetic and the social achieve a certain unity⁹ in acquiring a negative critique of the social.

Aesthetic experience can be directed towards only the sensual, without according any importance to social reality. This is a kind of enjoyment that is possible, despite everything negative in this reality, which can be implied

veka: jedna muzikološka vizura [With a Work of Music in Front – Treatises on the Mutual Projections of Aesthetics, Poetic and Stylistic of the 20th Century Music: one musicological viewpoint], Pretoria, 2005 (manuscript), and also in my study "Towards a Secondary Level Inherence in the Relationships Between Music and Society – an Attempt to Overcome one of the Adornian Fissures", Pretoria, 2004 (in print).

⁹ In an interpretation of Adorno's negativity, which is the subject of his book *Die Souveränität der Kunst – Ästhetische Erfahrung nach Adorno und Derrida* (Frankfurt am Main, Suhrkamp Verlag, 1991) Christoph Menke considers this unity as an equation, an identification of the aesthetic with critical negativity, which also means the aesthetic with moral quality. Referring to this, let us mention here his observation that being burdened by the notion that art is or should be a critique of society can bring one who writes about the art to the point where one starts losing an important distance either from the object of art or its specific content. (Cf. *ibid.*, 24) To paraphrase Menke's view by projecting it on music, the first case implies negativity because music functions as a critique of extra-musical reality; the second case implies negativity because music becomes a place of intensification of aesthetic experience *contrary* to extra-musical reality.

Menke emphasizes that the notion of negativity is essential for an understanding of Adorno's dual determination of modern art, because at least two aspects can be recognized within this notion which are separated by certain misconceptions. According to Menke, the notion of aesthetic negativity cannot entirely be explained with notions and evidence of Adorno's aesthetic itself, but only from the aspect of an opposite aesthetic viewpoint. That is why Menke first considers the autonomy of the aesthetic in the very notion of negativity, after which he points to the necessity of its semiological reformulation from the perspective of Jacques Derrida's deconstruction. (Cf. *ibid.*, 13–14) Menke 'reads' the negativity by confronting it with the fundamental hermeneutic thesis, with which he ultimately embarks on a critique of hermeneutic theory. His method contains some common features with the essentially deconstructive method that we apply in this study.

by a work of music.¹⁰ Whether the work implies this or not is no ‘object’ of this aspect of aesthetic experience, which we would say shifts the aesthetic focus towards a separation between the sensual and the social-critical. An ‘object’ of this kind of experience relies on what occurs on the primarily formal level of the work, more precisely, on discerning the phenomenon as the object of the aesthetic experience.¹¹

III

Although these determinants of the antinomy of musical material are initially based on a strained relationship, we would claim that they do not confront each other to the extent of mutual exclusion and do not exist as binary terms of a purely ‘immovable’ and ‘hopeless’ opposition. We shall try to show this by considering these terms from the perspective of an altered hierarchy in their relationship, from a latent dynamism implied by the very notion of negativity of musical material to forms beyond the negativity, reaching a level of compositional methodology and aesthetic tendency.

Thus, let us assume that the first part of this opposition, its autonomous-musical term, is in a state of hierarchical priority. It suggests that the very process of working on the “thing in itself” is a composer’s only intention and task, and that the compositional-technical process and the resulting musical content are self-sufficient categories. However, while assuming this, we should not overlook the fact that within Adorno’s notion of musical material this musical term naturally grew together with

¹⁰ Menke is correct when he reminds us that aesthetic experience is possible only through the medium of aesthetic experience even when its object is ugly and tragic. However, beyond this medium such an object could only induce a sombre mood, by no means enjoyment. (Cf. op. cit., 20–24)

¹¹ Not only is it possible to notice an inner antinomy in the notions of musical material and dual character of art or aesthetic experience, but also in many other of Adorno’s theoretical issues and explanations: for example, in the new status of composers’ subjectivity with its creative freedom that is realized now within the framework of the “dictate of the thing in itself”, then, in the new status of expression and mimesis, in the relationship between philosophy of history and aesthetics, etc. Generally speaking, the inner antinomy can be noticed in all those occurrences in which the category of negativity or general principle *against a notion by means of the notion*, are at stake. (More about this see in: W. Martin Lüdke, “Zur ‘Logik des Zerfalls’ – Ein Versuch, mit Hilfe der ‘gezähmten Wildsau von Ernsttal’ die Lektüre der Ästhetischen Theorie zu erleichtern”, in: *Materialien zur ästhetischen Theorie Th. W. Adornos...*, op. cit., 415–446) This is so because Adorno is “always in a counterposition, in opposition, always holds steadily to the principle of negative dialectics applying it so consistently at any place that the principle in itself sometimes seems to appear as the automatism of a scheme”. (Focht, “Muzika u stavu...”, op. cit., 10)

‘its’ social totality. Because, as we have emphasized, material is a certain objectified spirit, objectified expression, in fact, the objectified former subjectivity of a composer. For it is actually just the composer himself – as this former subjectivity – who processes the material in pursuit of self-expression. At the same time, however, the subject itself has a certain social acceptance and hence indirectly acts as a mediator between the musical contents he creates and ‘their’ social totality. That is why the assumed hierarchical priority of the purely musical does not guarantee an entire independence of the musical, that is, it does not guarantee the total liberation of the musical from its inherent social context. So, not only considered as the hierarchically dominant but even as the hierarchically ‘sole’, the autonomous-musical cannot be deprived of its dialectical constitutive ‘surplus’.

If we assume now the reverse hierarchical priority – that the ‘subordinate’ term of the oppositional relationship e.g. social-critical aspect of musical material becomes primary – we cannot ignore the fact that this aspect exists in music exclusively due to its autonomous means. We must take into consideration that the social and critical potential of music cannot exist in music without music, and that musical means and shaping are prerequisites and forms of the existence and functioning of a potential musical criticism. In other words, Adorno’s notion of the inherent character of music overcomes the dualism of its conceptual ‘unit’ already within itself, and by itself.

From the aspect of both assumptions, therefore, we can reach the same inference: the Adorno’s ‘cracked’ notion of musical material denies its own fissure.

IV

Thus, this relationship manifests itself in both of its reversible directions with the same conclusion. Also, however, it projects itself on the antinomy that stands beyond the very concept of musical material: on Adorno’s dual determination of music. That is why it is possible that in the opposition between the autonomous “aesthetic spirit” of music and the “aesthetic spirit” as a social fact, each of the terms of the opposition are at the same time a ‘cause’ of the other, its consequence and prerequisite of its acting and individual reach.¹² It is the case of a kind of reciprocal relationship by which music ultimately ‘protects’ itself from

¹² “Die Dialektik jener Momente gleicht darin der logischen, daß nur im Einen das Andere sich realisiert, nicht dazwischen.” (Adorno, *Ästhetische..., Situation, Ausdruck und Konstruktion*, 72)

the danger of being aesthetically misunderstood if solely “strikt ästhetisch wahrgenommen”. This is so because “keine einzelne auserwählte Kategorie, auch nicht die ästhetisch zentrale des Formgesetzes, nennt das Wesen der Kunst und reicht hin zum Urteil über ihre Produkte”.¹³ Hence, neither is the category of social-critical, deprived of its existentially opposite constituent, sufficient enough and reliable as an indicator of the way towards the essence of music.

We can claim, therefore, that Adorno’s notion of negativity in music, on which the antinomy of musical material relies and by which it is overcome, is actually the notion with a dual aesthetic potential. As such, it necessarily reflects itself still further, in the poetic, stylistic and aesthetic streams of 20th century music.

In other words, due to its inner dialectical dynamics, the notion of negativity considered here as the basis of the antinomy of musical material and music in general, can transcend and initiate the neutralization of this antinomy on a concrete level: for example, on the level of purely musical language. This eventually means that a musical language ‘inaugurated’ by the antinomy of negativity can lead to a language ‘against’ the antinomy.¹⁴

¹³ Ibid., *Kunst, Gesellschaft, Ästhetik, Zum Verhältnis von Kunst und Gesellschaft*, 17, 18.

¹⁴ “Die Male der Zerrüttung sind das Echtheitssiegel von Moderne; das, wodurch sie die Geschlossenheit des Immergleichen verzweifelt negiert; Explosion ist eine ihrer Invarianten. Antitraditionalistische Energie wird zum verschlingenden Wirbel. Insofern ist Moderne Mythos, gegen sich selbst gewandt.“ (Ibid., *Situation, Zum Invarianzproblem; Experiment I/1*, 41).

In connection with this, it is possible to quote many examples from the history of art in general and music in particular which show that the transcendence of antinomy can be discussed from the Adornian standpoint – with reference to music composed in the period before Adorno theoretically articulated the notion of negativity, which he did on the basis of the rich achievements of philosophical practice that preceded him, as well as contemporary to him. (Cf. Theodor W. Adorno, “Negative Dialektik”, *Gesammelte Schriften*, Band 6, Rolf Tiedemann (ed.), Frankfurt am Main, Suhrkamp, 1973, 137–207) In this sense, following up Adorno’s notion that “die Einheit der Geschichte von Kunst ist die dialektische Figur bestimmter Negation” (Adorno, *Ästhetische..., Situation, Ästhetische Rationalität und Kritik*, 59–60), we can mention as one of the most influential the antinomy originating from the theory of Eduard Hanslick. Formulated as an opposition between absolute and programmatic music, this view of antinomy has been spreading in various musical and theoretical forms right up to the present. But at the same time, this opposition has been overcome by music itself, both by compositions of the primarily programmatic and absolute character. Generally speaking, this opposition has been showing in tries for answering the questions of relationships between music, on the one hand, and its sense and meaning, on the other. So, the relationship between the avant-garde and postmodernity can be considered as one of these answers regarding music of the 20th century.

To explain this, consider the example of the musical avant-garde, starting with the presumption that, conditionally speaking, the musical avant-garde precisely reveals a typical ‘battle-field’ of antinomy in musical streams of the 20th century.¹⁵

On the one hand, materializing itself in the field of musical autonomy as its primary instance, the avant-garde rebelliously opposes everything that has preceded it in the sphere of means, language, poetic concepts and processes.

On the other hand, because of and in parallel with this, the avant-garde faces a situation in which the radicalism of its means considerably diminishes its communication capacity, even with its own social environment. The avant-garde can turn critically to the environment in order to focus on the social issues that should be improved, by which it actually establishes a closer relationship with real life. In this way the avant-garde actually tends to accept a social ‘surplus’ as an organic part of its inviolable musical autonomy.

So, basically, the musical avant-garde implies the same dualism inherent in the notion of negativity and musical material. The musical avant-garde is ‘negative’: it is rebellious, musically oriented against its own tradition and heritage. But, at the same time, it is socially and critically meaningful.¹⁶ In other words, the avant-garde acts on its own inner stimulus to accomplish a hierarchical equation of its initially opposite constituents and tendencies.

That is why we would say that in conquering its territory and infiltrating music over the 20th century, the avant-garde actually ‘reads’ its own dual constituents from the perspective of their alternating hierarchical priority. The consequence of this is that the avant-garde mitigates and

¹⁵ I wrote on the phenomenon of the musical avant-garde in my book *Stvaralačka prisutnost evropske avangarde u nas* [Creative Presence of European Avant-garde in Serbian Music], Beograd, Univerzitet umetnosti [University of Arts], 1983, and in the study “Problems and Paradoxes of Yugoslav Avant-garde Music (Outlines for a Reinterpretation), in: *Impossible Histories – Historical Avant-gardes, Neo-avant-gardes, and Post-avant-gardes in Yugoslavia, 1918–1991*, Dubravka Đurić – Miško Šuvaković (eds.), Cambridge, Massachusetts – London, England, The MIT Press, 2003, 404–441.

¹⁶ “Das Kunstwerk muß seine diskursiven Bestandteile seinem Immanenzzusammenhang einbringen in einer Gegenbewegung zu der nach außen gerichteten, apophantischen, die das diskursive Moment entbindet. Die Sprache avancierter Lyrik vollzieht das, und sie enthüllt ihre eigentümliche Dialektik daran.” (Adorno, *Ästhetische..., Das Kunstschöne: “apparition”, Vergeistigung, Anschaulichkeit, Anschaulichkeit und Begrifflichkeit*; Dingcharakter, 152)

soon even abandons its own intolerance, directing itself towards the meta-musical horizon of postmodernity¹⁷.

In the last instance, all this points to the fact that the avant-garde denies and justifies hermeneutic methodology at the same time, to finally retreat from it, no longer being the avant-garde.

V

With this musical transcendence of its specific inner oppositional determinants the avant-garde reaches the stage of neglecting the notion of the progressive material, revealing that in fact it itself relies on the 'dispersive' energy of its own negativity. Hence, postmodernity can be considered as a form of transcendence of this negativity, and its creative principles and musical language of tolerance as features that oppose those of the avant-garde.

This means that the relationship between the autonomous-musical and the social-critical which is implied by the notion of avant-garde negativity is now transferred to the 'next level', to the relationship between the avant-garde and postmodernity as bearers of, respectively, the primarily phenomenal and hermeneutical in European 20th century music. Although the main thesis of avant-garde negative aesthetics differs from the main thesis of the postmodern hermeneutic, negative aesthetics apparently includes the issue of meaning, to some extent, which, as we saw, is mostly a result of the transcendence of the negativity of the material of the avant-garde.

However, towards the end of the 20th century recollections of the inviolability of avant-garde musical gradually appeared and became more and more noticeable and intense within the dominantly hermeneutic, postmodern context. In fact, these recollections reveal a postmodern appreciation of avant-garde achievements, without which postmodernity would never have become what it is. Hence, the avant-garde is for postmodernity its necessary, organic 'subordinate' part.

If a possible 'fissure' of postmodernity can be observed in this – if postmodernity can bear any 'fissure' at all in its hierarchical indifference

¹⁷ I make an important orthographic distinction between the term post-modernity (written with the hyphen) and postmodernity (written without it). With this I differentiate post-modernity as a 'sum' of stylistic tendencies occurring in the time after modernity, and postmodernity as a specific creative tendency within this 'sum'. For an extensive explanation of this see in my book *Fragmente zur musikalischen Postmoderne*, (Übersetzung aus dem Serbischen von Vlastimir Peričić), Frankfurt am Main, Peter Lang Verlag, 2003.

towards components of musical shaping in the range from 'raw' material to technological procedures – then it cannot be discounted that this 'fissure' will spread, establishing new groupings on the basis of antinomy relationships. It might be possible to confront them on a binary basis and trace their transcendence not only regarding the relationship between their individual inner constituents but also among the groupings. Then, however, these would not refer to hierarchical levels but to multiplication and relationships that occur on one and the same level.

VI

One of the most significant consequences of the ability of this negativity to go beyond its 'normal' avant-garde boundaries, more precisely its transcendence towards postmodernity, has been an incomparably better communication between music and society in postmodernity than was the case with avant-garde. The reason is that the Adornian form of confrontation of avant-garde negativity with social crises was not, generally speaking, socially and artistically recognized as such. In principle, the avant-garde artist submitted to the "dictate of the developmental logic of the material", and composing primarily in order to achieve progress, was in a relatively independent position considering the aesthetic needs of listeners. So, the radically anti-traditional musical means of the avant-garde and its aesthetics of ugliness – let us retain Adorno's example of the Viennese expressionism – did not entirely reach 'their' society through their critical aspect. They remained mostly because of the external reaction to this aesthetics, that is, they had 'their' society rejecting the ugliness, without any deep insight into its critical sense. The circle of those who necessitated the disclosure of this sense was small enough and socially with a limited reach. Thus it would seem that Adorno somehow overestimated the practical social effects and results of the immanent musical criticism.

The streams of European music that arose from Viennese musical expressionism in the sense of compositional technique and media – such as total serialism and early electronic music – can be cited as examples of this. Paradoxically enough, those streams which tended to widen the road between contemporary music and its audience can also be mentioned here. The output of Kurt Weill belongs to such tendencies.

In reference to total serialism and early electronic music we would say that their Adornian critical dimension and social 'hope', meaning, the 'subordinate' constituent of its latent antinomy, were almost lost. This resulted from a situation in which music based on dodecaphony

became obsessed by material to the extent that its antinomy appeared to act as an antinomy with the social term 'erased'. This music is focused on the deepening and technological development of dodecaphony as a "sediment" of the expression of the period in which dodecaphony was invented. Since this "sediment" was mostly ascribed the status of 'dead' material, music that relied on its "dictate" became even more alienated than music of the Viennese avant-garde,¹⁸ which means that it had less chance of being recognized as inherently critical than the expressionistic avant-garde had. Since neither the music of total serialism nor electronic music renounced its structural and technological radicalism right up to the end of the nineteen-sixties, being occupied by its own challenges and mazes, avant-garde music at this serial stage was not very welcome, even within broader professional circles.

So, being highly esoteric, focused on itself and its own means, the avant-garde of total serial and electronic music restrains the existential 'subordinate' element of its antinomy. By this it actually puts a brake on the transcendence of its negativity, determining itself as a socially 'superfluous' phenomenon.

The avant-garde experiences very different social acceptance in cases where the antinomy terms are established more profoundly. It is noticeable even when it concerns same forms of avant-garde manifestations: total serialism and electronic music. Let us only consider the example of Luigi Nono. The bold musical means and social-critical sense which characterize his music reveal how each of these can act for its own sake, within their oppositional relationship. To paraphrase Adorno, it refers to the treatment of "sediment" by which its – we would say 'inorganic' – status quo is overcome.¹⁹ The result of this is the much wider communication radius of music and its generally better social position.

However, these aspects need not always be in direct proportion. Sometimes, as in the case of Weill's music, this radius concomitant with an essentially favourable although socially unofficial status of music, can be at serious variance with its socially official status. For example, the epic Brecht-Weill musical theatre experienced good communication with its audience. Accordingly, we can claim that Weill's music was highly respected in European society. At the same time, we cannot ignore this respect originating more from reactions of the audience to the musical materials and contents themselves than to their critical barbs. Actually, it

¹⁸ More about expressionism as a musical avant-garde in relation to other avant-garde movements and the phenomenon of the neo-avant-garde see in my study "Problems and Paradoxes of Yugoslav Avant-garde Music...", op. cit.

¹⁹ Cf. Adorno, *Ästhetische..., Zur Theorie..., Entfaltung...*, op. cit., 287.

was more the audiences' approval of the contents as likeable and subculturally closer to them, despite compositional-technical novelties applied in their articulation, than any discernment of Weill's criticism against the conditions in German society between the two world wars. Contrary to Adornian presumptions, it is as if the huge Weill-Brechtian audience was not quite ready to 'admit' and accept its own vices, musically disclosed on the stage.

However, the critical dimension of Weill-Brecht musical theatre was discerned immediately and with tragic efficiency by the government itself. Political consequences followed: Weill and his music were excommunicated from current German society and culture.

This example of 'Weill's case' shows how avant-garde negativity can transcend its borders by means of a concomitant hierarchical equation of both antinomy terms. But while the superiority of the musical causes an essentially positive social response precisely during this 'exchange', the superiority of the critical – maybe paradoxically from an Adornian perspective – brings about the loss of the socially positive status of music. True, the period between the wars in Europe was a time when political repression was used to slow down and control musical processes. In fact, it modified, more precisely distorted their real social position for the benefit of its own political power. This is what will always happen in the conditions of any oppressive political domination.

In concordance with the contemporary democratization of life, which has revealed since the social emergence of the generation of 'flower children', being a part of the process, music has become more open towards variety of attitudes both purely musical and theoretically critical. As we have already emphasized, meta-musical, generally speaking hermeneutical flexibility of postmodern music, has enabled a considerable communication mobility of music and thereby determined its democratic social stance.

So, considered as a form of transcendence of the material negativity of the avant-garde, postmodern music points to the fact that the reversible inner dynamic that leads to the transcendence is not only an autonomously musical category but also a specific axiological category.

VII

Following this thought, and on the basis of the given examples, we conclude by differentiating five modes of transcendence of avant-garde negativity, which can also act as indicators and determinants of different social position of European music of the 20th century: 1) An immanent

critical dimension of music within the aesthetics of ugliness, remains in its alienated social status. 2) A 'retarded' transcendence, meaning, a transcendence 'interrupted', halted by the overemphasized avant-garde musical self-sufficiency socially marginalizes music. 3) A reciprocal hierarchical exchange between antinomy terms provides social relevance for music. 4) The transcendence of negativity under political repression results in the aggressive replacement of a socially positive position of music, with a socially negative one. 5) A bridged antinomy and the demise of the hierarchy of musical material results in an appropriate position in the process of the contemporary musical and social democratization.

In other words, transcendence of the antinomy that underpins the notion of Adorno's concept of musical material can be overcome within itself, as we have seen. As a result, the transcendence acts within various levels of 20th century music, being a relatively reliable determinant of the social acceptance of music, actually as an indicator of its social position.

Ia

Thus, musical issues related to the sovereignty of society, and social issues related to the sovereignty of the musical intersect during the process of transcendence leaving behind important criteria traces, transcending to another, axiological field.

Мирјана Веселиновић-Хофман

ТРАНСЦЕНДЕНТНОСТ АВАНГАРДНОГ НЕГАТИВИТЕТА КАО ДЕТЕРМИНАНТА ДРУШТВЕНЕ ПОЗИЦИЈЕ ЕВРОПСКЕ МУЗИКЕ У XX ВЕКУ (Резиме)

Полазећи од критичке теорије Теодора В. Адорна, којој је у фокусу савремена музика западноевропског капиталистичког друштва, усредсредили смо се у овом раду на деконструктивистичко читање антиномијског односа између аутономно музичког и друштвено-критичког аспекта музике XX века. Тај однос се испољава на различитим нивоима и у различитим формама. Темелји се на самом појму негативитета, и пројектује на све кључне појмове Адорнове естетике, као и савремене музике. На њему почивају како сам музички материјал као Адорнов централни музичко-естетички појам, тако и све његове музичко-естетичке консеквенце, као што су нпр. оне којима смо се у овом раду и бавили: двоструко одређење музике, двоструки карактер естетског искуства, раван конкретно музичког коју смо овде обухватили пре свега с обзиром на музичку супстанцу и музички је-

зик авангарде и постмодерне као својеврсних носилаца теоријске супротности између оног феноменалног и херменеутичког у савременој музици.

Констатујући у свим овим појавама антиномијски однос и пратећи видове његовог превазилажења, дошли смо до закључка да тај процес трансценденције, у савременој музици ‘сумиран’ у динамизму авангардног негативитета, оставља значајне критеријске последице. Наиме, видови трансценденције о којима смо овде говорили указују на то да превазилажење антиномије која лежи у Адорновом појму музичког материјала и која се превазилази већ унутар њега самог а, захваљујући томе, на разним нивоима и путем њега, дејствује у музици XX века као релативно поуздана одредница начина и степена друштвеног прихватања музике, као показатељ њеног друштвеног статуса у смислу следећих налаза: 1) иманентна критичка димензија музике у оквиру естетике ружног, остаје у свом отуђеном друштвеном статусу; 2) ‘закочена’ трансценденција, тј. трансценденција ‘закочена’ пренаглашеном авангардном аутономно-музичком самодовољношћу друштвено маргинализује музику; 3) изједначена хијерархијска размена између антиномијских чланова доприноси друштвеној релевантности музике; 4) трансценденција негативитета под политичком репресијом резултира насилном заменом друштвено позитивне позиције музике друштвено негативном; 5) стање превазиђене антиномије и обезважене хијерархије музичког материјала обезбеђује музици повољан статус у процесу савремене друштвене демократизације.

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Без назива
Sans titre

1929

Никола Вучо
Nikola Vučo