

Structures of Meaning:
Popular Music and Society

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Abstract of Thesis

The sociology of music has a long history and has attracted theorists because, although music has obvious effects on people which appear to be socially and culturally constrained, there is no 'meaning' which can be held accountable. Likewise, certain types of popular music, in particular 'rock' and 'reggae', are associated with identifiable social groups and yet homologies tying musical types with social structures are not easy to identify. Nevertheless, a feature of this field of study, which has been well received for some two decades, is to announce 'links' between certain popular musical styles and social structures. These 'links' are based on description and assumption rather than rigorous analysis. They are, however, an important feature of the myths which surround popular music, and an analysis of one group of myths in particular is offered.

This thesis works with two main propositions: first, that popular music can be addressed sociologically in the same way as 'serious' or 'classical' music; and second, that the musical analysis should be consistent with the musical type concerned as well as descriptive of the music itself. Popular music, even if formally notated, has considerable degrees of freedom, far more than are available to 'serious' music. The presence of these degrees of freedom makes formal notation an inappropriate document for popular music and might explain why its main method of distribution and reproduction this century has been in the form of recorded artefacts - discs, tapes, compact discs, etc. Although these aural records could be used, the disadvantage of these media is the lack of generalisation. For this reason appropriate written documents can be utilised. These are offered here in the form of charts which identify general rather than specific elements in the music and are here employed to demonstrate overall structures in musical texts.

It is from this position that it is possible to identify trends and similarities in popular music and this allows conclusions to be drawn concerning musical structures and social structures which are tied firmly to the musical texts involved. This both satisfies the musicological and sociological demands of such analyses by the identification of specific homologies. This thesis offers studies illustrating the method.

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Preface and Acknowledgements

This thesis, which explores homologies between musical and social structures, inevitably deals in part with rudimentary musical theory. Most details will be explained as they emerge, but I offer here an overall background which will enable the general reader to have a fuller understanding of the argument.

Western music as it has developed since the Reformation is based on the tempered scale. In its major mode - by far the most common, especially in popular music - the scale of any of the 12 pitches (separated by semitones) in the tempered diatonic scale can be found by applying the following formula, starting at any note:

from the start note, advance by: tone, tone, semitone, tone, tone, tone, semitone

In musical nomenclature, alphabet terms are assigned to the white keys on the piano keyboard, from A to G. Each group of A to the next A above spans one *octave*. Octaves can start from any of the white keys or any of the black which are named according to the white keys to which they are adjacent. The black key to the right of the white key F is called F[#] (sharp), but since it is at the same time immediately to the left of the white key G it is also called G^b (flat). Thus, increasing a pitch by a semitone sharpens it, while decreasing it by the same interval causes it to be flattened.

On a piano keyboard, a semitone interval is represented by adjacent keys, whether white or black. A tone rise in pitch entails a move to the next but one key, again counting black and white keys. A tone increment from C moves the pitch to D, the white key immediately to the right of C. A fall of a tone from F[#] involves a drop in pitch to E.

Using the above formula, the scale of C major is:

C D E F G A B C

while the scale of F is:

F G A B^b C D E F.

Scales are bounded by notes having the same name. They are separated by the interval of one octave.

In summary, there are twelve possible major scales in Western music (classical and popular), each starting on one of the semitone divisions bounded by an octave.

Since the classical period (starting about the end of the eighteenth century), improvisation in musical performance has tended to be less common, presumably because of its 'romantic' possibilities of self expression, which stands opposed to the classical movement. The received version of art music stresses a written text which should be adhered to more or less strictly. In the Baroque period, on the other hand, improvisation was expected, and especially in the continuo, or accompaniment. The instructions to continuo players are only sketched out and have the name *figured bass*. This type of instruction survives today in popular music, variously called *chord sequences* or *chord charts*. These specify the underlying harmonics of a piece but do not instruct the player *precisely* how to play it. The artist is thus given considerable scope for embellishment and interpretation.

Chords

A chord is a group of two or more notes sounded simultaneously. The three most common chord types in popular music are: *major*, *minor* and *dominant* (usually *dominant 7th*). These basic types are subject to extreme variation and embellishment, especially by improvising musicians. In popular music nomenclature, chords are named according to their *root* note which governs its effect in the context of a given piece of music. This effect is entirely relational in character. There is no intrinsic reason to the note C in isolation which would suggest its property as the dominant of F, which, in the chord of C⁷, would require a return to the chord of F (major or minor). In the context of a piece of music written in F, however, it would have that effect; but in a blues composition in the key of G we might find that same chord having the value of a subdominant 7th. It is, indeed, found in blues compositions¹ written in C as the tonic 7th².

The major chord is composed of the 1st (tonic, or root), third (mediant) and the fifth (dominant - i.e., the name of the degree of the scale, not to be confused with a dominant chord). Dominant 7th chords are the major chord with the inclusion of the flattened 7th. Minor chords are found by sounding the 1st, minor (or flattened) third and fifth.

Each of the twelve semitones in the diatonic scale can be used as the basis for chord construction³.

Chord sequences (or charts)

Western music is usually notated by dividing the musical flux into *bars* which are consistent with the rhythm and metre of the piece. Most popular music is based on phrases of two bars in length which are organised into melody lines of either eight, sixteen or thirty two bars in length⁴. Moreover, most is in four-four time, meaning that there are four beats in every bar.

These common features are exploited in the type of musical shorthand typical in Western popular and folk music, chord sequences or charts. These are the only surviving musical descendant of the Baroque figured bass. They offer a set of harmonic structures and other rudimentary instructions which will ensure that players in the rhythm section (or *continuo*) will play the same background for the ensemble or soloists. Since jazz and other folk music is heavily improvised, soloists especially will also tend to use the harmonic structure of a piece to inform their own variations rather than relying only on the melody line. Two such charts are offered here by way of illustration.

¹ The subdominant 7th, being a 'blue' note, is found commonly in jazz improvisation and is sometimes written in more formal compositions such as Jelly Roll Morton's *The Pearls* (probably composed in 1918).

² This attribute of musical notes (and, indeed, chords) might be thought to have a parallel with Saussure's notion of the arbitrariness of linguistic signs. However, for a number of reasons, which must include the rational development of Western music alluded to by Weber (1949:30-32), there are probably fewer degrees of freedom for musical signs than for linguistic. This probably marks the limits of a semiology of music.

³ This thesis does not utilise even simple formal notation. However, Wright (1980) does so on the grounds that it is a convenient way of distinguishing between different 'takes' of a piece. The general reader is referred to his admirably brief Note on Simple Musical Notation (1980:x).

⁴ The ubiquitous twelve-bar format of the classic blues has become familiar only through exposure. According to van der Merwe, it sounded alien to publishers when W C Handy first tried to interest them early this century (van der Merwe 1992:285).

I Saw Her Standing There (Lennon and McCartney) (Key: C)

C	%	F ⁷	C	C	%	G ⁷	%
C	C ⁷	F	A ^{b7}	C	G ⁷	C	%
C	%	F ⁷	C	C	%	G ⁷	%
C	C ⁷	F	A ^{b7}	C	G ⁷	C	%
F	%	%	%	F	%	G ⁷	%
F ⁷	%						
C	%	F ⁷	C	C	%	G ⁷	%
C	C ⁷	F	A ^{b7}	C	G ⁷	C	%

The Pearls (Ferd. 'Jelly Roll' Morton) (Key: G, modulating to C)

Introduction

G	E ^{b7}	%	D ⁷
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Theme A

G	E ^{b7}	G	E ^{b7}	E ⁷	Am	A ⁷	D ⁷
G	E ^{b7}	G	E ^{b7}	E ⁷	Am	G	GD ⁷ G/

Theme B

G ⁷	%	C ⁷	%	G	G/G ^{#o}	D/D ^o	A ⁷ /D ⁷
G ⁷	%	C ⁷	%	G ^o	%	G/D ⁷	G/D ⁷

Theme A'

G	E ^{b7}	G	E ^{b7}	E ⁷	Am	A ⁷	D ⁷
G	E ^{b7}	G	E ^{b7}	E ⁷	Am	G	GD ⁷ G/

Bridge

G ⁷	%	G ⁷ /G ^o	G ⁷
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Theme C

C	%	%	%	C	C/C ^o	G ⁷	%
G ⁷	%	C	C/C ^o	$\text{Bm}7\text{b}5/\text{E}^7$ _G	A ⁷ /D ⁷	B^7/E^7 _G G^7 _{Em}	B^7/E^7 _{C7} G^7 _{E7}
C	%	%	%	C ⁷	%	F/A ⁷	Dm
F	Fm	C	A ⁷	Dm	D ⁷ /G ⁷	C/C ^o	G ⁷

Coda

C	%	%	G ⁷ /C ⁹
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It is apparent on observation that the Morton piece has a fundamentally different structural approach to the Beatles' tune. This is not to give some spurious 'value' to multi-thematic compositions, but merely to show some of the illustrative power of analysis using these diagrammatic approaches. Both exploit blues (non-standard) harmony.

A further diagrammatic device is utilised later in this thesis. By way of illustration, the following is an example which appears later in this thesis:

Section	In	A ¹	A ²	B ¹	B ²	C ¹	C ²	Br	C ³	Br	C ⁴
Number of bars	8	16	16	16	16	16	16	8	16	8	16
Key areas	I					IV					

In this case, a diagrammatic representation of a multi-thematic march, Sousa's *The Washington Post*, key area I is the original tonic of the piece (in this case G). IV is the fourth degree of the scale, the subdominant, and indicates that the piece changes key (modulates) to that key. Had the key changed to the fifth degree of the scale, the dominant, it would have been shown as V. This use of Roman numerals is orthodox. *In* stands for *Introduction* and *Br* for *Bridge passage*, normally modulating to a new key. The letters A, B and C indicate different themes in the piece, while superscript ^{1, 2} etc. show the different appearances of the themes in the flux of the composition. This form of representation is common where multi-thematic compositions are concerned. It can be seen, by reference to *The Pearls* above, how it can be derived from a chord sequence as well as conventional notation.

Diagrams such as these can also be developed for specific purposes. For example, Keith Nicholls has analysed all King Oliver's recorded material using a linear diagramming technique (Wright 1987:180-242). The advantage of these diagrammatic forms for a work overtly concerned with 'non-classical' music (mainly jazz and other 'popular' forms) is that, while giving a description of the music on a written page, and thus allowing comparison and non-aural description of the texts themselves, they do not have the highly prescriptive character found in conventional musical texts. This is an apt form

of notation for music which has far more degrees of freedom in performance than music normally notated in a formal sense. Indeed, jazz, as an improvised form, I would argue, *should not*, except by way of illustration, be notated formally. It is sometimes necessary to have arranged passages, and these might be written; but to transcribe improvised jazz works is to militate against their essential character. For the essence of a work of jazz is not a written document, but a recorded one. Thus, from both practical and aesthetic standpoints the use of schemata of the type outlined here is both valid and accurate. For, while it might be conceded that folk and popular music forms do not readily lend themselves to formal musical analysis, that in itself is not sufficient to forego direct reference to the texts; all it means is that we should make use of less orthodox means of representing them on paper. Furthermore, to devise a scheme is an unnecessary expenditure of energy when one already exists, one which, moreover, has a pedigree extending back to seventeenth century.

Finally, and with great pleasure, I wish to make acknowledgements for the assistance I have received during the production of this thesis. My supervisor at Goldsmiths College, Paul Filmer, has been unstinting in his support, time and suggestions throughout. During periods of severe self-doubt on my part he ensured that the work progressed. Dr Clive Seale, also of Goldsmiths College, gave assistance on the use of regression lines. My employers, Nescot, have been generous both in time and financially and in particular I would mention my Head of Department, Denis Haffner and my Dean of Faculty, Jackie Bell, for their support.

My family, and in particular my wife Suzy, have been patient and understanding during the years it has taken to conduct this work. Without that generosity of spirit it would have been impossible for me to complete the work and it is therefore entirely appropriate that I dedicate it to them.

Introduction

Sociology has had an ambiguous relationship with popular music. While there are clearly matters of great interest for sociology in the topic - whether as a sub-set of media studies, youth and marginal culture amongst other issues - it has been treated mainly as though it is not music *per se* but instead manifestations or signifiers of something else - such as capitalism, style and belonging, to cite three common ones.

Nonetheless, there is a sociology of music. This has concerned itself almost exclusively with classical or 'serious' music. As will be argued, this is, at least partly, because of the German tradition out of which the sociology of music arose. There were two main strands to the groundwork being laid by Simmel and Dilthey, as expounded in Etzkorn (1989), and Weber (1949, 1974; Gerth and Mills (1974); Etzkorn (1989)). First, music should be understood as an expression of national sentiment. Second, the development of music was best understood as part of the rationalizing processes developing in all other spheres of Occidental civilization. The pre-eminent role of German music in the context of European classical music was enough to guarantee the dominance of German sociology of music. Even during the nineteenth century there was a feeling that music was the key to all society. It alone would give insights into the deep processes which allow of social cohesion and function.

The German tradition culminates in two figures - Weber and Adorno (1967 and 1987; Etzkorn (1989); Paddison (1993)). Both share a heritage of seeing in music the great interpretation of society. Understand a society's music and you understand that society. However, Weber, despite the fact that he was irresistibly drawn to the subject, was never able to encompass music itself in a scientific methodology. For Weber, it is only possible to study the rationalizing processes inherent in the development of Occidental music and to show how this leads to a rational music (Gerth and Mills 1974:51-52). It is not possible to do anything else. This, certainly, would be a welcome addition to the corpus but expresses a tautology; it is only by nominating Occidental music as rational that it can be discussed as the outcome of a rational process. And yet music itself resists rationality. We can, of course discuss music in terms of wavelengths and ratios, and the Pythagoreans

did that much. What they also did, and what Weber could not do, was to address music as a mysterious as well as mathematical force. But the Pythagoreans also considered numbers to be mystical. The discovery that the square root of 2 is irrational was accompanied by far more popular acclaim, comparatively, than a new production of *Tosca* at the Royal Opera House. The progress of understanding numbers was followed with the same kind of interest as those modern mystic numbers, the National Lottery, and for far healthier reasons. While the modernist movement was disenchanting the world, it sought at the same time to tame the one thing its proponents felt could truly explain it - music. It was not able, as were the Pythagoreans, to conceive of the intellect and the passions as part of a whole. Fact was to be strictly divorced from value.

Putting Adorno and Weber together in this way may seem bizarre; yet they must be seen as occupying similar space in the German tradition of the sociology of music. Both locate music very firmly in the society from which it springs. Where Adorno is concerned, this led to a critical form of analysis which on two grounds dismissed popular music as unworthy of serious attention. First, its construction is too simple to allow of the communication of complex patterns of thought. Second, its links, via the 'music industry' to capitalism renders it a tool of vested interests. Its true function is to render powerless those who succumb to it, and capitalists make sure that the proletariat do, indeed, succumb.

A further point to be made is Adorno's descriptive style of analysis. Nowhere are we given, in any form, examples to back up his assertion. To be sure, he *refers* us to works, but this is not the same as demonstrating his point at the time he makes it. Moreover, while we can be confident that the case he makes for, say, Stravinsky and Schoenberg is properly made if we listened to the works he refers to, we cannot be anything like as confident when it comes to popular music. As we shall see, he can be very inaccurate, biased and partial when it comes to jazz. There is little evidence that he knows much about it at all; his critique relies on cultural elitist prejudice rather than cogent argument.

Adorno's influence has, however, permeated the sociology of popular music. It has made it difficult for the development of a sociology of popular music which addresses texts.

This, of course, is an advantage to writers such as Frith (1992) who have little musical knowledge (and who admit to the fact). While they write authoritatively on matters of youth culture and style, the links between those and the popular music styles promoted as cognate must always remain tenuous while the texts cannot be addressed. We may choose to believe the argument or not - there is no evidence presented to sway us one way or the other. If *Dire Straits* is said to be the sound of 'Yuppie America', then so be it. If the reader is not sure what to make of such a comment, Frith does not help. Indeed, Frith is clear that his method cannot address issues of homology between the music he discusses and the social settings which, he claims, informs it. There are clear signs of Adorno's influence here; state the links but provide no musical evidence.

An area where Adorno and elitist critics converge is a refusal to treat popular music as the conceptual equal of serious music. Mellers (1973; Mulhern (1979)), along with other contributors to the journal *Scrutiny* holds that popular music was, indeed, an important object for comment but that it could not be the subject of the same kind of critique as serious music. Thus, there are two sides to Mellers' publications on music. One, dealing with classical composers, finds him addressing texts and quoting excerpts from them. The other, concerned with popular music, overlooks the texts themselves, except for occasional references to a chord, perhaps, or the significance of a change from major to minor mode. His analysis has more to do with the personalities of the performers and their backgrounds than the music itself. Mellers typifies the bourgeois reaction to the discovery of the working class hero. Yet here, at least, is some reference to music; Frith is not able to get this far and finds Mellers too attracted to musical theory to address the reality expressed in popular music.

The problematic status of popular music has led to the ambiguous reaction of writers such as Shepherd (1992). In his case, while he wishes popular music to be accorded the same status as serious music, he can only do so by addressing an area usually untouched by 'serious' analysis, namely vocal timbre. But, as with Mellers, as well as Middleton (1986), here at least is a move towards the music itself.

The refusal, from a number of standpoints, of sociologists to address actual texts of popular music has led to a position where description and opinion stand as informed comment. The outcome of this has been the perpetuation of a number of myths about music (most of which arise outside the sphere of sociology; without the mediation of method they are imported wholesale and unquestioned). Underpinning many of these myths is the word 'authentic'. This word appears throughout the literature, and not only in connection with popular styles; it is common in the sociology of serious music also. One problem with the use of this word is that it is never defined, although it is used in a variety of different ways, sometimes within the same text. It is variously invoked as meaning:

To be true to:

self;

social class;

ethnic background;

humanity;

the intention of the composer.

The last is a thorny area which provides a clear link between all music, serious or popular. In the classical field, authenticity to the composer's intention leads to the use of 'authentic' instruments, such as sackbuts and valveless horns, and to the search for 'authentic' singing styles. Yet music speaks to us as listeners whether we understand these matters or not. The dilemma is, then: do we attempt to resurrect the composer's intention, or do we try to make sense of what the music invokes in us as listeners? The more we know about the music the more tempted we are to address the former at the expense of the latter. But does it help us to know that J S Bach composed many of his finest pieces to honour obscure German princelings - the song *Sheep May Safely Graze* comes from one such cantata and celebrates the protection of the people by the prince, not by God - or that Jelly Roll Morton wrote *The Pearls* to commemorate a waitress's necklace (or so he said). There is, perhaps, some interest in these matters but from a

sociological point of view they are largely irrelevant. Of greater interest is the social milieu and cultural tradition from which the music springs.

And here the lack of attention to text leads writers into the murky areas of myth. Jazz, in particular, is given a legendary status which tends to rub off on all subsequent popular music since a lineage is often traced from New Orleans to Carnaby Street and beyond. It is held almost axiomatically that the origins of jazz are now too distant for us to discover, but that it is clearly an invention of ex-slaves in the USA and therefore, in its pure form, must have been authentic. By the 1920s there had been two major coalescences of myth. One concerned its origins in New Orleans (and exists in a more or less unchanged state today) and the *Jazz Age* myth (again, often invoked in its original form still). These, themselves, on analysis, are clearly syntheses of deeper myths, including a version of Rousseau's 'noble savage'.

It is clear that without the filtration process of some method myth, opinion and prejudice will remain as major influences on the sociology of popular music. An important collection edited by Leppert and McClary, *Music and Society*, was published in 1992 and three of its papers are discussed in Chapter 3 along with other documents relating to musical analysis in the fields of popular, folk and serious music. The finding is that the grounds for addressing serious music with attention to the text is established by McClary when dealing with Bach and politics, yet where popular music is concerned, even writers sympathetic to it do not address texts at all. However, from musicological backgrounds, writers *do* address popular and folk texts. It is therefore possible to develop some of those insights so as to allow the development of a method for addressing musical texts which arise from non-serious backgrounds. These texts are much freer than most serious texts. There is usually no single arrangement to be followed at all times when they are performed, except (often) the recording. Also, recordings are often, especially with jazz, a memory of one improvisational moment which had a particular tune as a basis, rather than a *definitive* version of a piece. In order for a methodology to be developed, it should be one which remains true to these features of popular music. It should also provide for the statement of the argument in the printed form, since that is still the dominant medium of communication.

With little adaptation, descriptive techniques which do not require conventional notation already exist. The two adopted here are: first, chord sequences, which derive from the baroque figured bass; second, grids or diagrams which help to show the pattern for multi-thematic pieces. Both these assist the general reader in following the argument. Diagrams of various kinds are not at all uncommon in the literature and are found in Lomax's pseudo-science of cantometrics in an advanced form. They allow the text to be addressed in a way that is accessible by readers with a general sociological background. These methodological tools are only aids to analysis, but since they concentrate the analyst on the text itself, they allow a more rigorous approach to musical sociology to develop. What they can do is supplement research in other areas and hence provide the grounds for probable homologies between certain texts and the social milieu from which they sprang. What they cannot do is give certain answers to these or any other questions. They get us a little further along the road and allow us to identify and eliminate at least some of the myth and palpable absurdities surrounding the sociology of popular music. We also have the chance of treating popular music on equal terms with serious music since the methodology frees us from the constraints of conventional notation with which popular music has always felt uncomfortable.

The remainder of this thesis is devoted to chapters which use the methodology outlined here as well as addressing issues of myth. The original idea was to investigate certain 'nodal points' in the development of popular music in this century but after starting the research it became clear that continuities are at least as important as major developments. Thus, despite the persistence of the myth surrounding the origin of jazz, which in part insists on the unknowability of the precise roots of jazz, it can be demonstrated that in its early form its links are with popular styles in the USA at the turn of the century and, via Gottschalk, with European polkas and other forms. Despite the myth, our understanding of jazz is better informed by an investigation of the texts themselves. These reveal traces of a shared past between jazz and popular music. This finding is consistent both with van der Merwe's work (1992) and with what we know of jazz during this century. It does not support romantic versions of its origins. The same is found of other forms of popular music. The Beatles, despite the claims of Mellers, are clearly working within a tradition of popular music. They do not transport us in song to an Edenic Age; rather, they pick up

and elaborate popular music tendencies already present. It is clear also that they stand in a developing performing tradition which was not necessarily tied to the type of music they played. This performing tradition is as much a social as a musical phenomenon.

Chapter 4 offers a microscopic analysis of *Pep*, a fairly obscure Jelly Roll Morton piece from the 1920s and demonstrates the power of the methodology in its 'pure' form. By allowing diagrammatic representations of the piece to appear on the printed page we can move from opinion and supposition to argument supported by evidence. The conclusion arrived at here is that there is a clear homology between the piece and the social setting of its origin. This gains oblique support from the literature - especially Gilroy (1993) - and this allows the invocation of the concept of triangulation. Not only does the method lead to this conclusion, Gilroy's theories of the black diaspora are entirely consistent with the finding.

The idea for Chapter 5 came about by questioning the appearance of the film *High Society* in 1956. This was an important year for popular music, for it was the year in which rock and roll came to prominence. Yet, despite references to rock and roll, the film uses mainly musical styles which emerge from what van der Merwe calls the 'parlour' tradition in a form far more suited to the 1920s and 30s. An analysis of the texts leads to the conclusion that the film has a strong sub-plot, transmitted via its music, which is to offer assurance to middle America at a time when black music was reasserting itself and when the black civil rights movement was starting to gain confidence. This is not, however, to argue that the composer, Cole Porter, had this *intention*; the suggestion is that society works in him and in us in such a way as to allow that interpretation. The film also provides material for checking Adorno's theories of popular music as well as Ryan's (1985) notion of the 'production of culture' in the music industry. The musical texts of *High Society* emerge as closed texts; they say little beyond the *angst* of white society at a time of change. Adorno's and Ryan's theses are both supported, but are supported precisely because the texts are *directed* texts; they were written with particular effects¹ in mind and this renders the potential for interpretation limited. They remain firmly part of the capitalist establishment.

¹ This alone could stand for Porter's *intention*. For example, the song *True Love* clearly invokes erotic romance, while *Who Wants to be a Millionaire?* is a vehicle for light-hearted satire.

Chapter 6 discusses Mellers' (1973) work on the Beatles in the context of the working-class culture out of which they emerged. This context is all but overlooked by Mellers who clearly has a preconceived idea of what he will find. The notion that the Beatles return us in song to the innocence of the Garden of Eden is simply not supported by the texts, all of which display links with a cultural past which is readily identifiable to anyone who was in contact with it. There are signs towards the end of their career, and especially in Lennon's work, that an adventurous approach to music was being taken; yet despite that the contexts, or *matrices* (to use van der Merwe's expression) within which they worked and which informed their choices, remain unchanged and clear.

Chapter 7 performs the essential function of picking up the mythology theme which permeates the other chapters. The 'Jazz Age' myth, a mixture of several more abstracted myths, has been both successful and prominent. Yet the soil on which the myth was engendered, the notion that jazz and its practitioners were somehow closer to man's essential nature is, as we shall see, simply not supported by the textual evidence. We have the far more mundane conclusion that jazz must be seen in a tradition which includes the (presumably) sullied Occidental. In a sense, the Chicago Jazz Age and its myths correspond very closely to Mellers' elevation of the Beatles to cultural icons. Yet the latter is a highly personalised account, referring as Mellers does (albeit in a rather patronising way) to John, Paul, etc., while the Jazz Age myth celebrated the sanctity of a 'race'. It is, perhaps, not too fanciful to conceive of this switch as indicative of the triumph of post-modern aesthetics.

Finally, the conceptual bases for this thesis stems from three books published in recent years. Leppart and McClary's *Music and Society* has already been mentioned; in addition, van der Merwe's *Origins of the Popular Style* (1992) gave scholarly and musicological backing to a suspicion I already harboured, that the distinction between 'serious' and 'popular' music was recent and largely artificial. Kenney's *Chicago Jazz* (1993) gives an academic perspective on the cultural history of the development of one important area of popular music in the twentieth century. Kenney's work provides the foundation for one entire chapter, and it is true that without these three works this thesis

would have been impoverished. Any shortcomings, however, are mine and not my sources’.

Chapter 1: Music and Sociological Analysis

Music poses a fundamental question which has taxed sociologists for much of the twentieth century. It is clearly a communicative system, one apparently tied intimately to societies and cultures; and yet it has no phenomenal referent. While people may differ as to the 'meaning' of words, it is nevertheless possible for them to identify or describe things or concepts such that alter may at least know approximately what ego 'means'. But if ego says: 'That piece of music moved me to tears' or, 'That was an exciting number', alter has to take on trust that the 'meaning' of the music was emotional excitement in some way. Even if alter was also moved to tears, there is no guarantee that whatever emotion moved ego was the same for alter.

It is possible to trace the beginnings of modern sociological concern with music to a German tradition. Dilthey noted that 'of all arts, music is most bound by technical rules, yet it is also the freest in calling forth emotional responses' (Etzkorn 1989:4). Dilthey's comment sums up the two strands which have characterised music as both a fecund area for sociological thought and an enduring paradox. While it is possible to describe quite precisely a musical piece at one level, at another (arguably the most fruitful because it is the emotional level) it remains untouchable. We can say **what** we hear, and even **how** we hear it; but **why** it should have any effect on us remains unknowable. For Dilthey, the task of sociology was precisely to make the link between objective features of a musical work and meanings which would be deeply cultural, even national in flavour:

In a section on the great German music of the eighteenth century, Dilthey searches in the "objective" characteristics of music for the meaning it expresses. This meaning is then related back to "German" characteristics. For example, Bach's Pastoral Symphony "is one of the deepest inventions of Bach, which sprang from the depths of Germanic fantasy, including all future presentations of our national feelings". (Etzkorn, 1989:5)

Following Dilthey's studies of German music, Etzkorn argues, a threefold program would ensue:

The essential aspects of Dilthey's program would be concern with the technical rules governing the musical expressions and forms of a people's music — as it were, rules directly applicable to the music; concern with the cultural and psychological values (emotions) that are expressed in a given social setting through appropriate (musical) communication; and concern with the mutual interaction among musical elements, musicians, and social setting or structure (Etzkorn 1989:5).

Simmel conceived of music as fundamental to humans and the human society: 'Music, for him, has its basis in speech, and speech is already a manifestation of social relations' (Etzkorn 1989:12). The process of socialization, for Simmel, accounts for the variety of musical forms in the world. Music is intrinsic to the social:

As in the German idealistic tradition, the *Wesen* (essence) of music and society is treated as one unit. The meaning of music is implicated in the meaning of society. Consistent with this assertion, Simmel avers that the artist who creates music is so strongly integrated in his society that his musical creations are true expressions of the essence of his country ... music is a highly developed articulation of social processes, which can best be apprehended when viewed as simultaneous expressions of the unifying *Wesen* of society. (Etzkorn 1989:13-14).

Music for Simmel both conditions and is conditioned by the social reality in which it is involved.

Max Weber took an approach which combined the idealist tradition which sees musical essence as one with the social in which it exists with a study of the development of 'rational' music in the Western tradition.

Writing in or shortly before 1917, Weber wrestled with the problem of aesthetic value (Weber 1949:30-32). It is possible, in Weber's opinion, to approach art from a purely 'technical' point of view and this is the only valid approach for the 'history and sociology of art'. The aesthetic value of art is a 'given' (Weber 1949:30).

Nevertheless, the field outlined by Weber as being of technical significance for a sociology of music is impressive and scholarly. It encompasses the development of Occidental harmony:

From the standpoint of the interests of the modern European ("value-relevance"!) its central problem is: why did the development of harmonic music from the universally popularly developed folk polyphony take place only in Europe and in a particular epoch, whereas everywhere else the rationalization of music took another and most often quite opposite direction: interval development by division (largely the fourth) instead of through the harmonic phase (the fifth). Thus at the centre stands the problem of the origin of the third in its harmonic meaningful interpretation, i.e., as a unit in the triad... (Weber 1949:30-31).

In a similar way Weber outlines a programme for the study of rhythm, notation, 'rationally polyphonous vocal music' and musical instruments, especially the pianoforte. At the root of these developments, according to Weber, was technical innovation:

The difference between ancient music and the chromatic music which the great musical experimenters of the Renaissance created in a tremendous rational striving for new musical discoveries and indeed for the purpose of giving musical form to "passion," lay not in the impulse to artistic expression but rather in the technical means of expression (Weber, 1949:31).

Weber's programme may lack an aesthetic dimension but its realization would still be of great importance and interest. It allows a scholarly approach to the issue of music even though it must leave untouched its 'values'. If it must ignore passion, it can still be technical. Weber may not have known how to encompass art in a 'scientific' methodology but he clearly sensed the centrality of art to human society. His rational approach allows an approach in some depth; but we sense that it must have been a great sorrow to him that he could not write - in a scientific way - about it. In *The Social Psychology of the World Religions*, he notes that not all irrationality can be overcome:

In music, the Pythagorean 'comma'¹ resisted complete rationalization oriented to tonal physics. The various great systems of music of all peoples and ages have differed in the

¹ The Pythagorean comma comes about because if one takes two rising successions of intervals, say fifths and octaves, at one point they will arrive at what seems to be the same note, but in reality is not. For if

manner in which they have either covered up or bypassed this inescapable irrationality or, on the other hand, put irrationality into the service of the richness of tonalities. The same has seemed to happen to the theoretical conception of the world, only far more so; and above all, it has seemed to happen to the rationalization of practical life (Gerth and Mills 1974:281).

Weber is clear as to the two components of art: the technical expertise of the artist as artisan; and the creative intuition of the artist as interpreter. The two main senses of the word 'culture' as identified by Williams reflects this distinction. Culture as a 'whole way of life' can be seen as the interpretative function of art, while art's technicalities are a mirror of the sense of culture as 'all that's best' in a society (Williams 1983: 10-14).

In an unpublished essay by Weber - *Rational and Social Foundations of Music* (1921) - this notion of music as a social synthesis is developed. According to Etzkorn:

Weber appears to view music more as a resultant [*sic*] of particular social emanations than an intrinsic nexus of all. Much of the published fragment of his essay is devoted to a demonstration that contemporary music is more rational than music known from earlier times and other places (Etzkorn 1989:14).

Weber's overall thesis remained unchanged in this fragment. Rationalization, especially as it is experienced in the Occident, is the key to understanding the rich European tradition of music. In particular, rationalization means the avoidance of disharmony through 'interferences of the music overtones amongst each other' (Etzkorn 1989:14). Weber's analysis, according to Etzkorn, traces the development of equal temperament (our contemporary system) to this specifically musical form of rationalization. This is associated with technological advances (in the construction of musical instruments in particular) and this ties musical rationalization to other forms of rationalization. Clearly, Weber, had he been able to complete this musical project, would have attempted to trace homologies between musical sounds and social structures:

the length of a string on a violin is halved, for example, its pitch increases by one octave. The Pythagoreans discovered that the ratio of 2:3 will increase its pitch by a fifth. After five octaves, the pitches should be identical. However, while the succession of octaves gives a ratio of $5+\frac{1}{2} = 2.5$, the succession of fifths gives $8+\frac{1}{3} = 2.66$ recurring.

In this fragmentary study, Weber never discusses musical phenomena apart from their physical sound properties ... The sociological task, in this preparatory study, seems to rest in the discovery of social-structural categories that are significantly related to the categories of the acoustical system. With this study Weber wished to demonstrate that sociological analysis could be *wertfrei* (value free, rational) and still contribute to the enhancement of our knowledge of culture, even in such value-loaded realms as the musical arts (Etzkorn, 1989:15).

In its fundamental irrationality, music stands for Weber, Gerth and Mills infer in their Introduction to *From Max Weber*, as an 'acid test' of the development of Occidental rationality:

Weber's view of 'disenchantment' embodies an element of liberalism and of the enlightenment philosophy that construed man's history as a unilinear 'progress' towards moral perfection (sublimation), or towards cumulative technological rationalization. Yet his skeptical aversion to any 'philosophical' element in empirical science precluded any explicit constructions of historical time in terms of 'cycles' or 'unilinear' evolution. 'Thus far the continuum of European culture development has known neither completed cyclical movements nor an unambiguously oriented "unilinear development" '. We nevertheless feel justified in holding that a unilinear construction is clearly implied in Weber's idea of the bureaucratic trend. Even so 'inward' and apparently subjective an area of experience as that of music lends itself to sociological treatment under Weber's concept of 'rationalization'. The fixation of clang patterns, by a more concise notation and the establishment of the well-tempered scale; 'harmonious' tonal music and the standardization of the quartet of wood winds and string instruments as the core of the symphony orchestra. These are seen as progressive 'rationalizations'. the musical systems of Asia, of preliterate Indian tribes, of Antiquity and of the Middle East are compared in regard to their scope and degree of 'rationalization' (Gerth and Mills 1974:51-52).

The German tradition, then, saw music as both fundamental to society as a form of communication, and also intricately tied to social structures. It need not, therefore, be analysed only from an emotional perspective - although that perspective existed and was important, it was not and could not be value-free - but could now be addressed as a part of the general trend towards rationality. Liberating as this was to analysts, it also disabled the most fundamental feature of music - its uncomprehended ability to bring about

affective states. McClary has noted that a musical sign - she chooses d^b - can affect one's most fundamental emotions. And yet:

...a d^b can move one to tears, can appear either to affirm (as though inevitably, absolutely) one's expectations or to shatter one's most fundamental beliefs. Now a d^b all by itself in the real, extra-musical world signifies nothing. It can only do so by appearing in a highly structured, ordered context - a context dependant on norms, rules, and those apparently self-contained, abstract principles known explicitly only to initiated practitioners (McClary 1992:16).

Although McClary picks one sign - d^b - to make the point, any of music's signifiers would have done just as well. Why should a minuet signify elegance, or Vivaldi's *Four Seasons* be overused by television presenters when dealing with matters concerning the aristocracy? Why should hip-hop (with an emphasis on the third beat of a four beat bar) or the tango (with identifiable African connections) evoke specific and predictable responses in listeners? Taken further, why should music have any form at all? Why do composers - the *initiated practitioners* - use established forms when writing? It is unnecessary to keep asking these questions, at least partly because there is no known answer to them but also because, for any practical purpose, their number is limitless. The point here is that these abstract principles hold good for *all* music, and not only Western 'rational' music. An 'initiated practitioner' is not only a graduate of a Western Academy, but is an interpreter of any music, whether folk, popular, *avant garde*, classical or baroque. And here it is worth noting that the distinction between 'commercial' and 'art' music is also artificial, for musicians need to eat and clothe themselves whatever music they are creating. Their activities need to generate an income however that itself arises. The difference is one of degree. Other considerations require a more or less overt appeal to political and other value stances - the role of the state, the effect of forms of political structures, the 'worth' of a piece of music, its educational potential - these are considerations which are beyond the concern of music *per se*. Thus, despite the German tradition of consideration of Occidental - and, arguably, mainly *German* - music, all musics, considered as sign systems, can be thought of as having equal value. We may therefore address Finnish folk music, reggae, blues and jazz or any other of the varieties of music around the world as well as music in the Occidental 'serious' tradition as part of

the same phenomenon. Differences are there, of course, and can be addressed. But these differences are of minor importance when set against the similarities and especially the fundamental similarity - that music has apparently inexplicable powers of calling forth emotional responses, and that these responses are socially and culturally based. It is partly in response to these considerations that this thesis seeks to redress the perceived lack of attention to *the music itself* when addressing popular styles.

For this reason and others which will be explored later, the German tendency to consider as valid *only* music which has emerged from the European (and hence German) tradition is rejected and popular music will be considered on its own terms as valid musical expression.

Before leaving the German tradition, however, one name which is common to most literature on the subject in the post-war period is that of Theodor Adorno. Where Adorno touches most especially on popular music, and especially on jazz, will be remarked below; however, some general comments are in order here.

Despite a fundamentally different epistemology and related methodology, Adorno's approach to music has a clear foundation in the German tradition, as outlined here. As Etzkorn remarks, despite Marxist terminology, 'a close inspection of his contributions reveal that they express a bourgeois rather than a proletarian bias' (Etzkorn 1989:18-19). Adorno was, indeed, a trained musicologist who started writing on the subject in the 1930s. It is for this reason, as much as his analysis of the *culture industry* that he treats popular music with contempt. His essay on jazz, *Perennial Fashion - Jazz* will be discussed later in some depth, but here my object is to locate Adorno within a German rather than Marxist tradition.

As we have seen above, classical German theorists do not make a distinction between music and society. The *Wesen*, or essence, of both is the same. For Weber, music can be seen as reflecting broad currents of society. If there is such a thing as 'natural tonality', then, for Weber, it exists in societies based on religion and observing value rational modes of thought. The whole history of the Pythagorean movement exemplifies this; it is

from this basis that there developed the mediaeval conception of music as a branch of mathematics. But the Pythagorean movement was also a religion with a theory of the soul bound up with number mysticism and numerology, included in which was the systematic study of musical tonal ratios.

However, what characterises, for Weber, the development of the Western social and economic order is the parallel development of instrumental rationality. Only in the West has instrumental rationality taken firm root, and only in the West did rational music develop alongside this development. For Weber, this rational music has a specific character:

The musical ear of other [i.e., non Western] peoples has probably been even more sensitively developed than our own, certainly not less so. Polyphonic music of various kinds has been widely distributed over the earth. The co-operation of a number of instruments and also the singing of parts have existed elsewhere. All our rational tone intervals have been known and calculated. But rational harmonious music, both counterpoint and harmony, formation of the tone material on the basis of three triads with the harmonic third; our chromatics and enharmonics, not interpreted in terms of space, but, since the Renaissance, of harmony; our orchestra, with its string quartet as a nucleus, and the organization of ensembles of wind instruments; our bass accompaniment; our system of notation, which has made possible the composition and production of modern musical works, and thus their very survival; our sonatas, symphonies, operas; and, finally, as a means to all these, our fundamental instruments, the organ, piano, violin, etc.; all these things are known only in the Occident, although programme music, tone poetry, alteration of tones and chromatics, have existed in various musical traditions as a means of expression (Weber 1974:14-15).

There is a sense here of the sheer sophistication of Occidental music. It is not that music has not appeared elsewhere in the world; it clearly has, but its development has been haphazard and truncated. In the West, on the other hand, music is not only a 'means of expression' but the working through of modern aesthetics driven by the thrust toward rationality. The reason for this return to Weber is that these kinds of themes, *mutatis mutandis*, are actually common in Adorno, often, however, implicitly so. According to one writer, 'orthodox Marxists' are critical of Adorno's 'idiosyncratic and selective' reading of Marx. This reading is described as essentially Hegelian 'with an admixture of

Nietzsche and Max Weber'. The same 'orthodox Marxists' 'complain that Adorno's sociological aesthetics remains entirely dependant on the musical values of the bourgeois period' (Paddison 1993:12). Adorno and fellow Frankfurt Institute theorists clearly identified rationality and its relationship to the development of Occidental music as fundamental to its understanding:

The progress of progressive rationalization is seen as pivotal by Adorno because it is shared by both the immanent formal/structural processes of music and by the processes of the social totality itself (Paddison 1993:138).

Here we have the clear links between Adorno and the German tradition: first, a sense of the holistic structure underpinning the society/music system; second a sense of progressive rationalization with all the connotations of that word, including notions of dominance over nature. Nevertheless, for Adorno, as indeed for Weber in a different sense, the ideal type of instrumental rationality is too restrictive. For him, art and music work with aesthetic rationality:

... we are left to assume that 'aesthetic rationality', seen in the light of Kant's view of art as 'purposiveness without a purpose' (or end-orientatedness without an end (*Zweckmäßigkeit ohne Zweck*)), corresponds to some extent to Weber's value rationality (Paddison 1993:139).

And yet music, while operating under the aegis of value rationality (or something like it) must also mirror society and it is the failure of many kinds of music, from jazz to Stravinsky, to do so which finally marks them as aesthetically compromised. Adorno's aesthetics come finally to work through a critique of existing systems. Thus, Stravinsky and modern music are both accused of capitulating to the culture industry (Adorno 1987:7-8), while only atonalism, and particularly the twelve tone row as exemplified by Schoenberg, had the propensity to overcome the relations implicit in capitalism and at the same time assert the autonomy of music from its socio-economic surroundings. And yet music *is* society; its role therefore is to critique the society from which it springs. The composer is free from restrictions of musical convention and as a consequence, the music is its own aesthetic. This makes it difficult to listen to, let alone to understand; and this is

what guarantees its social being, rather than the appeal to authenticity or intentionality. Stravinsky, as a pioneer in (for Adorno) regressive neo-classicism strove for authenticity, for musical statements which had a deep human connection. Yet:

Aesthetic authenticity is a socially necessary illusion: no work of art can thrive in a society founded upon power, without insisting on its own power. However, it thus comes into conflict with its own truth, with the administration for a future society, which no longer relies on power in any way and has no need of it ... Art would perhaps be authentic only when it had totally rid itself of the idea of authenticity - of the concept of being-so-and-not-otherwise (Adorno 1987:216-7).

Scheonberg exemplifies the revolt against the basic premise of 'modern music', that 'something should sound as though it had been present since the beginning of time' (Adorno 1987:216). As such, his work allows us to hear something of the contradictions inherent in modern capitalism:

The deepest currents present in this music proceed, however, from exactly sociological and anthropological foundations peculiar to [the general public]. The dissonances which horrify them testify to their own conditions; for that reason only do they find them unbearable. Exactly the opposite is the case of the all-too-familiar, which is so far removed from the dominant forces of life today that the public's own experience still communicates with that for which traditional music bore witness (Adorno 1987:9).

Aesthetic justification, then, is found in the ability of the artist to mirror society. In capitalist society this specifically involves the expression of contradictions inherent in society, but what of other ages? One German composer who has long been a challenge to musicologists is J S Bach. The received view of Bach is that he is somehow 'above' ordinary humanity, and is expressing something timeless, as McClary found as a student:

As a scholar classified as a Baroque music specialist, I participated during 1985 in several Bach Year celebrations: panel discussions in which my contributions were modest attempts at resituating Bach in his social, political, ideological context. To my overwhelming joy (again as paranoid confronted with worst-possible scenario), I was told outright by prominent scholars that Bach (unlike 'second-rate' composers like Telemann) had *nothing* to do with his time or place, that he was 'divinely inspired', that his music works in accordance with perfect, universal order and truth (McClary 1992:14).

To pin Bach down to a particular set of social relations is, in this paradigm, not simply wrong, but almost sacrilege. McClary cites Adorno's influential essay *Bach Defended Against His Devotees* as pivotal in allowing herself to locate Bach in his socio-political context (McClary 1992:13-14). Adorno, in this essay, does not seek himself to do such locating, but rather is asking us to be realistic in what we can expect of Bach and to consider carefully what we mean by 'performance' and, especially, 'interpretation'. Our relation to Bach is not an historical one, but is defined through the 'praxis of performance' (Adorno 1967:142). The search for 'authenticity', which Adorno also attacked in Stravinsky as we have seen, is, therefore, a futile search. What is authentic about Bach is what is there, and what is there is a product of his time. Bach is not ahistorical. The implications for performance, then, are complicated:

True interpretation is an x-ray of the work; its task is to illuminate in the sensuous phenomenon the totality of all the characteristics and interrelations which have been recognized through an intensive study of the score (Adorno 1967:144).

This, however, will rest on the quality of the intensive study which, by its nature, can never guarantee completeness; how can we actually and finally *know* that those characteristics and interrelations we have discerned in the text actually are there? Moreover, our knowledge rests at least in part on our *ability* to understand social and political relations existing in Bach's time, for our knowledge base is firmly grounded in the capitalist relations of production. In the end, it might be that 'the traditional Bach can indeed no longer be interpreted' (Adorno 1967:146). If so, Adorno argues, it is new composition producing work of Bach's quality and depth which, paradoxically, is most loyal to Bach. As examples, Adorno specifically cites Schoenberg and von Webern.

This look at Adorno's work has been taken to show the sense in which he stands in the German tradition of the sociology of music as well as to say something about his influence on later writers. In summary, the following points could be made:

- Adorno believed that *progress* in music was an essential ground for its aesthetics. This is entirely consistent with the German tradition. The analyst, therefore, has

not only to *understand* modern music, but must also understand its origins. This is the *value* to which Adorno was committed.

- He refused to acknowledge that serious music of any kind could be divorced from its social context.
- His background and approach was bourgeois in character. The sociology of music could only be addressed from a position which assumed a knowledge of the Western tradition and system *from an elite point of view*.
- Following from, and congruent with, the first three points, is Adorno's refusal to treat folk music, popular music and jazz - he made no meaningful distinction between the categories - as part of a universal system of music. These types of music, therefore, were considered *ipso facto* to lie beyond any social context and this made them the ready tools of alienating capitalism.
- Although often referring to particular pieces of music, and hence displaying a broad knowledge base, Adorno does not make close reference to any particular text. His observations, therefore, have a tendency toward assertion rather than valid argument.

Not all the above points have remained as Adorno's legacy. In particular, popular music, jazz and folk music have come to be seen as grounded in society as firmly as 'serious' categories. This might be seen as overcoming one of Adorno's clear weaknesses - his bourgeois orientation. However, it brings with it its own problem - the close relationship of popular music to capitalist modes of production and consequent clear alienating tendencies. However, Adorno's work has enabled subsequent writers to address the close and immanent links between music and society. This is a lasting part of his legacy. A further and less fortunate influence of Adorno is the lack of close reference to any musical text. This, especially where popular music is concerned, has allowed the development of an entire corpus which feels justified in ignoring textual issues; relying instead on assertion and opinion for its methodology. This is allowable in journalism

(where such writing on popular music first emerged), but it is not sociology and should not be conceived of as such. Frith and Hebdige stand as examples of such writing and some of their work will be considered in more detail below. However, as has been mentioned, McClary owes an explicit debt to Adorno and her work does make specific and telling reference to musical texts (McClary 1992). But her subject matter is Bach; again, although there is nothing implicit in Bach to tie him to the bourgeoisie, he is the type of subject more likely to be understood and to interest those with such a background. Although McClary may have repaired the deficiency in Adorno which is tied to his lack of attention to texts, she has not so far been able to escape the bourgeois tendency.

Conclusion

This thesis is not immune from at least some of Adorno's influence. It certainly wants to tie music - in particular popular music - to society, but seeks to do so by the identification of specific homologies. These homologies can only be established by close attention to texts which in their turn should be established in ways consistent with the music to which they refer. The argument is, therefore, that formal musical notation has only a limited part to play in the description of musical texts where the tradition is aural and where improvisation is both allowed and expected. It is Adorno's inability to see these matters as being equivalent with the grounds and development of Occidental - and especially German - music which leads him to the conclusion that such music has no potential for social critique and no role in social change - indeed, quite the opposite.

The German tradition has been addressed in some depth here, because, especially in Adorno, its influence has been most marked in the development of the sociology of music. Certainly, links between music and society or, more usually, specific social groups, are commonly assumed. The interpretive work engaged in by the listener is a further assumption commonly made. Praxis now has a home with popular as well as Adorno's 'serious' types. It was never certain that the sociology of music would arrive at this point, however; there was considerable debate at one point over the role of musical texts as the embodiment of musical society, as well as Becker's famous ascription of the dance band musician as a 'deviant' (Becker 1963:79). It was possible, then, that either a semiology of music or an individualist interpretation of musical culture might have become dominant. In the event, the German tradition has, *mutatis mutandis*, been the most powerful. But, above all, the change most telling in the development of the German tradition has been the realization that styles emanating from traditions other than the Occidental are worthy of close study. This has entailed certainly a relativist position, where genuine musical statements and experiences can arise in different forms and from social strata outside the elite. And this means giving equal weight to musical forms of all kinds. Now this, in itself, is problematic. Can it seriously be held that Bach's *Wachet Auf* is the same conceptual phenomenon as the Beatle's *She Loves You*? Clearly, there is a difference, partly to do with the background and commitment of the listener, and partly to

do with the complexity of the work amongst other things. And yet there are also many similarities; it is these similarities that allows the analysis to cross musical boundaries. For by its nature, all music must have pitch, it must have tempo, it must have form and it must have rhythm, despite the fact that variations in complexity and combination involve a potential infinity of choice for composers and listeners alike. Thus, John Shepherd develops an argument for the discussion of male hegemony in music by reference to common features found in all music:

I intend this paper as a contribution to the understanding of how the politically personal may be articulated from within the internal processes of music. More specifically, I seek to elaborate a theoretical model in terms of which the parameters of timbre, pitch and rhythm, in both 'classical' and 'popular' musics, can be linked to male hegemonic processes of gender typing and of cultural reproduction and resistance (Shepherd 1992:152).

This is consistent with Shepherd's explicit desire to see popular music 'accorded the same status as 'serious' music as an object worthy of study in university music departments' (1992:151) I share this desire with Shepherd.

Attention is coming to be directed, therefore, not on features which separate popular music from serious music but on those features shared in common - and this allows popular music to be taken seriously. This thesis represents an attempt to move towards methodological issues which have so far been barriers to the 'serious' treatment of popular music.

Chapter 2: Issues and Tensions arising from Sociology's approach to music

A number of issues present themselves when considering the sociology of music. One of these has been mentioned above, in connection with Adorno - the issue of authenticity. Another, closely related, matter is the question of intentionality. For, beneath virtually all considerations of the sociology of music is a paradox; although much music starts with an individual, it is heard, responded to and somehow 'understood' by many. Adorno implies that a solipsism on the part of writers on modern music is to write off the collective origins of music in cult and dance as a mere 'point of departure', for the collectivity, the 'we', still stands at the root of music (Adorno 1973:18-19). It has been remarked above that, although a piece of music may call forth a response in an individual, it is not at all possible to be certain that the response is the same for all individuals, or the same as that called forth by or intended by the composer¹. A common experience, in any case, is that although on one day a piece of music calls up a certain response, on another the response of the individual is quite different. The question is whether we can ever *really* know what was in the mind of a composer and, indeed, if this question is worthy of consideration.

Authenticity and Intentionality

The word 'authenticity' is found commonly throughout the literature. However, its connotations are numerous. Where opera or baroque music are concerned, the word is usually used to imply those performances which seek to recreate the exact conditions (as if they can ever be known) of the original performance. Thus, we have renditions of Bach where considerable research has gone into the actual instruments used by ensembles with which Bach worked, and where necessary these are manufactured, and singers, such as Emma Kirkby, attempt to recreate the singing styles of the period. Jazz is not free from

¹ Some music, which might be thought of as 'directed music', indeed aims at specific responses. Examples would be music for advertisements, for films and patriotic music. There are some musical elements which, although probably culturally specific, can be fairly certain of the right kind of response. A good example is the use of the natural mediant (the 3rd measure of the major scale). In our culture, this has particular emotive force and is often pressed into use in this way. The 1939 (American authored) *There'll Always be an England*, for example, rests heavily on this device and, as van der Merwe points out, Verdi amongst others makes considerable use of the third (van der Merwe 1992:227). However, this is a two-edged sword; not only does over-use dull the edge, it can call forth responses of derision.

this tendency - the whole 'purist' party at the time of the British New Orleans jazz revival of the 1940s and early 50s (led by Ken Colyer) strove for an 'authentic' 'Storyville' (or what was thought to be pre-commercial) sound. The underlying principle, also identified in Stravinsky by Adorno, is that music, at its creation, is close to real or 'authentic' human expression. As new music is developed and leaves behind its roots, the humanity in it is progressively lost.

For popular music of the twentieth century, having many roots in black American folk styles, the issue of authenticity often takes on a race aspect. This was true of the New Orleans jazz revival, where, for example, the fact that (black) Bunk Johnson could not afford false teeth and thus had to give up trumpet playing prematurely was seen by British (white) purists as a 'symbol of white oppression' (Godbolt 1976:76). In the 1950s in the USA the whole issue was given a startling commercial edge by the phenomenon of white 'cover' versions of black hits. Shaw cites the *Billboard* 'Top Tunes tabulation' of mid-January 1955:

'Sincerely' at No.7 was credited to the McGuire Sisters, 'Ain't That a Shame' at no.10 to Pat Boone, 'Dance with Me, Henry' at no.13 to Georgia Gibbs, and 'Seventeen' at no. 18 to the Fontane Sisters. But 'Sincerely' was originally recorded by the Moonglows, 'Ain't That a Shame' by Fats Domino, 'Dance with Me, Henry' by Etta James and 'Seventeen' by Boyd Bennet. In each instance, the superior pressing, distribution, and promotion facilities provided by a major label - not to mention the reluctance of pop, white deejays to program black R & B disks - put the original recordings in a weak competitive position (Shaw 1978:124-5).

Arrangements cannot be copyrighted; in these cases, arrangers carefully copied the black original, but took away the 'raw and exuberant earthiness' (Shaw 1978:126). In 1955 middle American youth, although attracted to black music, was not yet ready for the real thing. Pat Boone's entire career started with cover versions, under the aegis of a producer named Randy Wood, who recognized the potential in black music but also its cultural strangeness:

The contrast between the white covers and the black originals was a matter of image as well as sound. Boone's publicity emphasized his status as a college student - Charles

Eugene Booth graduated from Columbia University magna cum laude - as a loving husband, happy father of four daughters, and God-fearing Christian. He always wore white sweaters and white buckskins in his TV appearances to emphasise the contrast with the tough rock 'n' roll singers in their black denims and motorcycle boots. The Fontane Sisters, who were as good looking as the Andrews Sisters, projected sedate images of decorum and respectability. And pretty Gale Storm looked so healthy and virginal, who could read sex into a song like "I hear you knocking", but you can't come in." (Shaw 1978:128).

According to Shaw, although LaVerne Baker started to agitate for arrangements to be copyrighted, the matter was solved simply - American youth simply stopped buying white covers in favour of black originals. This, of course, was one of the factors which enabled black music to become prominent².

Shaw's argument implies that the black originals had authenticity on their side - hence, 'raw and exuberant earthiness' - and that this eventually won through against the blatant commercialism of the white cover versions. In a parallel and almost simultaneous event, Sam Phillips, the owner of the *Sun* record label in Memphis, Tennessee, started to record white singers who were singing what amounted already to black music. Prominent amongst these were Elvis Presley and Carl Perkins. Phillips also recorded artists who had a more pronounced Country and Western influence such as Jerry Lee Lewis. But even in Lewis, black influences are obvious. The distinction between the *Sun* recordings and white cover versions is that the *Sun* recordings are not covers. They were originals, performed by artists who, although white, had absorbed the black folk music of the South, along with white styles, especially Gospel and Country and Western. In other words, these performers were already 'authentic'.

The centrality of this issue means that it will be revisited at various other places in this thesis, for example in Chapter 3 where a discussion of Frith's work is undertaken.

² As we shall see, the tension between the relatively affluent white American public, especially the young, and black popular culture (which depended on the white public for acceptability and commercial success) is a tension which underpins much of the twentieth-century history of popular music in the USA.

In order to interrogate this issue further, it is necessary to bear in mind that this debate is not specific to popular music or even to music in general - it is an issue for the sociology of art.

Issues of Intentionality

This question underpins much that is written about authenticity and art - it is necessary to confront it even if it is not accorded a central place in aesthetics. There are two main issues here, as has been alluded to above: first, is it possible to divine the intention in the mind of an artist; second, if so, how important is the intention of the creator of a work of art to its meaning?

In an unpublished essay on authenticity in opera, David Walsh (1994) holds that if the work of art is 'great', the intention of the creator is of minor importance. In fact, the work can be seen as great precisely because the intention of the artist is discounted (or discountable). For great art survives the chronology of its creation and lives because it can be interpreted by succeeding generations. This indeed is a measure of its greatness. This 'test of time', as Walsh puts it, is a tautology but is a commonly applied test of works of art from the past. It is implied, for example, in Adorno's treatment of Bach. A major drawback, apart from its tautological implications is, of course, that it is not possible to apply that test to modern works.

One possible way of redressing the imbalance in Walsh's aesthetic construction is to pick up another inference in his work, and that is the ability to which a work of art is open to interpretation. If the work is 'open', then it has the potential to be art; if a work is 'closed', then its potential is limited to the manner, time and place of its creation. And here, the intention of the author does become an important factor. One might posit political tracts as an example of this kind of writing. In order to make sense of political tracts of the past, it is necessary to reconstruct the conditions of the time of writing. The same is true of novellas, operettas and similar creations of the past. If they are not open to interpretation we need to know more about the environment in which they were created

so that we can make sense of them. I have used and shall use the expression 'directed music' above to refer to closed kinds of musical writing.

However, as Walsh points out, it is folly to throw the baby out with the bath water. The extent to which the urge to authenticity deepens our knowledge and appreciation of the work of art is beneficial; the danger is that it becomes an end in itself. This is indeed illustrated by the example of 'cover versions' of black music cited above. The use of authentic black arrangements allowed, in time, white audiences to become more appreciative of, and attuned to, the original music.

Wellek and Warren (1976) address this issue in a generic sense. There are, they argue, four main answers to the questions: What is the 'real' poem? Where does it exist? They use the term 'poem' to stand for any literary work and we might legitimately extend that and treat the term as referring to any art and in particular to music. The four 'traditional' answers to this question. are:

- The work of art is an artefact and exists only as the phenomenal object impinging on us. This would mean that a poem has a meaning only insofar as there are pages and those pages have marks upon them. The device of using the shape of the text on the page is quite common, respectable and effective. However, it is also not the norm. Wellek and Warren point out that this argument is obvious nonsense in that there exists a whole corpus of unwritten poems - an interesting parallel with folk music.
- The second of the answers is that the meaning of a poem resides in its performance. But just as there is a huge unwritten corpus, so there exists a vast array of works never sounded.
- The third answer is that the meaning of a poem is its existence as part of the mental processes of the reader. Wellek and Warren's riposte to this is that although a poem is understood through individual experience it is not in itself an individual experience. Readers understand poems partly through their own

backgrounds; hence, every poem has the potential for infinite interpretation. Wellek and Warren deplore the implication that a poem is non-existent unless experienced and that it is re-created in every experience.

- The final ‘traditional’ answer is that the meaning of the poem is the experience of the author. This could be one of two things:
 - The intention the author sought to embody at the time of writing;
 - ‘The total conscious and unconscious experience during the prolonged time of creation’ (Wellek and Warren 1976:148).

Concerning the first of these interpretations of the fourth answer, Wellek and Warren make the following observation:

The view that the genuine poem is to be found in the intentions of the author is widespread even though it is not always explicitly stated...[it] is at the bottom of many arguments in favour of specific interpretations (1976:148).

While intentions should be taken into account, they also deserve criticism, for the intentions of the author may be no more than pronouncements of plans and ideals. Had we been able to interview Shakespeare, argue Wellek and Warren, we should probably find his intentions in writing Hamlet unsatisfactory and we would still find meanings not in Shakespeare’s mind. If we seek to recreate the intentions of artists involved in great artistic movements, the evidence of a great plan is far from clear; Baroque artists and the Metaphysical poets had surprisingly little to say about their work.

Regarding the second of these interpretations, if the meaning of the poem is located in the total subjective experience of the author, this, argue Wellek and Warren, puts the meaning into an inaccessible realm - ‘a subjective experience which is already a thing of the past’ (1976:149).

Instead, using a version of the phenomenological reduction, Wellek and Warren argue that we can only behold the poem as a system of norms and values having its own being:

The work of art ... appears as an object of knowledge *sui generis* which has special ontological status. It is neither real (physical, like a statue) nor mental (psychological, like the experience of light or pain) nor ideal (like a triangle). They must be assumed to exist in a collective ideology, changing with it, accessible only through individual mental experiences, based on the sound-structure of its sentences (1976:156).

This clearly resonates with the way in which I have suggested we might conceive of Walsh's argument - an aesthetic test of the work of art, in the absence of a time factor, might be the degree of openness of the work. This is at odds with Adorno's formulation of musical aesthetics which is located not in openness but in progress - progress assessed and understood by the scholarly analyst. For Wellek and Warren, the work of art is a hybrid, and its facets can be read at many levels. However, as a work of art it is accessible **only** through mental experiences.

Intention, then, can be thought of as an inadequate tool to help in aesthetic judgements, but for Wellek and Warren as well as Walsh it has a place. The real concern for a sociology of art, however, is the interpretative work performed by members which allows of the possibility of the existence of the aesthetic object. For it is clear that only on works of art can such interpretations be made.

Manifestly, as with Adorno, much of the work in this area concerns 'high art' and we must constantly address the degree to which texts, ideas, methods, heuristics developed with the high art object in mind can be utilised in the analysis of popular music. Mellers used the pages of *Scrutiny* to outline an agenda for the study of popular music - or at least to 'weigh' the possibility (Mulhern 1979:54). The position of his predecessor at *Scrutiny*, Pattison, was that changes wrought by the Industrial Revolution had destroyed the organic links between musician and public:

Where once the soil of traditional popular song had lain, providing nourishment for a whole musical culture, "the forces of mass production, shoddy thinking and trivial living" had created a dust-bowl in which nothing could survive ... The "rhythms of the soil" had at

length been replaced by “the inanities of a jazz band or a cinema organ” as the measure of popular life (Mulhern 1979:52 and 53).

Mellers took over and developed this position, coming at last to the conclusion that those with concern for the musical taste of the populace should do ‘everything possible’ ‘... to raise the level of commercial music *for what it is and within its own sphere*’ (Mulhern 1979:54). Popular music should not, in this analysis, be seen as the same conceptual object as ‘serious’ music - the machine had interfered too much in the process of its conception.

Yet, as we can see through van der Merwe’s (1992:17) work, what is now considered popular music has common origins with ‘serious’ music. In this sense, it might be that Mellers considers commerce rather than the machine *per se* as the intrusive factor. For it is not so much industrialisation to which he makes implicit reference but rather to those social relations brought about by the logic of industrialisation. Mellers eschews Marxist versions of social history. For example, in his introduction to Ballantine’s book *Music and its Social Meanings* (c1984) he claims that Ballantine allows ‘doctrine to belie his exceptional intelligence’ when he claims that Sibelius’s silence after composing the Seventh Symphony is attributable to a feeling of self-betrayal after writing a piece for ‘a conspiracy of capitalist interests’. Instead, argues Mellers, what silenced Sibelius, and Beethoven before him, was the realization that a better world could only come about through the ‘re-creation of the ‘whole’ human being’ (Mellers 1984:xii). This preoccupation Mellers would call, along with Blake, ‘religious’. The implication is clear: if even our greatest composers are stumped when trying to lead us to a better world, then there must be something very wrong with this.

Mellers’ work on the Beatles, *The Twilight of the Gods* (1973), certainly bears out Mulhern’s charge of paternalism. And it also carries through Mellers’ programme of analyzing commercial popular music ‘within its own sphere’. Certainly, the kind of analytical techniques used by musicologists of ‘serious’ music, including Mellers, is entirely lacking. There are no extensive quotes of musical notation, no linking of motifs, no real analysis of form; what Mellers is concerned with is to show that, despite all their financial success, the Beatles still articulated an authentic ‘folk’ music. I shall argue later

that this is not simply mistaken but a serious misreading of the Beatles' music. Rather than roots in the teeming organic community of Liverpool, the Beatles can be 'more authentically' located in the popular music tradition of Britain in the twentieth century with its numerous influences and antecedents.

More important methodologically is the practical abandonment by Mellers of musicological methods in the analysis of popular music. Although he does identify certain musical elements in the Beatles' music as being of clear folk origin (such as vocal mellismata and 'false relations' or blue notes), this does not amount to analysis and on the whole we are left with opinion and assertion. In this, Mellers is no different to other writers on popular music, such as Hebdige and Frith, who openly acknowledge their ignorance of musical theory. In Mellers' case, the lack of musicological analysis is not out of ignorance but rather his arrogant opinion that popular (or commercial) music is not the same analytical object as 'serious' music.

In this assertion and practice, Mellers is wrong. It is possible to approach popular music using received musicological techniques. Some adjustment is required in order to be more true to the musical form itself. For example, where normally improvised music (such as jazz) is concerned it is questionable to transcribe the improvisations since this is being in some way unfaithful to the music. It is more fitting (for reasons given in the Introduction) to use a descendant of the Baroque figured bass³ - chord sequences⁴ - to show relations. Nonetheless, transcription has a place, having a relation to the analysis not dissimilar to the relation between quantitative and qualitative analysis in sociology - it can point the way to future studies by giving a fresh focus on the work.

³ **Figured Bass** (or *Through Bass*, or *Continuo*). The shorthand of harmony, a mere bass line with figures under or over it which enabled a keyboard accompanist (in the 17th and 18th cs.) to know from what series of chords he should extemporize his part (for in that period accompaniment to a vocal or violin solo, or to church music, &c., was rarely written in full. (Scholes 1974:199)

⁴ Examples of chord sequences have been given in the Preface and shall occur elsewhere. The major departure from the figured bass is that the chord is named by reference to its root note rather than the tonic. This gives more scope for improvisation since the chord sequence of underlying harmonies can now be stated without specific reference to the melody. In practice, however, the melody is often given - this is usually called 'top line and chords'.

The notion that popular and ‘serious’ musics are somehow distinct is one area of myth in Mellers. The other concerns issues of authenticity. By being close to their origins in the organic community, argues Mellers, the Beatles’ music has a timeless, ‘Edenic’ quality. This is the guarantee of its authenticity. Although the word is used here in a slightly different sense to the sense in which Walsh uses it above, the outcome of the misapprehension is the same. Where advocates of authenticity of opera run the risk of ‘taking up residence’ in the past, so Mellers, by insisting on locating the Beatles in a mythical organic community, has bypassed all popular music influences which are the ‘true’ origins (by which I mean origins which can be established and verified empirically through the musical text) of the Beatles’ music and firmly but mistakenly located in a past to which we have neither access nor means of verification. This is just the error pointed out by Wellek and Warren above where analysts locate the ‘meaning’ of a poem in the totality of the author’s life and experiences. It may be right and it may be wrong. Whatever it is, it is sited in a place whereof we cannot speak. Clearly, if the analyst is denied the use of techniques which could repair this deficiency (which Mellers has denied to himself) then authenticity must reside in myth and supposition (not to say superstition).

The search for the authentic essence of humanity in music has clear overtones with myth. We shall return to New Orleans jazz and Chicago later, but it is worth expanding on a few key points at this juncture. In the same way that Mellers idealises the Beatles’ origins, writers on jazz have mythologised the origins of the music, have fashioned a *Creation Myth*. I shall make reference to this below, but in summary the myth is this:

Jazz is a mixture of African and European musical influences in which the African predominates. This predominance, by those who were recently slaves, guarantees that in its status as a folk music jazz speaks the authentic voice of people who are closer to nature than the over-civilized Westerner. This is the warrant of its authenticity. Since it is closer to our real, authentic being, its association with sexual ‘low life’ is only to be expected and in some senses celebrated.

In most works on jazz, this view predominates. A reason given by Kenney (1993:25) for the popularity of New Orleans jazz amongst white Chicago residents in the 1920s is the belief that by mixing with ‘colored people generally’, they would gain release from the stress of twentieth century living.

This is a seductive thesis, providing an answer to a thorny issue. ‘Slumming’ did occur, and without the support and encouragement of influential whites, jazz would probably not have gained the exposure and popularity that it did. ‘Jungle’ music, with obvious racial overtones, was also popular among white audiences during the 20s and 30s, and was catered for by all famous jazz band leaders such as Duke Ellington (for example, *Jungle Nights in Harlem* recorded in June 1930) and Jelly Roll Morton (for example, *Jungle Blues*, recorded in June 1927). But I have been unable so far to verify Kenney’s assertion that it was a deep seated cultural event with semi-mystical implications. Certainly, his source, T J Jackson Lears (1981), does not seem to be saying quite the same thing, although it is certainly possible to extrapolate from him in the way apparently attempted by Kenney. Lears has been referring to the dangers attributed to overwork in late nineteenth century USA:

“Overpressure”, it seemed, bedevilled every arena of American life: schools, homes, and offices. Critics charged that middle-class children were physically stunted and intellectually precocious, that their mothers sacrificed health to social duty, and that their fathers were hopelessly tied to their desks. “Something must be done - this is universally admitted - to lessen the strain in modern life,” announced *Harper’s Monthly* in 1894.

By the 1880s, a wide variety of remedies for nervousness had begun to appear. Many advisors simply exhorted Americans to cultivate relaxation and repose, to learn from “Oriental people, the inhabitants of the tropics, and the colored people generally.” Americans had had enough moral and intellectual strenuousness; they needed to husband their psychic resources (Lears 1981:52).

While it is clearly possible to extrapolate from this passage and infer an effect in Chicago in the 1920s, this must be an inference - something overlooked by Kenney. Nonetheless, as we shall see, the resonances between Kenney’s view and the noble savage myth provides strong circumstantial evidence for his thesis.

In a work first published in 1929, and thus contemporaneous with the development of jazz in Chicago - the so-called 'jazz age' - Zorbaugh remarks of Chicago night life in 'Little Hell', a deprived area of Chicago:

At night North Clark Street is a street of bright lights, cabareting, drinking, gambling and vice. There is a colorful night life in which bohemia and the underworld may meet with the curiosity seeker and slumming parties from the world of fashion (Zorbaugh 1965:115).

It is difficult to escape the conclusion that Zorbaugh himself was caught up in the myth of Chicago even in 1929; the tenor of this quote is very reminiscent of the song *42nd Street*, written only a few years later in 1933. The reference to the seeking of curiosity and slumming is far from the impression given by Kenney of the renewal of life through contact with blacks. As we shall see, Kenney ascribes, at least in part, the interest of white Chicago citizens in jazz to a desire to have authentic human existence (as exemplified in black people) rub off on to them.

Morris writes, concerning the same phenomenon in Chicago:

...It was only after the Jews and Italians started protecting these niteries that their value improved as investments. Before the [First World] war it was highly unlikely that clubs of this calibre would derive much income from the white slummers drawn like moths to light before the specter (*sic*) of black men dancing with white women (Morris, 1980:60).

Contrary to this, Kenney implies that another part of the jazz myth, the association with organised crime, should be discounted. The real reason for the existence of jazz in Chicago, he argues, was its audience of recent migrants from the South⁵.

⁵ Goodwin cites two main reasons for the mass migration, mainly to Chicago, which occurred during and soon after the First World War: sentimental and economic. By sentimental is meant 'racial violence and the social outrages endured by Southern Black Americans, and their fears and feelings of the evils of lynching, Jim Crow facilities, unsatisfactory crop settlements, and the lack of legal redress in the courts...The economic causation for migrating ... centered around the infestation by the boll weevil of the cotton crops, land erosion brought on by floods and drought, decline of cotton prices, and the depression of 1920-21.' (Goodwin 1990:18). The depression of the 1930s brought this migration to an end, although the demands of munitions factories during the Second World War caused its renewal.

Both these findings are dismissed in a work predating Kenney's book by some years (Morris 1980). Morris's hypothesis is that in both New Orleans and Chicago the presence and influence of Italian and Jewish immigrants has been unrecognised. These groups shared marginal status along with African Americans:

By 1880 the French Quarter was an immense eyesore, far removed from what wealthy bohemians would make of it after 1928. Arnold Genthe's photographs of this area, taken in 1926, bear witness to a dismal landscape presided over by equally pathetic-looking inhabitants. Kendall called it an "Italian preserve" (Morris 1980:85)

Pestilence was rife and the air was foul:

Little wonder that the highest mortality rate in the entire Delta Basin was located in the French Quarter. Critics knew where to apportion blame:

The worst part of this quarter is inhabited by the lower-class Sicilians, the Mafia, and Negroes, an area of gin, cheap wine and dope ... There were scenes that duplicated Naples and Palermo - long lines of family wash hanging out on once-lovely iron lacework balconies ... half-naked children ... old, dark, fat men and women sleeping on their stoops ... the odor of garlic and of rotten fruit everywhere.' (Morris 1980:85, quoting from Robert Tallant, *The Romantic New Orleansians* (New York 1950, pp 308-309).

This realism can be contrasted with a mythic account:

Some of the old men who watched the first awkward and charming steps of the infant jazz are still alive. In their recollections, in their story of the hot music of New Orleans we may come close to the magic and mystery of cultural flowering (Lomax 1956:xvi).

Lomax's work has gone into several reprints since its first publication, most recently in 1992, while contemporary non-romantic accounts of New Orleans in particular are not at all well known. Clearly, the creation myth has more appeal than reality. In the same way, Mellers peddled the myth of Liverpool in the 1950s and 60s as a teeming organic community, ignoring the poverty and unemployment which was the reality. There are clear parallels between New Orleans and Liverpool in their myths.

Italian connections are almost ignored in most works on jazz, including the most scholarly, despite the fact that early white players with Italian names became famous early on (such as Nick LaRocca, Leon Ropollo and Tony Sbarbaro). This omission is repaired in Morris's work who gives a list (in his Appendix D) of Italian Jazz Musicians in the early period in New Orleans. This long list is not exhaustive, and of its members, 'None was born after 1914, most were reared in the French Quarter/Storyville district, and each played either before or during prohibition' (Morris 1980:217).

Morris's Appendix C lists Italian Jazz Clubs in New Orleans (Circa 1905). This year is often thought to be in the hey-day of jazz in New Orleans. Most of the names in this list frequently appear in accounts of early jazz, but the implications are rarely explained in the way that Morris explains them here. *Matranga's*, the venue for Louis Armstrong's first local engagement, is described as a 'popular and lively spot for gangsters', while *Spano's*, wistfully recalled by Jelly Roll Morton in 1938, was a 'bouncy spot patronized by the mobs'. *Lala's Big 25* is said to have been 'well patronized by the underworld' and so on (Morris 1980:216).

Morris comments that the mob connection with jazz in New Orleans and Chicago has been underplayed for a number of reasons, mainly the negative image of the gangsters portrayed in Hollywood films from the 1920s on and a general sense of fear of the past and its threat to respectability. Certainly, it puts Morton's reticence to discuss delicate issues in 1938 (by then a committed Roman Catholic) into perspective. Things had been different in Chicago in the 1920s:

The final category, of musicians-turned-racketeers, is best illustrated by Jelly Roll Morton. As clever a racketeer as he was talented a pianist, Morton assiduously competed with local mobs in their own fields of endeavor. Some of his trades, like narcotics peddling and an occasional street hustling, they countenanced. But Morton's energetic plans for a gambling casino and ornate bordello met with less enthusiasm and the crackdown was swift and resolute. With diamond-studded teeth, well tailored and stylish clothes, Morton's self-advertising brought an equal amount of attention and rebuke:

Jelly came on the Eastern scene dressed like an old-fashioned pimp ... with spats, Stetson, diamonds and gold sock supporters. His independent and garrulous ways

antagonized many, including gangsters influential on the New York and Chicago pop scene. [Quoted from an RCA record sleeve]

Allsop commented about the typical mob reaction which knocked the pianist off his perch:

The mobs were too fond of his music to kill him but let the word out that it was unhealthy for other musicians to play with him (Morris 1980:156).

Of the attraction of the Chicago South Side cabarets (and later New York spots such as the *Cotton Club*), Morris argues that the gangsters turned the unspeakable squalor of an underworld dominated by Irish immigrants (and catering to a desire for drink and gambling) into cabarets where women were welcomed. The clubs were 'congenial night spots that featured captivating music for both sexes, all races and a younger crowd - amidst sensual motifs that matured American entertainment overnight' (Morris 1980:12). In other words, it was fun and pleasure that were the attractions, not a rather serious desire for spiritual regeneration, as Kenny would have it.

The well-springs of jazz, then, did not flood American popular music with authenticity and spontaneity - at least, not only those. If Morris's thesis is correct, if only in part, jazz players were willingly mixed in with organized crime and the entertainment industry from the start. If this is a disappointment to those, like Lomax and Mellers, who have a preconceived dream as to the nature of popular music, then at least it has the ring of truth.

In later chapters of this thesis the attempt will be made to interrogate jazz and other popular music works in an attempt to answer issues of intentionality amongst others from within the work of art itself. Specifically, too, I shall address the issue of the 'meaning' of a piece of jazz.

It is premature to apply Walsh's criterion of the 'test of time' as a sign that some jazz is 'great art', but it might be possible to apply the corollary, the extent to which a work is open - open to interpretation.



I shall show that one of Morton's extended works, *Pep*, is indeed open to interpretation, and not simply on the basis that it is partly improvised. The majority of Morton's works can be analysed in a similar way and it might be because of an innate sense of the interaction between the listener and the performer that Morton is now accorded central status in accounts of jazz. Whether we realise it or not, while we are listening we are engaged in interpretation.

In the same way, but with the opposite result, I have analysed some Cole Porter pieces from the film *High Society*. These proved to be closed texts - they are quite clearly directed to a particular social moment and this can also be shown by analysis. In this sense, intentionality, whether consciously conceived or not, is a major issue. It is permissible to remark that Porter's intention can be extracted from the music, and admired in the detached way we might admire an artefact from the past. Porter was outstanding in his use of popular music's genres and it is this which makes him, literally, admirable. But his texts are closed texts; they speak of a witty yet ultimately despairing cynicism of society, and do not infer an engagement with society or attempt to explore its conceptual possibilities. While they deny the *value* of social life in post World War One USA they do so from a position which is deeply entrenched inside it. In this sense they deny themselves, and that is what makes them closed. It is his artfulness which engages us, not his art.

Morton, however, engages us on a far deeper level. Although it is possible to isolate homologies in his work, it is our interpretative function which marks the work as art. With displaced rhythms and harmonies, jazz recalls for us our own precarious and unpredictable being in the twentieth century; it does not, necessarily, point us to the font of human life itself.

This thesis, consistent with its development in the clubs and cabarets of Italian mobsters, again runs counter to the jazz myths of creation and noble savage:

The essence of jazz encompasses movement, life, feeling, expressiveness. The degree to which it sustains and effectively projects those characteristics is the measure of the musician's artistic integrity and accomplishment. When the artist cultivates the talents

which he himself intuitively perceives, when he honestly overcomes the pull of his ego and lives for his art rather than personal applause, then he is free to express what is in him and absorb the necessary techniques and knowledge for such expression (Miller and Venables 1947:73)

The word 'absorb' is another word which is common in the literature on popular and folk music; but real world musicians do not absorb techniques and knowledge - they have to be learned.

Miller (the author of the piece) realises that this leaves the musician with a problem: how to earn money. His answer to this is that it is the discerning jazz fan's responsibility to ensure that the authentic jazzman is kept in employment.

As with most myths, those connoting authenticity and intentionality in popular music express some underlying truth. The problem comes when, as with the striving for authenticity in opera, the two related concepts are adopted as practical ends in themselves. Popular music, as with any other art, is a real-world activity. Just as Bach was sponsored by Junkers and other robber barons of seventeenth-century Germany, so King Oliver and Duke Ellington obeyed the mobsters of 1920s USA. Although art forms express truths, their creators still have to eat. The intrusion of the real world into myth cannot happen without some pain and some reevaluation of cherished beliefs. Indeed, the myth may be so powerful as to resist change.

Given the nature of our society it is a fact that at the most mundane level one intention of the artist must be to produce a saleable product, although this thesis would not be attractive in all circles. But it can be repaired by the fact that great art can, indeed, be recognised by its very openness at the level of analysis even if it is not mature enough to have had a chance to stand the 'test of time'.

Homology

It is quite consistent with the confusion often felt where the relations of music to society are concerned that issues of homology are not well treated in the literature. There is an

impression, not normally made explicit, that music must, in some way, be 'saying something' about the socio-cultural environment from which it sprang. There is even an implicit consensus of opinion on this point, unsurprisingly so since music is an art form and art is usually treated in this way. But music's position is made more complex by its lack of phenomenal referent. While a poem, for example, can be made available for textual analysis even if it is not intended as mimesis (for example, T S Eliot's *The Wasteland*), this approach is not available for music. But this is only a problem if we make the assumption that the apparent lack of immediate reference to the phenomenal world is important. The very difficulty of analysing all works of art, poetry, painting, dance and so on if it shows anything at all, demonstrates that music's opaqueness is one of degree, not of kind. Homologies can be inferred from music, but to do so in a meaningful way requires method, not impression or opinion. As will be shown in the next Chapter, the latter has tended to be the norm where popular music is concerned.

An important consideration in this connection is the extent to which popular music can be considered 'art'. We might have no qualms in considering the art of the elite - high art - in special, almost reverential terms, but popular music is popular precisely because it is **not** the art of the elite. One problem is that popular music is not an homogenous genre; as Frith and Horne have written:

The peculiarity of jazz in Britain is that something understood as a folk form, live music for dancing and community entertainment, became a recording cult, music for collectors, for an elite of jazz students, critics and musicologists and discographers. Solemnity not excitement defined true jazz fans, who self-consciously distanced themselves from the general public and were suspicious when anyone like Louis Armstrong became popular (Frith and Horne 1989:75)

Middleton (1986) makes the point that while all music relies to some extent on repetition, popular music makes conspicuous use of repeated 'musicemes' - minimal units of musical expression (by analogy with phonemes) - and that this is seen by Adorno-influenced critics as demonstrating capitalist social control over popular music, obliterating any possibility of art in it.

In this connection, too, Williams's concept of *structures of feeling* is important. In an unpublished paper, Filmer (1995) describes in detail the significance of the concept for the analyst. Filmer shows how the notion developed in Williams's work over time and how it was necessary for Williams to develop the concept as a heuristic device to explain the sense of the ineffable demonstrated in the structure of artistic work usually located in cultural margins. Filmer describes this as a sense of 'beyondness', having two moments: otherness, which through exclusion renders experience unarticulated; and possibility, where the future is sensed as a change to present social relations. Williams himself (1977) later described the concept in this way:

...structures of feeling can be defined as social experiences *in solution*, as distinct from other semantic formations which have been *precipitated* and are more evidently and more immediately available (1977:133-4)

Williams goes on to state that most art relates to 'already manifest social relations' and that the concept of structures of feeling properly relates to emergent social structures. As Filmer makes clear, Williams's prime concern is literature, where relative freedom from ideology is possible. It is clear, however, that music shares the possibility of at least the same freedom from ideology and that it is capable, almost routinely, of expressing the ineffable. Moreover, as shall be shown (Chapters 4, 5 and 6), *structure* is central to a discussion of music. But while it is conceivable that a structure such as the tone row, as found in European art music of the twentieth century, could be described as a structure of feeling, can the same be true of popular music, with its obvious repetition at various levels? Does popular music have the capacity for freedom from ideology? Part of this thesis is concerned with the fact that 'open' popular music texts allow interpretation in terms of homologies; this puts them in line with Williams's remarks about 'other semantic formations which have been *precipitated* and are more evidently and more immediately available'. As Filmer makes clear, the term 'semantic formations' is crucial. It is, indeed, conventions in art and literature, but are more than that. They are:

verbal linguistic utterances and the related paralinguistic sounds and movement upon which both continue to depend...Semantic figures are real but barely tangible. They carry, with an appropriate conceptual refinement, the delicacy of 'the least tangible parts of our

activity'...They are also features of the inflexion and timbre of ordinary speech which carries what is known and need not be articulated more elaborately (Filmer 1995:5).

Semantic figures are also carried in 'style', which Williams characterises as a generational difference (Filmer 1995:5), a definition which would later generate considerable discussion. It is here, perhaps, that popular music can be rescued from its innate conservatism. Form in popular music, described by van der Merwe (1992) in its most general sense as *matrices*, is tenacious. Yet within these forms there is considerable freedom for the artist at the level of semantic figures. In jazz, for example, form is secondary to improvisation and it is here that structures of feeling can become evident. This argument is briefly developed in Chapter 4 in relation to Jelly Roll Morton.

Myth

Myth and music are clearly related categories. Not only, as we have seen above, do normally sober writers such as Mellers become entranced by the connection between the two, there are clearly other senses in which, for example, both phenomena work in allegorical or metaphorical ways to define experience and reality. This thesis, working with popular music, must often touch on these matters, for authenticity and myth are often invoked jointly. An interesting argument in this connection is Levi-Strauss's 'Overture' to *The Raw and the Cooked*.

Levi-Strauss underlines the close connection between myth and music throughout this work. It is dedicated 'To Music' and throughout Section titles refer, directly or indirectly, to music. For example, Part Five is headed 'Rustic Symphony in Three Movements', while Part Four is entitled 'Well-Tempered Astronomy', an allusion to J S Bach's *Well-Tempered Clavier*⁶. The centrality of music to Levi-Strauss is well outlined by Leach:

⁶ These allusions occur in various places in Levi-Strauss's work. Leach remarks:

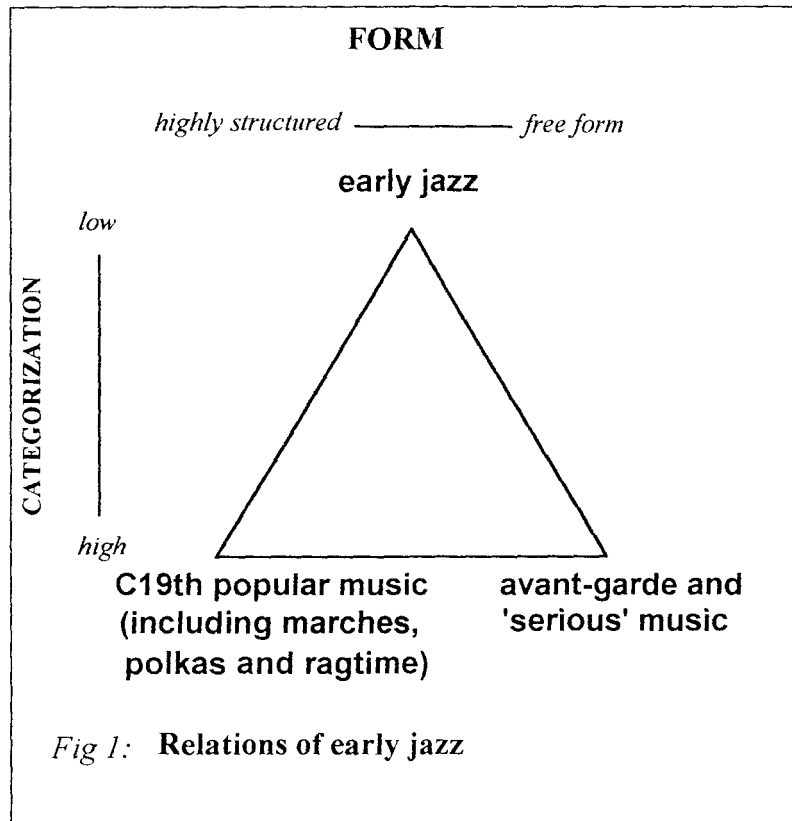
Incidentally the whole corpus of Levi-Strauss' writings is packed with oblique references and puns of this kind which recall Verlaine's Symbolist formula "*pas de couleur, rien que la nuance*" ("no colour, nothing but nuance). Davy ... has remarked that the symbolist poets "insisted that the function of poetic language and particularly of images was not to illustrate ideas but to embody an otherwise indefinable experience". Readers who find the precise meaning of Levi-Strauss' prose persistently elusive should remember this part of his literary background (1978:16).

For Levi-Strauss, music is something of a test case. Music is of human origin, not animal origin; it is a part of Culture not Nature; yet it is not part of a system of exchange in the same sense that spoken language is a system of exchange; the 'meaning' of music cannot be reduced to a model or diagram in the way the 'meaning' of a kinship system or a set of myths may be reduced (1973:115)

Levi-Strauss's quest is to establish facts which are universally true of the human mind. The underlying paradox is that facts which are universally true must be found universally and, hence, are *natural*; yet what distinguishes humans from other parts of creation is the ability to create, define and sustain *culture*. Thus, humanity is non-natural. This paradox is mediated, for Levi-Strauss, and for Structuralism in general, by the fact that human brains search for meaning in nature by looking for binary pairs - raw/cooked, naked/clothed, red/green and so on - and then, having set up this opposition, develop a number of intermediate positions which have a *cultural* rather than a *natural* significance. It is Levi-Strauss's pursuit to look for these cultural mediations at the lowest possible level of significance, the sign. It is certainly possible to consider music in this way.

Figure 1 is a structuralist diagram, which attempts to outline some of the ways in which we make sense of early jazz when we hear it. In this case, the music has features in it which call to mind popular music of the nineteenth century but it also has advanced features which suggest *avant-garde* and other subsequent developments. These can be thought of as standing for culture - highly structured music, obviously composed with an end in view - and nature, where the *avant garde*, whether jazz or otherwise, of this century has little obvious structure and, in its apparently random noise (or so it sometimes seems), resembles noise in nature. At the same time, our desire to put order on things which we perceive is offended by early jazz; for it both respects musical conventions (of harmony, rhythm and so on) while at the same time flouting them (with 'blue notes', cross rhythms and other devices). This ambiguous quality of early jazz means that it is difficult to categorise, while earlier popular music and subsequent musical developments do not display such clear ambiguity⁷. The ambiguous status of powerful musical idioms - like early jazz or Baroque - clearly also allows myths to arise about them, especially in

⁷ This quality of early jazz probably accounts for the confusion felt by many writers in approaching it. Adorno, for example, clearly equates the word 'jazz' with popular music.



trying to locate their origins. Despite the fact that, as Leach remarks, ‘The linguistic model which Levi-Strauss employs is now largely out of date’ (1978:112), it still has considerable powers of explanation and elucidation. It is, now, worth addressing the important chapter ‘Overture’ to test it against the remarks made above concerning issues of myth and authenticity, always bearing in mind that Levi-Strauss seeks to identify homologies between myth and music.

Levi-Strauss’s aim, to repeat, is to identify human thought processes at the deepest level of the sign:

Starting with ethnographic experience, I have always aimed at drawing up an inventory of mental patterns, to reduce apparently arbitrary data to some kind of order, and to attain a level at which a kind of necessity becomes apparent, underlying the illusions of liberty. In *Les Structures*, behind what seemed to be the superficial contingency and incoherent diversity of the laws governing marriage, I discerned a small number of simple principles, thanks to which a very complex mass of customs and practices, at first sight absurd (and generally held to be so), could be reduced to a meaningful system (1969:10).

But the system uncovered by Levi-Strauss, although operating in the minds of human beings, could have derived from pre-existing institutional structures; mind might not be *a priori*. However, mythology, having no ‘practical function’, and not linked to any other kind of reality is likely to be ‘more decisive’ (1969:10). For if it can be shown that even where myth is concerned mind is still subject to laws, it must be so at all times:

And so, if it were possible to prove in this instance, too, that the apparent arbitrariness of the mind, its supposedly spontaneous flow of inspiration, and its seemingly uncontrolled inventiveness imply the existence of laws operating at a deeper level, we would inevitably be forced to conclude that when the mind is left to commune with itself and no longer has to come to terms with objects, it is in a sense reduced to imitating itself as object; and that since the laws governing its operations are not fundamentally different from those it exhibits in its other functions, it shows itself to be of the nature of a thing among things. The argument need not be carried to this point, since it is enough to establish the conviction that if the human mind appears determined even in the realm of mythology, *a fortiori* it must also be determined in all spheres of activity (1969:10).

Having stated his objective for working with myth, Levi-Strauss goes on to note that the issue of music seemed ineluctably to assert itself, first in the sense that the composition of the book resembled a musical composition, but second, and more fundamentally, in the ‘surprising affinity’ between music and myths. Richard Wagner had already discovered that the structure of myths could be revealed through a musical score (1969:15). This is not to say that Levi-Strauss should abandon his project, however; it is not that music expresses myth but that they both, as languages which can ‘transcend articulate expression’, share a common property of requiring a temporal dimension in which to unfold. But this relationship with time is not a simple one, for the listener to music apprehends it not in chronological time, but at a deeper level, the ‘physiological time’ of the listener. Although physiological time is diachronic, music acts on it in such a way that, during the listening, it becomes synchronic. Therefore, when we listen to music we ‘enter a kind of immortality’ (1969:16). Myth acts in a similar way such that both are ‘instruments for the obliteration of time’ (1969:16). As Leach remarks, quoted above, music is something of a test case for Levi-Strauss, since it is obviously understood by listeners and yet cannot be translated, or reduced to a diagram:

But since music is a language with some meaning at least for the immense majority of mankind, although only a tiny minority of people are capable of formulating a meaning in it, and since it is the only language with the contradictory attributes of being at once intelligible and untranslatable, the musical creator is a being comparable to the gods, and music itself the supreme mystery of the science of man, a mystery that all the various disciplines come up against and which holds the key to their progress (1969:18).

This hyperbolic sentence contains a paradox which Levi-Strauss acknowledges. For music, at least as he implicitly formulates it, arises in the minds of a few individuals and yet is understood by many: 'we do not understand the difference between the very few minds that secrete music and the vast numbers in which the phenomenon does not take place, although they are usually sensitive to music' (1969:18). Levi-Strauss has here clearly overlooked the issue, of considerable importance to the study of popular music, that folk music and related forms are likewise anonymous in their origins. But for Levi-Strauss the paradox is that listeners to music decide on its meaning themselves, yet cannot themselves create it. Myth and music, in this sense, stand in opposition to speech where the originator of the message decides its meaning:

...the myth and the musical work are like conductors of an orchestra, whose audience becomes the silent performers.

If it is now asked where the real centre of the work is to be found, the answer is that this is impossible to determine. Music and mythology bring man face to face with potential objects of which only the shadows are actualized, with conscious approximations (a musical score and a myth cannot be more) of inevitably unconscious truths, which follow from them (1969:17-18).

Underlying Levi-Strauss's writing is the notion that the analysis of music, like the analysis of myths, will ultimately reveal great truths about humanity and, in particular, the way in which human beings think. But there is nothing immanent in music to suggest that all music might function in this way. It is always possible that it is the case, but to state it as fact is actually a matter of opinion. Clearly, the issue of non-referential communication is an important one for music and if we do not address it we do not have a sociology of music; yet to posit the answer before beginning the research is surely to influence the outcome. It is impossible to argue seriously with Levi-Strauss's description

of the paradoxical nature of our perception of music ('silent performers'), and yet it does not necessarily follow that the 'potential objects' which we perceive are metaphors for 'inevitably unconscious truths'. It might be, indeed, that the meaning of a piece of music is, at least partly, contingent upon a number of socio-cultural factors⁸. There is no reason, indeed, why it should not be that music does express a universal truth which is that it is used to express socio-cultural truths the world over. Music and myth are clearly linked, in a number of intricate ways and, as will become clear above, it is important to isolate the myth so that we can better understand the music. For Levi-Strauss, the link is one way, in that music is expressing the structure of myth, or that both operate in similar ways of orienting our minds to the world. And yet, in popular music it is more common to find myths clustering around music, although there is no doubt that popular music can itself express myths. This is also found in classical music; as McClary states, Bach was held to be above time or place, that he was 'divinely inspired' and that Bach's music 'works in accordance with perfect, universal order and truth' (McClary 1992:14). This is as much a myth as any expressed by the Bororo or those surrounding the Beatles. It also is reminiscent of Levi-Strauss, where he writes of musical creators as 'gods' (1969:18), or of his 'reverence, from childhood on, for "that God, Richard Wagner"' (1969:15). Clearly, Levi-Strauss is as much caught up with one of the myths of music as McClary's teachers, but either unreflectingly or highly ironically.

⁸ Levi-Strauss's tendency to state his observations and discoveries as dogma is noted by Leach:

Of course there must be a sense in which Levi-Strauss is right and yet reductionism of this degree of comprehensiveness [i.e., to universal characteristics of human thought] seems to defeat its own ends. When, in the early days of psycho-analysis, the orthodox Freudians asserted as dogma the universality of the Oedipus complex the Oedipus Complex, as such, became devoid of all analytical value. All evidence no matter how contradictory it might appear was forced into the pre-determined mould. And the same kind of thing seems to be happening to Levi-Strauss. His writings display an increasing tendency to assert *as dogma* that his discoveries relate to facts which are *universal* characteristics of the unconscious process of human thought ... For example, a footnote to *Mythologiques III* reports on a private communication which the author had received from the distinguished Colombian ethnographer G. Reichel Dolmatoff relating to a Choco myth which uses wild honey as a metaphor for human sperm. Since the "philosophy of honey" which Levi-Strauss has painfully extracted from the piled up detail of *Mythologiques II* is "inspired by the analogy between this natural product and menstrual blood" one might have expected that Levi-Strauss would be somewhat disconcerted, but the contrary is the case:

"This remarkable inversion of a system which we have revealed as occurring in a vast territory stretching from Venezuela to Paraguay does not contradict our interpretation but enriches it by a supplementary dimension ..."

But if "supplementary dimensions" can be added to meet every contrary case then the main theory can never be put to a critical test at all (1978:116-117).

Certainly, the chapters which follow will reveal evidence of my own unconscious relations to myth in regard to music. But what I shall also demonstrate is that it is possible, by attending to the text, to go beyond myth, or at least behind it, and let the music itself speak.

Levi-Strauss also works with an idealized conception of music in which it emerges only from 'gods' like Wagner. Most of the world's music is not like that, however, and, in the sense in which myths are said by Levi-Strauss to be anonymous, is without author. Even Wagner's music does not emerge from a cultural milieu inhabited only by Wagner, and the extent to which his music defers to other music is the extent to which *he* is not its sole author. This much, too, is cultural and the music reflects that powerfully; if it is possible to remove from music sufficient cultural layers that we are able to observe universal truths, it is unlikely that much beyond pitch and timbre would remain; all other variables in music are contingent upon the culture in which they emerge.

A further important link tying Levi-Strauss into the popular music of the twentieth century is through his intellectual links with Rousseau:

Like Rousseau, Levi-Strauss's search is not after all for men, whom he doesn't much care for, but for Man, with whom he is enthralled. It is, as much in *Le Pensée Sauvage* as in *Tristes Tropiques*, the jewel in the lotus he is after. The "unshakeable basis of human society" is not really social at all but psychological - a rational, universal, eternal, and thus (in the great tradition of French moralism) virtuous mind.

Rousseau ("of all the *philosophes* the nearest to being an anthropologist") demonstrates the method by which the paradox of the anthropological traveler - who comes either too late to find savagery or too early to appreciate it - can at last be solved. We must, as he did, develop the ability to penetrate the savage mind by employing (to provide Levi-Strauss with what he perhaps least needs, another *expression*) what might be called epistemological empathy. The bridge between our world and that of our subjects (extinct, opaque, or merely tattered) lies not in personal confrontation - which, so far as it occurs, corrupts both them and us. It lies in a kind of experimental mind reading ... One understands the thought of savages neither by mere introspection nor by mere observation, but by attempting to think as they think and with their materials...

The philosophical conclusions which for Levi-Strauss follow from this postulate - that savages can only be understood by reenacting their thought processes with the debris of their cultures - add up, in turn, to a technically reconditioned version of Rousseauian moralism (Geertz 1993:357).

Rousseau's noble savage was not a primitive piece of nature, but was of the neolithic age - while still retaining primitive thought modes, civilised patterns of thought had not yet taken over. In this *societe naissante*, arts constituting the basis of society - 'animal husbandry, pottery, weaving, food conservation and preparation and so on' had developed and 'which still provide the foundations for our existence' (Geertz 1991:357-8).

It would have been better for man had he kept to this "middle ground between the indolence of our primitive state and the questing activity to which we are prompted by our *amour propre*" - instead of abandoning it, by some unhappy chance, for the restless ambitiousness, the pride and egoism, of mechanical civilization (Geertz 1991:358)

Geertz's point is that this is essentially Levi-Strauss's position. It is also, partly through the influence of Rousseau on American thought in the nineteenth century, the kind of impulse which led, at least in part, to the elevation of black culture to a position of honour in the 1920s and 30s in the USA. By immersing itself in this culture, some of the purity of blacks, largely untouched by modern impurities, would rub off on the white bourgeoisie. This is the view propounded by Kenney below.

The substantive studies which follow do not claim to have universal implications except, as I have remarked, that music the world over is used as a form of communication at a deep level. Instead, the aim is to come to better understanding of the music through the text itself, although presented in a different form. If, by allowing it to speak we learn of socially and culturally contingent homologies, that at least allows some progress which is not reliant on a pre-given schema.

The issue is, at least partly, whether music mediates between deep issues in the human psyche, revealed by myth, or if myths arise out of a way of rationalizing music. Put another way, is music a functionally necessary way of allowing humans to come to terms with a world via an implied myth, or do myths come about because music itself is

unknowable? This study of popular music reveals a complicated structure of myth. Levi-Strauss's position, described above, addresses the possibility that music will uncover great truths about humanity; in this sense the myths he seeks to identify can be called originary. But mediating between these originary myths and the sensible - the actual sounds impinging on us - is another level of myths about the relation of music to society. It is this level which is at the mercy of manipulators of music and is probably the level addressed by Barthes in *Mythologies*. As Culler writes, for Barthes at this time ' "myth" means a delusion to be exposed' (Culler 1983:35). While this cannot be denied in the case of music - it explains the use of music in television advertising, for example, and is clearly invoked in 'directed' texts, such as the film *High Society* - it is quite possible that the invocation of myth through music is neutral and, in a sense, natural. Having no concrete real world referent, we invent one. Through a complicated process, culturally mediated, what was initially sound without meaning becomes meaningful and, moreover, contains what Derrida calls 'traces' - it is as if, when we hear a piece of music for the first time, we had known it for ever. We are able to categorise it, love it, hate it, assign it a history and a future, and this we do through its invocation of myth. Although the number of myths in the sphere of popular music is large, they can be organized for the purposes of this thesis into four major myths:

- *The Creation Myth* - This is found not only in works on early jazz, but also in Mellers' work on the Beatles and in ideas of the origin of rock and roll (as invoked, for example in the film *High Society* and with the 'cover versions' phenomenon described above).
- *The Noble Savage Myth* - This is clearly invoked in most works on early jazz, including Kenney's work described above. In Chicago during the 1920s, and later in New York and, to a lesser extent and with a different emphasis in London, this myth drove the 'jazz age'. Part of its discourse was the 'jungle music' vogue. In a rather different form of the myth we can see this myth at work in Mellers' writing on the Beatles and their 'Edenic' qualities. There was very clearly an overtone of this myth in the treatment of Louis Armstrong as a popular entertainer, especially during the 1930s. The myth invokes Rousseau and the enlightenment view that

society had perverted natural man and that the 'noble savage' lives harmoniously with nature and is free from the vices of modern man - selfishness, jealousy and possessiveness. This view was prevalent in the United States at the turn of the twentieth century, according to Lears (1981).

- *The Barbarian Threat Myth* - Adorno invokes this myth in his essay on jazz, with the admixture of capitalist exploitation. In this case, moreover, the myth is amplified by the clear equation of barbarism with authoritarianism. This myth underpins much of the social function of the film *High Society*. It is also probably a part of Mellers' patronising attitude towards popular music - bring it down to size in its own sphere and do not treat it as if it were the same conceptual object as 'serious' music - and also is found in the comment on the painting in the *Melody Maker* (see below page 232fn).
- *The Rural Myth* - this appears in various guises. The noble savage myth is usually implicated here. In jazz, it manifests itself mainly in the appeal to 'Dear Old Southland' (the title of Louis Armstrong's signature tune for many years), which includes, paradoxically, issues to do with New Orleans. A city can be included in this because, like music, myths have no phenomenal referent; their 'meaning' is purely symbolic. There is probably a component of the rural myth in Meller's view of Liverpool.

While analytically these are discrete, they present themselves in intricately related forms. Thus, for example, although it is possible and important to isolate a 'creation myth', in practice this myth is not found without some component of the 'noble savage' myth. Again, the 'noble savage' myth is not usually found without an admixture of the 'barbarian threat' myth.

It is likely that similar myths will be found in classical music, and sometimes in explicit forms (as with Wagner). However, the social location of popular music (and folk music) gives its myths a particular slant which ties it very directly to the music itself. It is less likely that popular music will explicitly invoke myths (although folk music does).

It is at the level of myth that we respond to music, at least in part. The object of this thesis is mainly to look beneath those myths and to note instead the social forces at work in the music through a study of its observable and objective features. The myth has taken over in many works in the area of popular music, for example in Hebdige's work on reggae. But it is not only at these explicit levels that myth is elevated to fact; Adorno in his study on jazz has allowed myth to take the place of genuine investigation by implication and Lomax, despite having first hand empirical evidence to hand, adds a component of rhetoric, as shall be shown.

In these myths is an implicit wish to capture the past, thought to be in principle more authentic and human. The underlying preconception is that the past has more 'honour' than the present⁹.

⁹ In a similar and entirely consistent way, Chaney shows how we use the word 'honour' to evoke more respectable times:

It seems that part of the burden of characterizing a political leader as honourable is that he was exceptional (the choice of gender is deliberate) - exceptional in that there was believed to be a consistency between his public beliefs and how he behaved and thought in private, and because a common theme of comments in public discourse recently has been that the public are cynically contemptuous of politicians and the consistency of their beliefs and actions. Therefore, those who are seen to be exceptional excite admiration because they hark back to a more respectable age when politicians espoused a public probity. If this account of public mood is well-founded it is interesting but not particularly unusual to find that the myth of the past evoked with such nostalgia has little empirical substance (Chaney 1995:147-148).

Imagining these remarks addressing music rather than politics, and with necessary adjustments for the perception of the behaviour of musicians rather than politicians, gives the general mood of the idea of the past with relation to music. It, too, has 'little empirical substance'.

Chapter 3: Methodological Issues for a Sociology of Popular Music

Approaches to the analysis of popular music

Texts dealing with the sociology of popular music share a tendency towards description rather than analysis. By this I mean that methodology consists in the author of the piece presenting in words some features of the musical text without ever once referring directly to the text by any of the available means of so doing. No type of notation - formal or otherwise - is employed. The analyst therefore is left with description, drawing as an unstated resource on the background knowledge of the reader. In this chapter, a review of three such works will be undertaken. These will be briefly contrasted with other approaches. Finally, a method, adopted in this thesis, will be outlined and argued for.

Some texts dealing with popular music

Frith: *Towards an aesthetic of popular music* (Frith 1992):

Frith asserts that popular music functions as a form of social placement - by responding to abstract musical communication fans align themselves with others similarly disposed:

Different groups possess different sorts of cultural capital, share different cultural expectations and so make music differently - pop tastes are shown to correlate with class cultures and subcultures; musical styles are linked to specific age groups; we take for granted the connections of ethnicity and sound. This is the sociological common sense of rock criticism, which equally acknowledges the determining role of technology. The history of twentieth-century popular music is impossible to write without reference to the changing forces of production, electronics, the use of recording, amplification and synthesizers, just as consumer choices cannot be separated from the possession of transistor radios, stereo hi-fis, ghetto blasters and Walkmen (Frith 1992:135).

This short passage has within it a distinguishing feature of this kind of writing: a mixture of street talk and serious writing. This stylistic device has possibly arisen because, when it comes to it, there is very little music in the argument. In fact, what Frith seems to be

arguing for is a technological history of twentieth century popular music - he certainly sounds much more confident on that score than he is with music¹. Clearly, music takes a back seat here. It is assumed ('common sense') that the factors to which he refers are indeed genuine and important factors. In any final analysis, however, whatever importance may be attached to recording techniques and electronic instruments (and it should be considered), the essence of the music remains unchanged. It is this **essence** rather than peripheral concerns which should be addressed. This directs our attention from surface differences to underlying similarities. Thus, although fans in the early 1960s could become murderously violent over the virtues of the Beatles compared with the Rolling Stones, and could detail their distinctive features, the fact remains that much of their recorded output at that time was similar and sometimes identical material². Doubtless the same kinds of distinctions and similarities could be displayed with other groups contemporaneous with each other (perhaps the Sex Pistols and Siouxsie Sioux). What to fans seem stylistic divergences of canyon-like dimensions are diminished by perspective granted by aesthetic or temporal distance. This is not to state the obvious, that punk bands or glam rock bands tend to share some stylistic features, but to go a stage further and to suggest that twentieth century popular music (and its predecessors) can all be addressed in a few similar terms. This can only happen at a level at which pop 'style' is discounted and this, in turn, can only happen when musical texts are addressed, rather than what fans or 'sociologists of rock' have to say about them. This reinforces Moerman's dictum that 'Folk beliefs have honourable status but they are not the same intellectual object as a scientific analysis' (1975:55), where *science* is conceived of as systematic study based on empirical data.

Instead, these matters are merely the taken-for-granted backdrop to Frith's concern which is the development of an aesthetics of popular music. For simply remarking that a certain social group 'likes' a band or a track or a 'number' does not get us any closer to understanding why that should be. As Frith puts it:

¹ This passage, interestingly, has overtones of the 'production of culture' debate which will be considered in the chapter on *High Society*. Ryan's work refers (1985).

² The Rolling Stones' first hit - *I Wanna be Your Man* - was written by John Lennon and Paul McCartney.

While we can thus point to general patterns of pop use, the precise link (or homology) between sounds and social groups remains unclear. Why is rock'n'roll youth music, whereas Dire Straits is the sound of Yuppie USA? (Frith 1992:135)

As we shall see, homologies can be expressed at a deeper level than this, but Frith's immediate answer is to force a distinction between 'commercial' and 'good' music. By 'good' he means 'authentic'. In a tautological sentence, he sums the argument up as follows: 'Good music is the authentic expression of something - a person, an idea, a feeling, a shared experience, a *Zeitgeist*' (1992:136). Inauthentic 'bad' music, on the other hand, expresses nothing.

Authenticity, as we have seen, is one of the words which repeatedly surface in the sociological study of music, including popular music. However, its definition and even its location is rarely attempted. The result is that we can never be sure what a writer means when using the word. As we can see here, Frith arrives at a ludicrous definition which he probably does not intend - again, the appeal is not to a systematic understanding but to a shared set of implicit meanings in his readership. So good music we recognise by its authenticity and the fact that it is authentic means that it is good. This type of argument cannot advance our understanding of these difficult areas.

Frith implies that 'authentic' music stands opposed to 'commercial' music (although, of course, if 'authentic' means 'to express something', could it not be that what is expressed is commercialism?). This is another common idea in the sociology of popular music. Again, it is one which is rarely explained. The problem with it is that if authentic music, by definition, is *not* commercial, its proponents will, presumably, not earn a good living from it, since they will be marginalized and will be satisfying a non-commercial niche market. The question immediately raised by anyone who has had experience of this sort of situation is: how do they live? As we have seen, the answer given by one jazz critic is that it is the responsibility of fans to see to it that they support the non-commercial musician. Frith side-steps this issue by stating the obvious - rock music, in any form that becomes recognisable, is already commercial. We are dealing not with good-bad, authentic-inauthentic, but with a spectrum of goodness, of 'authenticity': 'How do we know Bruce Springsteen is more authentic than Duran Duran, when both make records

according to the rules of the same complex industry?' (1992:137). Frith then becomes hopelessly tangled by both addressing the problems of authenticity and answering his own problematic at the same time:

If we start with the assumption that pop is expressive, then we get bogged down in the search for the 'real' artist or emotion or belief lying behind it. But popular music is popular not because it reflects something, or authentically articulates some sort of popular taste or experience, but because it creates our understanding of what popularity is. The most misleading term in cultural theory is, indeed, 'authenticity'. What we should be examining is not how true a piece of music is to something else, but how it sets up the idea of 'truth' in the first place - successful pop music is music which defines its own aesthetic standard (1992:137).

Frith has here come up against the limits of analysis which eschews the text - how can you possibly say what might be meant by a piece of music if you do not refer to *it*? And how can you speak of its authenticity if you cannot speak of it? Certainly innovative music - whether 'serious' or popular - does create its own rules, and it is that which lies behind advances in the area. But it is a mistake to think that this happens outside the realm of the social, and that creative artists can then be judged in accordance with their own rules of aesthetics. Of course, Frith is quite right - 'authenticity' is a misleading term; but to replace it by a version of aesthetics based on popular success is more misleading still. It might work with some rock music today, but how might it relate to the enormously successful music hall songs of the Victorian and Edwardian ages? It seems to me that Frith might be arguing that *Daisy Belle (A Bicycle Made for Two)* creates its own aesthetics. Of course, he is not, but there is an implicit indexicality which gives a tendency to discuss highly situated and local issues of popularity and 'authenticity' in terms of universal and objective categories into which they fit very loosely indeed. The same is true of his discussion of the 'social functions of music'. There are four of these:

- to give us a sense of identity;
- to enable us to manage the relationship between our public and emotional lives - hence the preponderance of 'love songs';
- to organise our sense of time, to make us feel the present;
- to be possessed.

It is in this context that we might address the point alluded to above (page 65) - that writing of this kind (and there will be other examples below) has within it a curious mix of street talk and formal academic discourse. The function of this is rather complicated. On the one hand it alludes to the vocabulary of the young, a language at once easy to understand and full of group solidarity signifiers, while at the same time adopting a framework of academic ritual. Both are flavoured by contact with the other. Insofar as the writer is an academic, she or he must also be 'in touch'; insofar as the writer is a commentator of the pop scene, he or she is also clearly scholarly. Yet there is another, deeper function here. For the modern popular music scene is not a neutral stage for displays of 'style', as Hebdige (1979) would have it, or the development of an 'aesthetics' of rock music, as Frith in the paper under discussion here treats it. Instead, it is big business, a cultural hegemony which we ignore at the risk of neutralising our analysis. By conceiving of the discussion only in terms of 'youth culture' we must necessarily overlook the hegemonic effects of wider society which, as shall be shown below are indeed addressable through the musical texts. As Bennett puts it:

In Gramsci's conspectus, popular culture is viewed neither as the site of the people's cultural deformation nor as that of their cultural self-affirmation or, in any simple Thompsonian sense, of their own self-making; rather, it is viewed as a force field of relations shaped, precisely, by these contradictory pressures and tendencies - a perspective which enables a significant reformulation of both the theoretical and the political issues at stake in the study of popular culture (Bennett 1986.xiii)

This force-field is entirely analysable in the texts of popular music.

Put another way, by Bloom (1987), the universalism of rock music amongst the young is, far from being merely neutral, or what 'kids do', is actually a threat to the psychological well-being of an entire generation. While classical music and the other liberal arts demand effort if they are to be understood, rock music is immediate, effortless in its comprehension and damaging in its ability to desensitise the young to fine art. It speaks only of sex, but in a shallow, meaningless way. Whereas it had been shameful and an indicator of subordinate class to confess ignorance of classical music, rock music has won the day:

Rock is very big business, bigger than movies, bigger than professional sports, bigger than television, and this accounts for much of the respectability of the music business ... The music business is peculiar only in that it caters almost exclusively to children, treating legally and naturally imperfect human beings as though they were ready to enjoy the final or complete satisfaction (Bloom 1987:77)

The left, for Bloom, have given rock music an easy ride because they see in it the overthrow of the bourgeoisie. Marcuse predicted a post-capitalist society in which the greatest satisfactions would be sexual. But rock music *is* a part of late capitalism; it is not at all opposed to it: 'The critical theory of late capitalism is at once late capitalism's subtlest and crudest expression' (78). Mick Jagger epitomizes anti-bourgeois ire but at the same time is a business man. The whole thing is shallow - for all our efforts at understanding all we have is show business glitz. 'Mick Jagger tarting it up on stage is all that we brought back from our voyage to the underworld' (79). Rock music prevents the young having a 'passionate relationship to the art and thought that are the substance of liberal education' (79). Moreover, in a sentence which recalls Gramsci and especially his attack on Taylorism (Gramsci 1982:308-310): 'Without the cooperation of the sentiments, anything other than technical education is a dead letter' (80). Rock music, like drugs, gives a premature ecstasy. This has dulled the capacity of the young for passion:

But as long as they have the Walkman on, they cannot hear what the great tradition has to say. And, after its prolonged use, when they take it off, they find they are deaf.' (81)

These are some of the serious issues hidden by the use of signifiers which, while implicitly claiming solidarity with the consumers of the rock business's products, actually compound the injury by affording it simultaneously the veneer of academic respectability.

Thus, Frith's largely private definition of music's 'social functions' could be read as contrasting individualist political ideology with centralist political economy.

Indeed, referring back to Frith's list, whether we consider it reasonable or full, given some goodwill there is little to find problematic in the first three. The last, however, might best be theorized as the inevitable alienating consequence of a highly

commercialized popular music industry, and not a 'social function' of music *per se* at all. Music makes us more aware of society, not less. The extent to which Frith's fourth 'function' might be true could be construed as a far more certain indicator of authenticity than some of the categories he proposes. Clearly, however, in this formulation, Frith has highlighted the *inward* impulse of pop - the listener's attention is turned to inner states. This is fair comment, to some extent. It certainly might help to explain the ubiquitous personal stereos, but it cannot explain pop concerts (sometimes on a massive scale), nor can it explain the fact that classical music can be played on personal stereos. This is the first of Frith's attempts to arrive at an aesthetics of pop, drawing on work by Chester (1970:78-9). Whereas 'European art music' is *extensional*, developing outward from basic musical atoms, pop music is *intentional*; both are complex, but in these very different ways. This is actually a promising line of approach, but one which, Frith claims, he is 'not competent to develop' (1992:144). The problem is one for pop music, however, and not for Frith alone:

We still do not know nearly enough about the musical language of pop and rock: rock critics still avoid technical analysis, while sympathetic musicologists, like Wilfred Mellers, use tools that can only cope with pop's non-intentional (and thus least significant) qualities (1992:145).

It is precisely the intention of this thesis to address these areas. Although I shall return to the matter below, it is worth pointing out here that there lurks within this text one of the bugbears of the sociology of popular music - that it is somehow 'different'. The tools and techniques which have been developed for classical music are not thought appropriate. Yet this is rather inconsequential for Frith since musicology can only, apparently, address the 'least significant' qualities of pop. Hence, whatever methodology is utilized for pop *cannot* (and possibly *should not*) address the musical text. Yet, at their hearts, 'art' music and popular music are much more similar than dissimilar. As we shall see, a major strand of popular music - what van der Merwe calls 'parlour music' - can be shown to have split from the classical tradition towards the end of the eighteenth century. In this sense, tools and techniques, either common to the classical tradition or deriving from it, which directly address the text, can be used for the analysis of popular music.

And, again, Frith uses another common misconception, that, somehow, rock and pop music owe most of their origin to African music: ‘...how can we explain the *intensity* of musical experience that Afro-American forms have made possible?’ (1992:145). I shall seek to argue below that this common misconception does not stand up to scrutiny. It is not that African folk music has not had an important impact on popular music of the twentieth century; it certainly has, but it is one amongst a number of other influences.

A second approach to the aesthetics of popular music, argues Frith, is through an increasing focus on the use of the voice. This means that there are meaning structures which can be analysed. There are two misconceptions here. One concerns another sub-text in the sociology of music, closely allied to authenticity, the issue of intentionality. Frith is thus arguing that if we can understand the meaning of a song we can approach its aesthetics. This is seriously to misunderstand the role of song. Although a song has words and words have a ‘dictionary meaning’, a song is not a speech. The meaning is not only mediated through music, it exists with the music. To understand a song is still to understand the music. Frith cannot escape the dilemma so easily. Moreover, it is not true, as Frith would have it, that during the twentieth century there has been an increasing focus on the voice, although it may seem like that from a perspective that starts in 1960. Certainly, the role of the voice in jazz and in the swing bands of the 1930s was less pronounced, but alongside that must be set the fact that popular music singers have throughout the century been lionised. This is true not only of obvious candidates like Marie Lloyd, Ethel Waters, Big Bill Broonzy, Leadbelly, Louis Armstrong and Bessie Smith, but of singers with dance bands whose contributions may have taken less than 50% of a three-minute record. These would include, in the UK, Vera Lynn, Al Bowlly and Sam Browne and, in the USA, Bing Crosby, Frank Sinatra and Doris Day. The fact that the proportion of singing in a recording was less with big bands than with rock music is irrelevant. The focus was even then on singers and on their songs.

Finally, Frith argues that:

...popular music is wide open for the development of a proper genre analysis, for the classification of how different popular musical forms use different narrative structures, set up different patterns of identity, and articulate different emotions (1992:146)

Again, at one level this is a valid point, but not at the level meant by Frith. For Frith intends an analysis of surface features, such as the distinction he (with Angela McRobbie) drew between ‘cock’ rock and ‘teenybop narratives’ (1992:146). He admits that more complicated structures (such as those articulated by Frank Sinatra - ‘crooning’ - or Billie Holiday - ‘torch singing’) cannot be approached through this kind of methodology. Thus, the admission seems to be that not only can his methodology not approach classical texts, it is also specific to only one set of twentieth century popular music, the type which developed after the end of the 1950s. This is surely not good enough. While there could be an argument developed for analysing classical and popular music separately (but only for sociological purposes - their similarities allow a joint musical approach), one which argues for special status for pop music over other popular musics must be viewed with deep suspicion. Indeed, at this point Frith returns to the issue of authenticity, when discussing the ‘rock aesthetic of authenticity’:

What is interesting, though, is how this sort of truth is constructed, what it rests on musically; and for an instant semiotic guide I recommend the video of *We are the World*. Watch how singers compete to register the most sincerity; watch Bruce Springsteen win as he gets his brief line, veins pop up on his head and the sweat flows down. Here authenticity is guaranteed by visible physical effort (1992:147).

So there we have it - authenticity in the end is guaranteed by somebody sweating.

An inescapable conclusion of this piece must be that Frith has come up against the limits of his methodology. It can never avoid description, opinion and assertion and, as a consequence, can never aspire to be objective. In Aristophanes’ play *The Frogs*, ridicule is poured on Euripides’ lines by Aeschylus who replaces the final phrase in them by ‘lost his bottle of oil’ (Barrett 1984:200-201)³. In the same way, works which never escape subjectivity must always be subject to equally summary dismissal.

³ Aeschylus’ method is this:
 EURIPEDES [*reciting*]:
 Aegyptus, who, the oft-told story runs,
 Once put to sea with fifty daughters fair,
 Touching at Argos -
 AESCHYLUS: - lost his bottle of oil.
 EURIPEDES: What do you mean, lost his bottle of oil? You’ll regret this.
 DIONYSUS: Recite another prologue. I believe I see the idea.
 EURIPEDES [*reciting*]:

Frith's work is representative of that genre of sociology and this particular paper is important in that context. It quite clearly, in a number of ways, signals the impasse to which these analyses have led. Although much is made of the sociology of rock as a corpus of knowledge, there is here the admission that without addressing musical texts it has nothing much more to say. Without a theory of how music works with homologies at both the group and individual level and the means of articulating it, rock sociology must remain a species of fanzine.

Paul Gilroy's book, *The Black Atlantic*, has, as a title for Chapter 3: "*Jewels Brought from Bondage*"; *Black Music and the Politics of Authenticity*. Once again, authenticity is a central problematic. And, again, aesthetics is seen as a joint concern.

Gilroy develops an interesting argument concerning blackness - the experience of being black, especially in the UK - and the centrality of music to this experience. For Gilroy, it is impossible to understand black people and black culture without an understanding of two things. These are the shared feeling of race terror and the notion of the diaspora. Both are intricately linked. The diaspora from Africa is a direct result of the slave trade, which lies at the root of the race terror. The Atlantic itself stands as a metaphor for this process of dispersal. The glue binding black people across the Atlantic is music, for Gilroy essentially African music, especially in its drumming (which is probably accurate: the predominance of drums and strict tempo in popular music is almost certainly African in origin). But more than this, Gilroy elevates music to a central social role in the Black Atlantic diaspora populations:

I have suggested that the critiques of modernity articulated by successive generations of black intellectuals had their rhizomorphic systems of propagation anchored in a continued

Lord Dionysus of the fawnskin cloak,
Who leaps with ivy wand amid the pines
Of fair Parnassus -
AESCHYLUS: - lost his bottle of oil.

My reason for invoking Aristophanes here is to demonstrate how rhetoric which is largely empty can be ridiculed fairly simply because there is little to support it. In academic disciplines, the same is true of unsupported argument. If readers happen not to choose to believe such arguments, they are free so to choose. If the argument cannot be supported or falsified, then its acceptance must be a matter of choice or faith or some other form of personal inclination.

proximity to the unspeakable terrors of slave experience. I argued that this critique was nurtured by a deep sense of the complicity of racial terror with reason. The resulting ambivalence towards modernity has constituted some of the most distinctive forces shaping black Atlantic political culture. What follows will develop this argument in a slightly different direction by exploring some of the ways in which closeness to the ineffable terrors of slavery was kept alive - carefully cultivated - in ritualized, social forms (Gilroy 1993:72-73).

Two phenomena in particular have shaped the distinctive form of black consciousness in this century. The first is that modernity and its critique was developed without any black involvement, and the second that the horrors of slavery were ineffable. They could not be spoken, but *could* be communicated; this communication occurs through music. Gilroy argues that 'The power and significance of music within the black Atlantic have grown in inverse proportion to the limited expressive power of language' (1993:75). From this proposition - that music somehow 'represents' the post-modern Black Atlantic - a number of issues arise. These are: the way in which music works to isolate and specify 'general issues pertaining to the problem of racial authenticity and the consequent self-identity of the social group'; issues of 'embodied subjectivity' arising from the non-representational and non-conceptual form of music which are 'not reducible to the cognitive and the ethical'; and the development of black intellectuals writing music which has at its centre the drum. It is probably this more than anything else which has given rise to the persistent white view that Black music is somehow more 'primitive' than music in the White tradition⁴. Music goes beyond the power of words, and this explains its particular significance to the Black diaspora.

Gilroy's critique of post-modernist aesthetics is its utter textuality. For Gilroy, it is '...a means to specify the death (by fragmentation) of the subject and, in the same manoeuvre, to enthrone the literary critic as mistress or master of the domain of creative human communication' (1993:77). Gilroy has here given in to hyperbole. The text is not all, and no post-modernist writer expects us to believe that it is; but it is all we have to start with -

⁴ As we shall see, this misapprehension lies deep within white attitudes to black music and extends back over at least a century. It has found expression in ways which now seem offensive and ludicrous but at the time were considered simple truth. Many of these will be highlighted throughout this thesis, but a good example occurs in the 1929 film *King of Jazz*, which featured the Paul Whiteman Orchestra. In this film, the overtly racist symbol of the 'voodoo drum' is identified as the origin of jazz.

it remains the central resource. It is, indeed, the database which methodology addresses so as to derive supported conclusions. It is very easy to attack post-modernist writers on the grounds that they must make the implicit claim that all writing *apart from their own* is uncertain in meaning and in intention. But such attacks miss the point; at least post-modernists can claim to have made some headway and can ground their conclusions in some claim beyond opinion and assertion. It is ironic that Gilroy should have made such an attack on post-modernism in this context, for while, elsewhere in his book, he pays close attention to the work of black writers, when it comes to music, which he sees as central and indispensable to the very development of black consciousness, he cannot offer anything other than broad description and general impressions. Gilroy implicates post-modernism in bourgeois democracy and suggests that its model is not an appropriate ideal type for a discussion of black music. Moreover, in the analysis, he wants to be free from 'rampant invasive textuality' (1993:78). But why should the musical text be seen, apparently, as qualitatively distinct from the written word - Gilroy is here coming very close to logocentrism in one of its guises. His reply to such a charge must be that black music is properly seen as a first step on the road to genuine liberation, which must include liberation from bourgeois forms of analysis; it 'requires a different register of analytic concepts' (1993:78). Gilroy quotes Toni Morrison who argues that black music, in its distinctiveness, should be seen as the model for black literature and, Gilroy goes on to infer, for black arts as a whole. This, then, is the reason for elevating black music into a special relationship with analysis. It arises from a tradition in which modernity simply did not happen.

But what of the notion that black music is so different from white that it requires a 'different register of analytic concepts'? As will be shown below, the music of black Americans not only is addressable by common musical concepts, it can also be shown to have been as heavily influenced by European music as European music has been by African⁵. In fact, this point seems to have been confirmed by Gilroy himself, when he uses a term from the European discourse of musical analysis - antiphony - to characterise

⁵ My analysis does not yet seek to include contemporary forms such as hip-hop and rap, but from a preliminary hearing it seems unlikely that these would not be analysable in accepted terms - there are certainly more similarities than dissimilarities with European music. The declamatory style of rap should be available to normal techniques of literary analysis. One area where Africa certainly predominates would appear to be the drum although, of course, drumming is a distinctive feature in many European folk musics.

the 'call and response' pattern often found in black music (although not ubiquitously and not exclusively).

Black music, however, does more than articulate the world for the black diaspora; according to Gilroy, by virtue of being excluded from cultural fulcrums, especially modernism, black intellectuals have used music in political ways:

...we must take account of the work of those within the expressive culture of the black Atlantic who have tried to use its music as an aesthetic, political or philosophical marker in the production of what might loosely be called their critical social theories. Here it is necessary to consider the work of a whole host of exemplary figures; ex-slaves, preachers, self-educated scholars and writers, as well as a small number of professionals and the tiny minority who managed to acquire some sort of academic position in essentially segregated educational systems or took advantage of opportunities in Liberia, Haiti, and other independent states. This company spreads out in discontinuous, transverse lines of descent that stretch outwards across the Atlantic from Phyllis Wheatley onwards. Its best feature is an anti-hierarchical tradition of thought that probably culminates in C. L. R. James's idea that ordinary people do not need an intellectual vanguard to help them speak or to tell them what to say. Repeatedly, within this expressive culture it is musicians who are presented as living symbols of the value of self-activity (Gilroy 1993:79).

Black music, therefore, is both tied to the slave past and about the politics of the present. Moreover, for Gilroy, despite the fact that black music was considered 'primitive' (certainly during the decades surrounding the turn of the century), it has come to dominate popular culture in Western states which had for centuries enslaved its originators (a common notion which is open to criticism as will be shown).

Once again, this argument, identifying music as central to the black experience, to politics and to the entire popular culture of the West (and, using Gilroy's yardstick, why not go further and include the rest of the world?), has been advanced without one detailed analysis. Certainly, Gilroy has explicitly denied a role for such work, but what status have his claims beyond informed general observation and his own opinion which, of course, is worthy of respect in its own right?

Gilroy then looks at the particular case of immigration into the UK, especially from the Caribbean. Unsurprisingly he finds that music was central in ‘facilitating the transition of diverse settlers to a distinct mode of lived blackness’ (Gilroy 1993:82). This notion of ‘blackness’ becomes important in allowing people from different backgrounds to conceive of themselves as belonging to a distinct group. This was mainly achieved through music, and, of course, resonates with Frith’s notion that music functions as a means of social placement. At the same time, links with blacks in the USA showed the power of the notion of ‘blackness’: ‘It was facilitated by a common fund of urban experiences, by the effect of similar but by no means identical forms of racial segregation, as well as by the memory of slavery, a legacy of Africanisms, and a stock of religious experiences defined by them both. (Gilroy 1993:83). This amounted to a new metaphysics of blackness, dominated by music. A number of discourses are identified by Gilroy as constitutive of this metaphysics, of which he finds misogyny offensive, although it vies with racial emancipation to ‘constitute the inner core of black expressive cultures (Gilroy 1993:83)⁶. Yet, although a ‘reflexive political aesthetics’ should be developed in order to distinguish between groups such as 2 Live Crew (who exhibit ‘women-hating antics’) and ‘their equally authentic but possibly more compelling and certainly more constructive peers’ (Gilroy 1993:84), Gilroy rejects arguments based on cultural relativism. Instead, borrowing from Stuart Hall, he argues that gender is ‘the modality within which race is lived...Experiencing racial sameness through particular definitions of gender and sexuality has also proved to be eminently exportable’ (Gilroy 1993:85).

Methodologically, the point I wish to stress is that all this, based on black music and its centrality to black culture, is discussed without ever referring to a text. The following passage may help to emphasise the point:

I am not suggesting that the self-conscious racial pedagogy of recognisably political artists like KRS1, the Poor Righteous Teachers, Lakim Shabazz, or the X Clan should be

⁶ Gilroy specifically implicates rap in this, but it is certainly a feature of many early blues of the 1920s. For example, one Victor (later RCA) ‘race records’ advertisement from the Baltimore *Afro American* 12 April 1930 features a recording by the *Memphis Jug Band* exotically entitled *I Whipped my Woman with a Single Tree* (Wright 1980:73). The same advertisement announces Lizzie Miles’s recordings of *I Hate a Man Like You* and *Don’t Tell Me Nothin’ ‘bout My Man*, both written by Jelly Roll Morton and accompanied by him. Both describe the misogynist and macho life style supposedly lived by black urban males and the subservient nature of black women (‘If he’s anywhere you go, doing things you think I should not know/Don’t tell me nothin’ ‘bout my man’; ‘Walking around, with a switch and a rod, shootin’ dice, always playin’ cards/While I bring a pan from the white folks’ yards, I hate a man like you’).

straightforwardly counterposed against the carefully calculated affirmative nihilism of Ice Cube, Tim Dog, the Ghetto Boys, Above the Law, and Compton's Most Wanted (Gilroy 1993:84-5).

As I have suggested above, one feature of this kind of writing is a reluctance to distinguish between academic, formal discourse and street talk (this point has been developed above, pages 269-270). This reluctance is found in this passage but more than that is the sense in which we are to take for granted that the music played by these bands displays 'self-conscious racial pedagogy' or 'carefully calculated affirmative nihilism'. It would be very interesting to see what these categories might be, musicologically. All we have is Gilroy's unsupported assertion that this is indeed the case.

Having established a common grounding for black music, whether originating in the USA, the UK, the Caribbean or in Africa itself, Gilroy turns his attention to the history of black music in the UK, beginning with the visit of the Jubilee Singers during their European tour of 1875. This visit had considerable impact at the time, popularizing the spiritual as 'an international concert genre' (Gammond 1993:307). There was a confused response to the music at the time, but Gilroy's point is that the Jubilee singers arrived at a crucial moment:

Black people singing slave songs as mass entertainment set new public standards of authenticity for black cultural expression. The legitimacy of these new cultural forms was established precisely through their distance from the racist codes of minstrelsy. (Gilroy 1993:90).

The issue raised by the Jubilee Singers - the dialectic between minstrelsy and 'authentic' black expression (whatever that might mean) - is again a noticeable thread running through black American music, and can be clearly seen in the 1956 musical *High Society* (discussed below).

Having discussed the Fisk Jubilee Singers, Gilroy leaps a century to Jimi Hendrix. According to Gilroy, Hendrix cultivated white audiences and exploited their preconceptions about black people: 'The overt sexuality of Hendrix's neo-minstrel

buffoonery seems to have been received as a sign of his authentic blackness by the white rock audiences on which his burgeoning pop career was so solidly based' (Gilroy 1993:93). Again, we have the preoccupation with authenticity, without knowing precisely what is meant by it. (What is it to be authentically black, white or even human?) However, what concerns me more about this argument is the fact that Gilroy has omitted from his argument the century of time between the visit of the Fisk Jubilee Singers and the visitation by Jimi Hendrix. Not only did recordings by black artists sell well in this country - Ethel Waters, Cab Calloway, Jimmie Lunceford and Leslie Hutchinson to name four - there were visits by prominent black American players throughout this century. In 1919 Will Marion Cook's band included Sidney Bechet⁷; Duke Ellington and his orchestra both played and recorded in England in the 1930s and was hugely successful; and, above all, perhaps, Fats Waller made two visits to Europe in the late 1930s, both of which recruited English musicians (for his 'Continental Rhythm'), and both of which used London as a base⁸ (Godbolt 1984: Chapter 7, esp. p116). Fats Waller certainly exhibited traces of buffoonery and his recordings, even sixty years on, are dominated by his exuberant personality; but he was also a pianist of the highest quality and this, more than the popular appeal (based on whatever grounds) guarantees his musical survival. Fats Waller would have been a far more powerful example for Gilroy than Hendrix. His appeal was much more widespread in a UK which at the time had limited immigration, and his base was firmly in the culture of the Harlem ghetto. But none of this seems to concern Gilroy. He is equally silent about developments based on jazz in the USA in the period from the turn of the century and the great depression. These will be discussed below, but the fact that they are omitted from Gilroy's book suggests that he is not aware of them. This is a serious flaw in a work which elevates black music to such a very prominent role in the development of culture. And yet, curiously, his central metaphor - the black Atlantic, the diaspora - for black culture *is* supported by a close textual analysis of a jazz work which shall be discussed below. But it is one thing to have a hunch that a conclusion is correct and quite another to demonstrate it.

⁷ Bechet, one of the most influential soprano saxophone players in jazz, remained in London until deported in 1922 after a charge of rape.

⁸ Gilroy has also noted the pivotal role of London: 'Thus foregrounding the role of music allows us to see England, or more accurately London, as an important junction point or crossroads on the webbed pathways of black Atlantic political culture' (Gilroy 1993:95).

Gilroy highlights what must be an important issue in this context: is authenticity (presumably in the sense of being 'faithful' to one's race) important? The answer to this depends to some extent on one's theory of music, and Gilroy posits two polar opposites: *essentialism*, which is that music is transmitting eternal truths; and *anti-essentialism*, which is that music is transmitting only pleasurable sensations. Gilroy notes that the communities from which black music has sprung are 'unashamedly hybrid' in character, and this makes classification under simplistic schemes ('essential', 'anti-essential') inappropriate. Instead, he argues, there is a case for an *anti-anti-essentialist* position. Music does transmit eternal verities, but it does so in the act of doing, not by reference to categories existing outside the human agent.

Music and its rituals can be used to create a model whereby identity can be understood neither as a fixed essence nor as a vague and utterly contingent construction to be reinvented by the will and whim of aesthetes, symbolists and language gamers. Black identity is not simply a social and political category to be used or abandoned according to the extent to which the rhetoric that supports and legitimises it is persuasive or institutionally powerful. Whatever the radical constructionists may say, it is lived as a coherent (if not always stable) experiential sense of self. Though it is often felt to be natural and spontaneous, it remains the outcome of practical activity: language, gesture, bodily significations, desires (Gilroy 1993:102).

This passage, by implication, posits music as the outcome of lived experience. What it lacks is a systematic exposition of the theory with music at its heart. Gilroy has much of value to add to a sociology of popular music, but his work is flawed in two ways. First, he refuses to confront any particular text; and second is a lack of perspective. His examples are drawn from far too narrow a database. In any case, the anti-anti-essentialist position, if I understand it correctly, must be able to address the deep issues expressed in music, especially since this happens paradoxically through the living agent. Gilroy's position makes such analysis *more* rather than *less* necessary.

Hebdige: Reggae, Rastas and Rudies:

Hebdige (1982) works with the same sort of material as Gilroy. He certainly has a different slant on the issue of black music, but his conclusion is very similar: as a cultural

moment, black music is essential to blackness. As cultural forms change in wider society, musical forms change too, but again what is missing is any appeal to a text to show us *how* this might happen. Instead, Hebdige uses a fine and informed control over language to describe how the music demonstrates homologies with wider Jamaican (and then British) society, especially young blacks. But we are taken along by his rhetoric at our peril. As with Gilroy, considering the emphasis (correctly) placed on music as defining cultural form for the black diaspora, a passage such as the following should not be allowed to pass without comment:

The 'ska' beat made its debut on these early unlabelled discs. Ska is a kind of jerky shuffle played on an electric guitar with the treble turned right up. The emphasis falls on the upbeat rather than on the offbeat as in R and B and is accentuated by the bass, drum and brass sections. Ska is structurally a back-to-front version of R and B (Hebdige 1982:431).

Despite the impression of considerable knowledge of music given in this and similar passages in this paper, it makes little musical sense. Structurally, ska is likely to be very similar to R and B (Rhythm and Blues) and to many other forms of popular music. And ska, played in 6/8 time (a 'jerky shuffle'), does indeed emphasise the offbeat, as does R and B and much blues- and jazz-influenced popular music of this century. What Hebdige may be referring to is the fact that 6/8 is the compound time of 2/4 while much American popular music, although often notated in 4/4 time, is actually played in its compound time of 12/8.

A further interesting point is worth noting, and this comes when Hebdige discusses the origins of the word reggae:

Even the etymology of the word 'reggae' invites controversy. In Michael Thomas ..., Bulldog, A Rude Boy who has made the grade in West Kingston, claims that it was derived from 'ragga', which was an 'uptown' way of saying 'raggamuffin' and that the implied disapproval was welcomed by those who had liked the music. Alternatively, there have been readings which stress the similarity with the word *raga* (the Indian form) and still others which claim that reggae is simply a distortion of Reco (who, with Don Drummond, was one of the original 'ska' musicians) (Hebdige 1982:430).

Two points are worth mentioning here. The first is that in this passage Hebdige performs a deeper analysis on the word 'reggae' than he does on the music itself in the paper. The second is that Hebdige appears not to be aware of the word 'rag', a form of US popular music which was mainly played in the first two decades of this century but has been part of the popular repertoire in a variety of guises ever since. What is potentially productive here is that the origins of the word 'rag' are also mysterious. It might, therefore, be that both terms derive from a common black diasporic root and might lend considerable credence to arguments such as Gilroy's which stress the oneness of the black Atlantic populations.

A further deduction to be derived from Hebdige's work is that, despite the coy glances at comparative musical analysis, he does not in this paper display any particular knowledge of music other than Jamaican, and even this he fails to analyse. And missing the implications of the syntagmatic similarity between the signifiers 'reggae' and 'rag', while apparently taking seriously the possibility that there might be a connection with *raga* implies a serious lack of awareness of popular music this century, especially black American. In his desire to show the close links between Jamaican life and style and black music, Hebdige, like Gilroy, displays a lack of perspective and method which is ultimately damning.

For Hebdige, however, the surface nature of the discussion is probably intentional. As Davies (1993) points out, Hebdige has come to concentrate on style rather than issues at greater depth. Writing about Hebdige's 1979 work *Subculture: The Meaning of Style*, Davies points out that

... it was a Barthesian book, exploring the gap between 'reality' and 'myth', the reader and the 'text'. By proposing a merger between a phenomenologically-based Marxist cultural studies and a semiological one, Hebdige instead revealed the rift that would dominate the subject for the next decade, where the surface of 'style', 'simulacrum', 'textual representation' competed with the located specifics and totality of everyday struggle, though Hebdige's own work has tended since to opt for the stylistic (Davies 1993:128-129).

Reggae, Rastas and Rudies was actually first published in 1975, before the publication of *Subculture* and hence before, according to Davies, Hebdige opted for 'the stylistic'. There is, indeed, in this paper, a tension between a desire to say something about the implied homology between reggae and Jamaican society which tends to be realist and a fascination with style which tends to be Barthesian. It thus stands as a document confirming Davies' analysis while at the same time being unsatisfactory from an analytical point of view.

Adorno: Perennial Fashion - Jazz:

(This paper will be more closely reviewed below.) As has been remarked above, Adorno has an elitist view of music. His view of jazz (one of the first Afro-American forms to gain popular acceptance) is entirely coloured by that fact. Adorno's position is modernist in every respect. His appreciation of music is not different to Weber's and the European (or, more specifically, German) tradition. The development of tonality (an enlightenment notion), is implicitly given supreme standing.

Jazz is seen as a tool in the hands of capitalists. The 'culture industry' by which the products of jazz are disseminated ruthlessly ensures that its products, jazz included, are comfortable, predictable, non-threatening and uniform. The few musical innovations (soon standardised) in jazz are seen by Adorno as mere tricks and to equate them with atonality (as some mistakenly did) is 'evidence of capitulation to barbarism'.

But is Adorno referring to the products of Tin Pan Alley or jazz? He displays no real knowledge of jazz (referring only to Louis Armstrong and Mike Riley, the latter being obscure even to serious scholars of jazz) and seems to confuse jazz with the popular music industry. Again, Adorno demonstrates the tendency of writers on the sociology of music, and especially on the sociology of popular music, to describe without ever referring to any text. As will be shown below, there are three codes identifiable in this text:

- At the centre, a deep psychological castration complex;
- An intermediate level of capitalist conspiracy;
- A surface concern with totalitarianism.

These codes reflect Adorno's analysis of the function of popular music within society. Only one - totalitarianism (which is implied and unexplicated; it only emerges from a close textual analysis of Adorno's work) - is supported by reference to a feature of jazz, syncopation. Even this is over-played; syncopation occurs in all music. The reason Adorno singles it out is that during the 1920s it was part of what we would now call the 'branding' of jazz, and particularly commercial versions of jazz. 'Syncopation' became a signifier that Tin Pan Alley successfully attached to jazz, and Adorno, like most other people, was convinced that this said it all. His particular knowledge of music led him to make the connection between this word and totalitarianism, as we shall see. For the moment, it is sufficient to note that had he turned his attention seriously to jazz works he might have been able to construct a more balanced and convincing argument.

Ryan: The Production of Culture in the Music Industry:

Again, this work will be discussed in greater depth below. Ryan attempts to locate changes in popular culture in the actions of 'culture producing agencies', especially ASCAP (the American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers). Ryan addresses an extremely important, interesting and not very well understood moment in the history of popular music this century, the change which occurred in the 1940s and 1950s when the popular music business ceased to be dominated by an elite group of composers writing songs in the 'standards' tradition, for delivery by a vocalist and (usually) a big band. Instead, during these two decades, music which was clearly of folk origin, black and white, came to govern the music industry producing consequences we still live with. Once again, however, a work which takes seriously popular styles and their immense impact on society is offered without one textual analysis to demonstrate what is meant. We are left with description and the resource of our own knowledge as warrants of Ryan's writing.

What these disparate texts have in common is that, taking them as a whole, there are few, if any, direct references to texts. This, indeed, is quite typical of work in the field. Sociologists of popular music have performed a sleight of hand which would not be allowed elsewhere in the discipline; they write how they 'feel' about the subject and do not allow the text to interfere. This is a unique feature of this area of sociology. It would not be permissible, for example, for a researcher in the sociology of health and illness to rely on general description and the prior knowledge assumed in her or his reader (which are the main resources relied on by writers like Frith and Hebdige). On the contrary, some method must be employed to guarantee the objectivity of the work. The method can be drawn from a variety of methodological types (for example quantitative methods, conversation analysis or participant observation) but the common feature shared by all is that the use of a recognisable method ensures that the work is seen as standing in an objective relationship to the researcher. But sociology has always been eclectic in its methodology and this is partly because when it turns its attention to certain areas of human life - for example, art and literature - methods which were developed with other phenomena in view (for example, the family) cannot make available areas of sociological concern. In such cases, sociology has tended to borrow and adapt methods from other fields (for example, literary analysis). As will be demonstrated below, it is also possible to adapt musicological analysis to address popular music in such a way that both the musicology and the sociology are satisfied.

But in general, in the field of popular music, a disregard of methods of addressing the text is typical, even when music and its homologues are explicitly stated as central to understanding a certain part of social life. However, two final points of these writers may be necessary.

The first is that Adorno has shown a deep understanding of music in other places - e.g. *The Philosophy of Modern Music* - but not with textual analysis and certainly not as regards popular music. In his attitude to popular music, Adorno displays a similar attitude to Mellers by implying that popular music cannot be addressed in the same terms as 'serious' music. This is further circumstantial evidence of his underlying elitist approach.

Gilroy explicitly challenges the role of 'rampant invasive textuality' on the reasonable grounds that a post-modernist concern for the centrality of the text serves to hide the reality of ontology beneath it. This is an understandable position, but I think incorrect. I shall show below that to ignore the text is to lose sight of the richness of the signifiers and all that that might represent. Gilroy and others go part of the way when speaking of the influence of Africa, but they do not show how Africa is merged into and presented with European styles. It is as if all popular music is only African.

All leave unexplicated the relationship between music and society. It is usually implied that a direct correlation between popular music and society exists but the nature of the link is not referred to the music itself - rather, it is made by descriptions of the music as 'rough and tough', 'loud' etc. or by references to what 'anybody knows' - 'Dire Straits is the sound of Yuppie USA'. However it is done, what we are left with is adjectives, assumption and presumption and not the music itself. A further implication left undeveloped is the link between popular music and folk music. Most writers in the field use this notion as an unstated resource. However, using a methodology which allows this link to be illuminated is extremely productive, as shall be shown below.

Before moving on to substantive studies, I shall discuss some writers in the field who have demonstrated that it is possible to draw sociological conclusions from music using adapted musical methodologies.

Susan McClary

McClary's paper *The blasphemy of talking politics in Bach year* (1992) shows how, as a Bach scholar, she was able to come to terms with the fact that Bach can be seen as an artist very much implicated in his time and, in particular, politically grounded. This is distinct from orthodox musicological versions of Bach which elevate him to a more or less divine position, concerned only with eternal verities and far above mundane concerns. Thus, the denial of the orthodox view amounts to the 'blasphemy' of the title. The Bach year in question is 1985. McClary notes that the 1950 essay by Adorno, *Bach defended against his devotees* (1967), while having had a clear impact on herself, had

had, by 1985 no impact at all on the orthodox view of Bach. This is contrasted with the musicological research which had been inspired by the Bach year of 1950.

In 1985 during Bach year McClary made some attempts to relocate Bach in social context but, as we have seen above:

...I was told outright that Bach (unlike 'second rate' composers such as Telemann) had nothing to do with his time or place, that he was 'divinely inspired', that his music works in accordance with perfect, universal order and truth. One is permitted, in other words, to deal with music in its social context, but only if one agrees to leave figures such as Bach alone. (1992:14)

McClary's object is to take up where Adorno left off. She has four objectives:

- 1 To ask how and why music is treated differently to other arts.
- 2 To question our preconceptions and ideological uses of 18th century music (in particular Bach's).
- 3 To present a sketch of Bach's social context and to discuss two compositions to see what can be gained from a social grounding of Bach .
- 4 To consider what can be gained by treating Bach in political terms.

In an important passage, McClary discusses what she calls the Pythagorean dilemma. During the 19th century, music came to be removed from the mundane into a separate, 'more absolute' realm of truth - the pseudo religious tendency noted above. But the autonomy of music goes back even further - Pythagoras showed correspondence between numerical proportions and harmonious tones. Later theorists showed similar correspondence between triads and physical acoustics. There is a strain in Western culture that wants to account for music in metaphysical terms. At the same time, a parallel strain insists on music as a social construct. These two tendencies are irreconcilable. McClary ponders on the reasons why the Pythagorean model is so seductive. The reason for this lies in our very humanity; we cannot ignore music as we can avert our eyes - the ear is a vulnerable organ.

Moreover, music appears to be non-representational, at least as representation is usually construed. Unlike literature or the visual arts (which at least make use of characters, plots, colour and shapes that resemble phenomena in the everyday world and can be referred to by means of ordinary language), music seems to be generated from its own self-contained, abstract principles...In music one enters a strange rarefied world in which, for instance, the phenomenon of a $D\flat$ can move one to tears, can appear either to affirm (as though inevitably, absolutely) one's expectations or to shatter one's most fundamental beliefs. Now a $D\flat$ all by itself in the real, extra-musical world signifies nothing. It can only do so by appearing in a highly structured, ordered context - a context dependent on norms, rules and those apparently self-contained, abstract principles known explicitly only by initiated practitioners. (1992:16)

This property of music has enabled the development of a priesthood of practitioners and a laity of listeners. The laity respond strongly to music but lack any control:

Because non-professional listeners usually do not know how to account intellectually for how music does what it does, they respond either by mystifying it (ascribing its power to extra-human sources - natural or implicitly supernatural) or by domesticating it (trivialising or marginalising it, asserting that it does not really bear meaning). (1992:17)

Both musicians and laity collude in the spell to avoid either having to take responsibility for the power of music or to believe that humans are actively manipulating this powerful magic. '...both resist establishing connections between the outside, social world and the mysterious inner world of music' (1992:17). If one is happy with what music articulates, one will go along with it as universal; if not, the politics of it become clear ('...when, for instance, one's own voice is being silenced by its prestige and its claims to universal autonomy' (1992:17)).

McClary notes that Jacques Attali in *Noise* (1985) shows that music contains a dialectic between order and violence. Music has to have some order (or else it would be just noise), but movement and art arise when deviations from this order occur. Different repertoires exist on a continuum between the order and violence. The position on the continuum depends on the values of the society in which it arises and the musicians who wrote and perform it. The norms and deviations from them should be understood as ideological constructs. In this way it is possible to discern the 'most fundamental

principles of social order of a period as well as individual strategies of affirmation and opposition' (1992:18). Inevitably, then, composition itself becomes a dialectical and potentially political act: 'The ways in which one composes, performs, listens or interprets are heavily influenced by the need either to establish order or to resist it' (1992:18). In a passage that could almost have been written by Adorno, McClary argues that music today is dominated by the need for order:

We find ourselves today embedded in a society that is very anxious to secure for itself order in the face of potential or actual violence, in the face of pluralistic claims of the right to cultural production. Our theories of music (the means by which institutions train musicians) try to account for all events in a piece of music as manifestations of self-contained order, rather than as a more complex dialectical relationship between conventional norms and codes on the one hand and significant particularities and strategies on the other. And, consciously or not, our performance practices for the most part are designed to produce literal, note-perfect, reassuring but inert renditions of virtually all musics, whether originally affirmative or oppositional (1992:18).

This is an important passage, in that it leaves space for the emergence of interpretative schemata based on the openness of texts. In contrast to this, McClary argues that the modern concert repertoire is dominated by 18th century enlightenment music, which was formed by the values of the emerging middle class. This music presents itself as 'harmonious, perfect, organic, unified, capable of absorbing and resolving all tensions' (1992:18).

In this way, it is very much unlike the music produced in the seventeenth century (which celebrates in its fragmented structures, its illegitimate dissonances, and in its ornate, defiant arabesques the disruptive, violent struggles of the emerging bourgeoisie against the norms of the church and the aristocracy) or in the nineteenth century (which dramatizes the conflicts between the subjective self and the constraints of bourgeois society) ... But, in fact, no less ideological are the 'classics', which pretend (at least on some levels) to be manifestations of perfect, absolute, universal form and truth. Surely the overt defiance of eighteenth-century convention that begins in Beethoven means to be unmasking precisely this claim. And even within what we frequently like to perceive as the true order (indeed, competing claims to legitimate order) and deviation - if not outright violence - is readily apparent *if we permit ourselves to hear it* (my emphasis) (1992:18-19).

I have quoted this passage at some length because it seems to me to be important. McClary is clearly arguing that it is our perception of music which, more than the music itself, defines its meaning for us. This is an important conclusion; whatever music we take seriously - jazz, popular music, baroque, the 'classics' - whatever it may be it can yield us information about the dialectic between order and noise that lies at its origin.

Moreover, especially in this context, McClary seems to be drawing an unstated (and possibly unrecognised) analogy between ways of looking at music which do not take for granted an underlying orderliness - the modern way she advocates - and the discovery by Galileo that Jupiter had orbiting satellites, destroying the notion of orderliness in the universe warranted by its geocentrism. What is more, in its present nascent state, this idea is by no means fixed nor generally accepted; before it itself becomes a fixed paradigm for musical analysis it is possible to suggest other ways of dealing with less orthodox styles. This is the object of this thesis.

McClary goes on to consider Bach's music as social discourse. She begins by positing that Bach's music is also ideological and that we have to allow ourselves to hear it. Each of the styles Bach appropriated can be understood as a set of social values. As a German, Bach occupied a de-centred position; the mainstream music of his period was Italian and French. In his writing, Bach did not give in to any dominant form but remained marginal and eclectic, mixing dominant forms with German influences.

Seen against this social backdrop, the music itself ceases to appear as the pure mathematical order often suggested by theorists. For the styles Bach assembles are not simply different with respect to surface mannerisms; each has its own peculiar quality of moving through time. To combine in a single concerto the on-rushing goal orientation of the Italian opera or concerto with the more sober, static, contrapuntal ideal of the German Lutheran repertory and the motion-arresting graces of French dance is to produce at times a highly conflicted procedure. Yet Bach's genius lies in his ability to take these components that are highly charged - both ideologically and with respect to dynamic musical impulse - and to give the impression of having reconciled them (1992:20)

Having thus set the scene for her analysis, McClary selects two examples from the Bach corpus. These are *Brandenburg Concerto* no. 5 and *Cantata* 140, *Wachet Auf*. Her

intention is to look at the idiosyncrasies of the pieces in the context of overall signifying practices and semiotic codes:

This is not to say that I am uninterested in norms. Since signification in music is in part a product of the socially invested meanings of the individual elements themselves, both of these presentations will require that their components be discussed to some extent in the abstract: it is only up against the norms and semiotic conventions of a style that the strategies of an individual piece can be perceived as significant (1992:21)

This is an important paragraph, as shall be seen later when considering (especially) Jelly Roll Morton's composition *Pep*.

McClary begins her consideration of the first movement of *Brandenburg Concerto No 5* with a discussion of tonality. The concerto is a tonal piece. Tonality emerged in the West in the seventeenth century. It relies on the interaction between at least two mutually dependent levels: a background progression and surface strategies: 'each informs the other and makes the other meaningful' (1992:21). The background progression gives long-term coherence - a tonic, or 'home key' is established, followed by a series of cadences through other keys. The composer implies what the next key should be and postpones its arrival, according to a strategy for effect. The process is teleological - the listener is moved to desire to move to the next part of the harmonic progression but has to wait until the composer sees fit to produce it. It also seems rational; the social values are middle class - progress, expansion, the attainment of rational goals through striving and the ingenuity of the individual working both within and in defiance of norms. In the early eighteenth century, Bach had recourse to a number of dialects of tonal procedure. The Lutheran tonal dialect had a Chorale background (based on traditional melodies rather than abstract progressions), while the emerging tonality was based on 'rational' structures. The Chorale resisted tonal procedures while the dynamic procedures of tonality are typical of Italian music. The 1st movement of Brandenburg concerto number 5 qualifies as tonal. It has an unambiguous tonic in D major, and it moves in a clear progression through A major, B minor, F# minor and, finally, back to D major. It also exhibits strategies of suggesting the next goal, teasing the listener. This part of McClary's

analysis is entirely orthodox. The keys through which this movement passes are quite clearly related, and can be seen as emerging from the same semiotic discourse⁹.

McClary's argument becomes more developed as she addresses the *Concerto grosso* procedure, the structure for the piece. The structure itself was developed largely from Vivaldi's model. The Concerto Grosso has two 'principal performing media'; a large ensemble (the *concerto grosso*) and soloists. For McClary, its development in the eighteenth century is not surprising since it addresses the tensions between the dynamic individual and a stable society. In a conventional concerto, which is how Brandenburg no. 5 begins, the *ritornello* is stated as a foundation - what McClary calls a 'microcosm of the entire movement' (1992:24). The soloist emerges also at this time, the individual flaunting collectivity. The soloist is responsible for dynamism and destabilization. This movement starts as if the soloist is to be the flute but soon the harpsichord emerges. This, for McClary, is highly significant. Harpsichords were prominent in Baroque ensembles but as part of the *continuo*, what we might think of as the background against which the action of the movement is played out. *Continuo* parts were not even fully scored; they had an outline, called the 'figured bass' which gave considerable scope for improvisation. The harpsichord is given a long cadenza¹⁰, which is unusual, which unleashes 'elements of chaos, irrationality and noise until finally it blurs almost entirely the sense of key, meter, and form upon which the eighteenth-century style depends.' (1992:36). In the end, closure is attained but subversion is still the dominant theme:

The usual nice, tight fit between the social norm, as represented by the convention of concerto procedure, and specific content is here highly problematicized...Bach thus articulates very powerfully precisely the dilemma of an ideology that wants to encourage freedom of expression while preserving social harmony.' (1992:41).

⁹ This passage clearly resonates with some aspects of ragtime and early jazz. Many of Scott Joplin's more ambitious compositions pass through a number of keys before returning to the tonic (such as *Magnetic Rag* and *Bethena*). The practice of returning to the tonic, while only referring to one other key, usually the subdominant, is actually quite common. It is sometimes known as the 'rounded rag' and can be found in (arguably) the most famous of Scott Joplin's rags, *Maple Leaf Rag* and *The Entertainer*. Jelly Roll Morton used the device in the 1923 series of recordings for the Gennett label, for example, *Grandpa's Spells*, and as late as 1929 (*Frances*). Later still, in 1941 Fats Waller used it in his version of James P Johnson's *Carolina Shout*.

¹⁰ This is a well-known feature of the work, so much so that it is sometimes called *The Harpsichord Concerto*.

Expressed in this way, it may seem that McClary's analysis is not distinct from those analyses which do not address the text. This is because I have attempted a summary of her main argument. In fact, every major point she makes is supported by written quotations from the text, sometimes at considerable length. This is the important methodological issue; while where Adorno is concerned we may remark that the device of a 'bottle of oil' (see above page 73-4fn) is enough to destroy his argument, McClary's method gives much more substance both to her argument and to the demands placed on any critic. We are no longer dealing just with opinion (however well informed) and assertion.

McClary goes on to consider Cantata 140, *Wachet Auf*. The shaping principles of tonality and concerto, argues McClary, together with their attendant ideologies are also present in Cantata 140. But Bach, since he is working in both liturgical and musical discourses, has a further semiotic code of 'conventional signs and associations' (1992:41). Although she is not explicit at this point, McClary is clearly referring to the Chorale which, as we have seen above, stands clearly distinct from tonal music and is, in some senses at least, atonal. Meaning thus emerges in particular choices and juxtapositions of these different semiotic codes. McClary wishes to look at the issues thus emerging in the cantata. These are: national identity, orthodoxy/Pietism and gender construction.

McClary argues that Bach had access to three national styles:

- Italian, emotional and goal-seeking;
- French, consciously restrained and anti-Italian but still tonal;
- German, influenced by both Italian and French but with important elements of Chorale.

A decision had to be made as to what would predominate if a pre-tonal Chorale were to be used as the basis of a movement. Or, alternatively, should the pre-rational Chorale predominate over the rational tonal conventions? The answer to this question is crucial because Bach has a particular relationship to the Church, represented by the Chorale:

Bach often calls attention to the separate implications of the various components of which he makes use and then seems to overcome the dichotomies in order to fashion a world (always centrally German) in which aspects of each style can co-exist. The first movement of *Wachet Auf* is a case in point.' (43)

Wachet Auf is constructed as an Italian concerto (with ritornello) but is determined by cadential structure of the pre-existing chorale also called *Wachet Auf*, first published in 1598. There are also French references. The cantata is written in triple (3/4) time and is in 3 flats - music for a Trinitarian King, rather than the Sun King, Louis XIV - the subject of contemporary French overtures. Using textual examples, McClary shows how the French opening chords, deliberate and static, are immediately overcome by rushing Italian style. Both are finally overcome by the entrance of the musical king - the chorale, specifically German:

After hearing such a piece in which so many interlocking levels all finally achieve closure, who could fail to believe in the overdetermination of salvation? In the specifically German plan of salvation? (1992:51)

McClary shows how *Wachet Auf* achieves a synthesis of national styles available to Bach at the time, and that the German style finally triumphs. As McClary remarks, 'The monad that contains the whole world is located, significantly, on German soil (1992:51).

This ideological dispute between orthodoxy and Pietism within Lutheranism was of considerable importance to Bach, and to his career. As McClary notes, it informed his compositional choices (1992:51). Orthodox congregations favoured higher, more elaborate 'art' music, while Pietists were more devout, stressing one-to-one relations between the Soul and Jesus (sometimes expressed in erotic terms). Much of Bach's church music, including *Wachet Auf* is about reconciling these positions. Throughout the cantata there are a number of duets between the Soul and Jesus with explicit devotional imagery, especially the image of Christ as the bridegroom. Finally, in the concluding Chorale they are reconciled:

The two camps are thus demonstrated to be mutually compatible. If Bach could not effect such a solution in real life, he could at least enact it through his creative imagination (1992:52).

McClary also investigates issues of gender in *Wachet Auf*:

Questions concerning the construction of gender rarely enter into discussions of music. The absence of a feminist critique in music is not necessarily owing, however, to an anti-woman bias. Until there exists some way of dealing with music in general as a social discourse, gender will remain a non-issue. In this, it is treated no differently than any other matter one might wish to examine critically or ideologically.' (1992:52-53)

In *Wachet Auf*, the Soul is cast as an incomplete female - longing for the coming of the man. The metaphor employed is a 'nagging, passive-aggressive wife' (1992:53).

Yet underlying Bach's musical metaphors is an analogy; just as a husband patronizingly puts up with a complaining mate because he knows that her insecurity stems from her emotional dependence, so God tolerates (uni-sex) us and our frailties (1992:55).

In this, Bach was no different to the social conventions of his day, and this is McClary's point; Bach was not above them.

To anybody who knows these pieces fairly well, it is easy to follow McClary's argument. Yet if she had simply stated that, for example, the Soul is presented as a nagging wife, we would have been in a position similar to that in which we find ourselves with Frith - it may be true, but how do we know? McClary offers us evidence, in the form of extensive musical quotes from the text, and invites us to make up our own minds.

McClary goes on further to locate Bach in his time. Bach's synthesis of cultures was not well received in his time and he was canonized only after the codes and semiological strategies had become inactive. McClary's point here would not be well taken by post-structuralism. Bach was political and situated in his writing but others, such as early nineteenth century nationalists, nostalgic religious authoritarians, theorists gaining rules and norms from the study of his music, abstract expressionists, the 'authentic' recording

industry and performers who have no interest in social grounding of Bach have all neutralized him. The result of this is that the whole opus signifies greatness but events in individual pieces have no meaning at all.

The question is, then, why there is a need to locate eternity in Bach? McClary's answer to this is because 'in today's crisis of liberal humanism, we appear to be trying to hold onto the shreds of evidence for the universal truth-content of bourgeois ideology' (1992:57). In its articulation of the values of the emerging bourgeoisie Bach's music came to be seen as the way things must be - tonality is invested with an aura of absolute perfection.

McClary concludes with an argument for politicising Bach:

Thus we must confront Bach and the canon and resituate him in such a way as to acknowledge his prominence in musical and non-musical culture while not falling victim to it.

What I am suggesting here is deconstruction as a political act. It is not coincidental that most deconstructive enterprises have centered on classic texts of the eighteenth-century Enlightenment, for, as we have seen, these are the texts (and the musical repertoires) that most powerfully articulated the social values of the emergent bourgeoisie under the guise of universal rationality, objectivity, truth.' (1992:60)

McClary argues for a three-stage deconstruction. First, deconstruct the canon - show it to be socially grounded. Second, put these reinterpretations into performance practice. Finally, she argues for rewriting the tradition to appropriate Bach to political ends - this is, after all, what successive groups have already done to Bach. Finally, she gives a closing rationale for her project:

My portrait of Bach presented earlier clearly exhibits characteristics of the post-modern eclectic, of the ideologically marginalized artist empowering himself to appropriate, reinterpret, and manipulate to his own ends the signs and forms of dominant culture. His ultimate success in this enterprise can be a model to us all. In actively reclaiming Bach and the canon in order to put them to our uses, we can also reclaim ourselves (1992:62).

I have gone to some depth in outlining McClary's paper, not because I am necessarily attracted to her political argument, but because her method is an example of good practice in the sociology of music. Readers can check for themselves whether her categorisation of Bach as a 'post-modern eclectic' is justified by reference not only to what she has written, but also by what Bach has written. However, it also carries with it connotations of orthodox musical analysis in using textual quotes presupposing some musical sophistication in the reader and in this is indistinguishable from orthodox musicology. This raises an important question, whether popular music can be addressed in the same way; can it be examined in the same terms?

Peter Van der Merwe

Van der Merwe's book *The Origins of the Popular Style* (1992) shows clearly how relations between folk and popular music, popular music and classical music and African and European folk music can be explicated and demonstrated using musical examples. Merwe is not specifically looking for sociological connections but there are explicit and sometimes implicit connections between musical types and social class.

Two major concepts are developed in this work. First, there is what van der Merwe calls *Parlour music*. This is not meant to signify music played in the Parlour, and is not a reference to Victorian popular music, but refers to the popular music which developed out of classical music in the eighteenth century. Up to the end of that century, the distinction we now draw between classical and popular music was not at all clear. Van der Merwe cogently argues that parlour music survives in numerous forms today (including, still, pop songs) but is probably best represented this century by the 'standards' of the 1920s, 30s and 40s written by composers like Cole Porter, Irving Berlin and George Gershwin. This is the once dominant kind of popular music overthrown in the 1940s, and in the 1950s by rock and roll, according to Ryan (1985).

The other major concept developed by van der Merwe is the notion of *matrices*. These are ways of showing how strands of musical thought and influence can be located in music, whether popular or classical. These can be obvious similarities such as 6/8 time or

12-bar blues or can be much more subtle (for example, the use of a pentatonic scale). These matrices allow us to identify similarities between otherwise apparently disparate pieces of music.

The effect of these two concepts taken together is to blur some of the distinctions we continue to draw between musical types. Thus, 'commercial' or 'folk', 'authentic' or 'art' musics can be conceived of as having many features in common, and sometimes a common origin. For example, concerning parlour music:

The latter, which I call 'parlour music', covered an enormous spread of social class and artistic pretension. Between it and folk music lay a wide territory where folk and commercial popular music interacted: a world of itinerant semi-professional musicians, rustic dance bands, broadside ballads, and the like. Scholars now point out that much of 'folk music' really belonged to this world. (Some deny that there is such a thing as 'folk music' at all.) They cite the ballad singer who refreshed his memory with a printed or handwritten text, the supposedly naïve folk artists who were actually sophisticated performers, and the many commercially composed songs in the repertoires of folk singers (1992:17).

Other important issues developed by Merwe include the British and other European influences on the blues, and the development of harmony.

An extremely important conclusion of this work is that the important dialectic this century has been between African music and parlour music, and not between African and European folk music. Indeed he argues that in nineteenth century American folk music it is often difficult to distinguish between European and African influences because they were already greatly cross-fertilized.

Van der Merwe's work will appear throughout this thesis, but its importance methodologically is that it both attends to popular music at the level of the music itself and that the text is addressed directly. However, it must be noted that, as a work of musicology rather than sociology, its objectives cannot be the same. Nevertheless, where issues having clear sociological interest, such as the development of the blues, are

concerned, van der Merwe has given us the musicological fundamentals from which to begin the sociological discussion.

Gunther Schuller in his book *Early Jazz* (1977) used orthodox musical notation to discuss jazz and in this is similar to van der Merwe (although two decades earlier). Schuller, however, approached his work entirely from a musicological standpoint. Nevertheless, this work provided an example for and a spur to the scholarly study of jazz and, by implication, other popular and folk musics.

John Shepherd in *Music and Male Hegemony* (1992) wishes to see all music, including popular music, treated seriously and given the same status as classical music. Subcultural work (he names Willis and Hebdige especially) on music seems to centre on men and not on the experiences of women. He wants to see how the 'politically personal' can be articulated from within internal processes of music:

More specifically, I seek to elaborate a theoretical model in terms of which the parameters of timbre, pitch and rhythm, in both "classical" and "popular" musics, can be linked to male hegemonic processes of gender typing and of cultural reproduction and resistance.
(1992:152)

Shepherd begins from the premise that worlds of culture and nature are inextricably linked through processes of social interaction. But the material world is still important. Material differences between men and women are crucial in defining the world for us. Because men do not have within them the source of life they find it necessary to have exclusive access to one who has - they must control a woman. While women value social relatedness as the way through which people are defined, men are not capable of this because they control another. The male desire to control women parallels their desire to control the world. But men need the 'relational and emotional' - they cannot permanently deny it. It is therefore degraded as inferior, as being in need of control by rational men. In order to be successful women must be objectified and presented as amenable for control by men. Social relations being stripped from the notion of the source of life means that we are left only with sex.

Men compensate for lack of biological reproduction control with control of cultural production. This is clearly seen in mapping and notational procedures - among which music figures prominently. Male hegemony is essentially visual - in contrast, touch and sound both necessarily involve acknowledgement of the world which would then ground life as materially based. Notions of human sexuality and the consequent 'freezing' and projection of women as sexual objects, constitute little more than a cultural construct representing male dominance in the world.

These observations make omissions of women in works by Shepherd himself, Willis and Hebdige highly conspicuous. They tend to revolve around questions of male political power. But are they looking in the right place? For the seeds of cultural reproduction are sown in the home, not in the public world. Thus, social stratification is more likely to be extension of gender relations than *vice-versa*. Industrial capitalism powerfully exploits consequences of male conceptualization of people as objects decontextualized from social relations.

Post-Renaissance Europe has become a reification without people - human values only survive among the powerless in cracks and margins. The comparative experiential and emotional richness of proletarianized and minority ethnic cultures can in this sense be viewed as a projection through social stratification of values more fundamentally associated with the world of women.

Having thus positioned his writing in very much a materialist paradigm, Shepherd turns to his central concern of music, gender and social stratification.

Visual stress on controlling the world has had consequences for all music which in itself constitutes a threat to visually mediated hegemony of scribal elites. Sound reminds of the world outside. In music, timbre constitutes its nature - we can imagine sound without pitch and without end, but we cannot imagine sound without timbre.

The existence of music, like the existence of women, is potentially threatening to men to the extent that it (sonically) insists on the social relatedness of human worlds and as a consequence implicitly demands that individuals respond. When this happens music

reminds men of the fragile and atrophied nature of their control over the world ... the male fear of women is mirrored in 'the threat posed by the uncontrollable musical experience to the "moral fibre" of the rationalistic scribe-state' (1992:158).

This threat to male hegemony posed by music cannot be denied and therefore must be controlled by isolating pitch and rhythm in a 'fully analytic' notation. This de-contextualizes articulation by isolating them from timbre. The classical tradition is highly standardized and depends on notation:

Notes stripped of much of their inherent sonic possibilities become a social code for the brand of individualism characteristic of industrial capitalist societies. However, the individualism of those with power and influence is not at all the same as the rich, emotive, individuality-in-community of proletarianized cultures. It may be an individualism capable of initiative and a singular point of view, but it is, at the same time, an individualism that is standardised by imperatives of social acceptability and demonstrated loyalty. (1992:159)

The classical tradition has been visually standardised. But this standardisation is mythical; good classical performances depend on subtle variations and some instruments depend on variations in pitch, e.g., vibrato. But the constraints are still there, the norms still present. Musical interpretation and creativity are rendered safe and harmless by adherence to the dictates of a bureaucratic norm.

Shepherd holds that 'it is the ideal homogeneity of pitches, rhythms and timbres that enables 'classical' music to be exclusively articulated through a finite, closed and infinitely repeatable musical system echoing and giving expression to the closed, finite and infinitely repeatable nature of capitalist social relations' (1992:160). Ambiguity of function is not permitted in classical music. Just as capitalist social relations appear rational, so too does classical music. Logical relations begin when medieval finals start to relate to each other as scales. Previously autonomous finals became subservient to a unified scheme. The ear was directed away from the internal qualities to external and unambiguous relations with other notes. ' "Classical" music is, then yet another justification of the ideology whereby people become objects and systems dominate individuals' (1992:161). Because the relations of classical music are immanent, they appear to express the relations of music itself. This is similar to Barthes' notion of

écriture classique, found in mid-seventeenth to mid-nineteenth century France; writing that seemed to be the essence of writing. But as Barthes points out, there is no such thing as 'white writing' - no writing or music is opaque. Clarity is merely a rhetorical attribute. Similarly:

The particular structuring of the world implicit in 'classical' music can only be properly penetrated, deconstructed, when it is realized that the dominant myth of post-Renaissance 'educated' Western culture *is* that it is the culture without myth ...In Barthes' terms it is 'readerly'. It does not allow the spectator to complete the meaning. (161-2)

'Classical' music, then, is readerly with little *jouissance*. It allows only little dialect between music and listener.

Some 'popular' forms of music, on the other hand, do know a certain *jouissance*, do assert an appreciable degree of subjectivity, and do subvert, *if only partially*, the bureaucratized norms of 'classical' music. The structures of many Afro-American and Afro-American influenced 'popular' musics reflect the situation of proletarianized peoples contained by social institutions that they cannot influence or affect in any consequential fashion. Expressive musical statements are made within the sharply defined harmonic-rhythmic framework derived from 'classical music' through devices such as inflection of rhythm and timbre, individuated 'dirty' timbres and improvisation. (1992:162)

This reflects the tension of living in given structures and can be seen as a way of winning back cultural space. The tactics employed by proletarians can be shown by altering harmonic sequences (e.g. adding 7ths) and emphasising the off-beat. Despite these measures, the dispossessed seldom achieve true transcendence, however. The power of the capitalist structure still seems inevitable.

Turning to issues of timbre and gender, Shepherd notes how timbre is constrained in both classical and pop music by the harmonic-rhythmic framework. In classical music, students are taught how to achieve pure timbre (which is a tactic to compensate for lack of visual control). Timbre is thought therefore to be uninteresting. But like anything else, timbre is not opaque - it still speaks.

Pop timbres are otherwise constrained. 'Dirty' timbres only use part of the harmonic range and are thus inherently writerly - they leave space for completion. This provides room for interaction, but even this freedom seems constrained:

It is now appropriate for me to lay out this argument against the mediation brought on by gender. If the timbres of 'popular' musics seem, through their 'incompleteness', to offer the possibility for meaningful dialogue between subjects, then such a possibility, at the cultural level of gender relations, is rendered extremely difficult because of the nature of male hegemony. This thesis can be explored by reference to two kinds of 'popular' music, hard or 'cock' rock and 'soft' rock or 'Top 40'/AM ballads, the particular gender identities with which they are traditionally associated, and the vocal timbres that they typically spawn (1992:164-5).

'Cock' rock is an explicit, aggressive expression of male sexuality as performed by Mick Jagger and Rod Stewart and Heavy Metal bands amongst others. Fear of women can be found in the songs and Shepherd holds that the *macho* stance of 'cock' rockers is a fantasy for men. Male solidarity in rock is a protection against the female.

The reverse side of 'cock' rock is 'soft' rock or 'Top 40' pop. This latter music is based on the sentimentality of the ballad form, which is infused, to a greater or lesser extent, with elements drawn from mainstream rock music. (1992:165)

'Soft' rock speaks to three 'gender locations': the young girl or housewife; the young and vulnerable male; the woman as a sex object - a visual 'come on'. Distinctive timbres are associated with 'cock' and 'soft' rock. 'Cock' rock is rasping; it makes restricted use of the vocal chords. Its origins, according to Shepherd, may be found in the blues. 'Soft' rock timbre, however, reflects woman as nurturer. Shepherd describes it as 'soft and warm'. 'Soft' rock timbres emphasise chest tones: 'The physiology of sound production in this case seems to speak to a person more fully aware of her inner, experiential being in offering herself as a source of emotional nourishment' (1992:166). 'Young and vulnerable males' (for example, Paul McCartney singing *Yesterday*), although 'softer and warmer' than 'cock' rockers, still produce head tones and not chest tones and are thus still empty by comparison with the chest tones of woman-as-nurturer. The harmonics

employed in 'soft' rock allow of some openness and synergy partly based in its three 'gender locations'.

'Cock' rockers, on the other hand, declare themselves open but do not allow anyone in for completion. The vision is inward and narcissistic: 'They attempt to complete themselves, and in this sense the masturbatory symbolism of guitar playing is not without significance' (1992:167). The exclusion of female timbres can be seen as a way of keeping women external and in their place. This does not mean that classical pure timbres are more complete than 'cock', because classical timbres are trying to reflect the purity of rational music, not whole male/female relations. In the classical voice, 'to use Barthes' terminology, the grain of the voice is flattened to filter out *jouissance*, thrill, erotic ecstasy' (1992:168).

'Cock' rock timbres are therefore constituted by Shepherd as being 'symptomatic of a control of women through an exclusion of other, frequently softer timbres' (1992:169). Where women such as the classic blues singers - Shepherd mentions Bessie Smith and Ma Rainey - occupy a masculine social space, the voice displays a vocal sheen and vocal hardness similar to that used by singers of the third gender location, woman as sex object.

Shepherd concludes that the vast majority of Western music articulates male hegemony. Classical music implies an androgenized sense of self. Incomplete 'dirty' tones in some popular musics suggest tension with orthodoxy but 'cock' rock excludes meaningful dialogue; it is essentially a male way of looking at the world. Unlike, Shepherd infers, their classical counterparts, popular musicians do not need to feel constrained by the music they play - they can renegotiate notions of gender and sexuality:

Negotiation is the key concept in understanding how the politically personal is articulated from within the internal processes of music. ... The technical characteristics of music ... represent little more than sites over and through which power may be mediated textually. The deconstruction of meaning in music requires not only a catholicity of theories and methodologies, but also a variety of entry points. However, without the elaboration of some initial theoretical models, it is difficult to conceive a way into understanding the

technical characteristics of music as sites for the textual mediation of personal power (1992:172).

Shepherd has been described in some length for the clear way in which he links music into deep issues of social structure. He has, moreover, proposed a way in which we might begin to address popular music in the same way as we can discuss (at least to some extent) classical. Yet he states that the musical touchstone for this debate - timbre, and especially vocal timbre - is not a core issue for classical music. This clearly leaves him in the same conceptual camp as Adorno - popular music cannot be addressed using the same tools as those used for the analysis of classical music. But, and this does mark a departure from Adorno, it can and should be addressed and can yield important conclusions and reveal homologies.

There is, in fact, another theory addressing female vocal timbres, one which would possibly allow Shepherd to account for the relative unimportance of timbre for classical music. Lomax's statistical and semi-scientific study of folk music which he calls cantometrics has identified a link between sexual permissiveness and singing styles.

Where feminine premarital sexual activity is restricted or severely sanctioned, narrowing [of the voice] and nasality, both signs of tension, become prominent and constant features of a culture's singing style, and relaxed vocalizing is relatively uncommon. Where sexual standards for women are permissive and there are rules that pertain in the case of pregnancy, narrowing usually does not occur, nasality tends to be absent, and the singing voice is open and relaxed (Lomax 1978:195-6)

The narrow, nasal style is also described as *rasp* and it is this which characterizes male hegemonic cultures (to use Shepherd's expression). On the other hand, the open style is associated with reduced male dominance. While these may not exactly equate to Shepherd's head tones and chest tones (these expressions deriving immediately from received musicology), it is clear that they are as expressive of the sounds produced by women popular music singers:

We have noted that many of today's White women troubadours employ two or more voices, though one cannot simply categorize them as raspy-male and liquid-female. Joni

Mitchell has a pale, little-girl pipe, a sensually 'dark' Negro woman's voice, and occasionally an Amerindian male rasp ... Janis Joplin is the Blackest of those White singers who being militantly feminist, almost metamorphose female eroticism into male grating. Occasionally she calls on a very high, little-girl timbre, as in her famous version of 'Summertime', but her femaleness here, being innately conscious of victimization and rape, is not far from hysteria (Mellers 1986:255-6).

By seeing popular music in the context of folk as well as classical music, Shepherd may have been able to overcome the tendency of 'serious' music to ignore timbre.

Richard Middleton's paper *Musical Repetition* (1986) likewise makes use of musical structures (in this case, specifically syntax) in trying to understand why we find pleasure in popular music. Middleton points out that studies of popular music generally lack 'any sustained examination of the pleasures produced by the musical syntaxes themselves. He thus insists on a return to the texts and does indeed describe a number of them in terms of his discussion of repetition. At the same time, however, he clearly locates popular music as one element of the musical totality itself:

Why *do* listeners find interest and pleasure in hearing the same thing over again? To be able to answer this question, which has troubled not only mass-cultural theory but also traditional philosophical aesthetics, as well as more recent approaches such as psychoanalysis and information theory, would tell us more about the nature of popular music, and hence, *mutatis mutandis*, about music in general, than almost anything else (1986:160).

This approach, similar to my own, allows Middleton to dispense with Adorno's argument (which, Middleton points out is also held in common sense) that repetition in popular music is analogous to Fordist standardisation and should therefore be seen as a type of social control in late capitalism. By categorising types of repetition between musematic (where a *museme*, by analogy with *phoneme*, is a 'minimal unit of expression' (163) and discursive (involving longer structures), he is able to draw upon examples of popular music from the nineteenth century onward to justify his argument¹¹. In fact, the discussion opens a discursive space between theories of social control (which Middleton does not

¹¹ As we have seen, repetition is central to most musical structures, including the *Concerto Grosso*. There is every reason to believe that Middleton's anticipation of an extension of his work into 'music in general' is at least feasible.

deny) and a deep pleasure, both mediated by musical repetition. Using notions from Barthes and Freud, Middleton shows how the pleasure we feel can be located in the aural relationship between mother and child, marked by repeated sounds which come before the linguistic formation of the subject.

The point that I have been making here is that it is possible to address music in general and popular music in particular with methodologies which allow the text to speak. One thing that all writers on the sociology of music agree is that music does not emerge from an eternal vacuum signifying universal truths, as Levi-Strauss would have us believe. Instead, music is tied to the socio-cultural contingencies of its origin. It is demonstrating these homologies that is the task of sociological analysis and this can only be done by identifying and addressing structures in the music; in turn this is only possible if the musical text is made available. The problem as I conceive it is how to define the musical text without sound through the written word. Certainly, it would be possible to provide the reader with a multi-media package, but there are limitations to this. Such a system makes extra demands on the reader, so that he or she has to have access to playback facilities while using the text. This automatically limits the environment in which the reading can take place and interrupts the flow. It has also been my experience that, for a non-musical reader, the music itself is of limited value; the argument can be set out more easily on paper and can be followed by the lay reader, provided that that person takes for granted the musicology.

Semiotics and Post-Structuralism

A further approach to musical analysis derives from the Structuralist tradition. Musical semiotics treats the musical note as the phoneme in the musical semiological system - a 'grammar of melody'¹². This tends to a quasi-scientific approach in that its object is to define the workings of individual units of music in terms of their relations to other units in the same system, and not to their relations at other levels.

¹² See, for example, Baroni and Jacobini (1978).

But, as with all cultural symbols, music speaks at various levels, and not just at the level of science. Consider Barthes' notion of the 'Third Meaning'. Barthes identifies three levels of meaning; first, the informational level, in which a message is put across: next, a symbolic level, a second order semiotics: and the third meaning, the obtuse meaning. This is much less easy to define, and entails the recognition that what we see or hear is not explained solely by first or second level semiological analysis. In order to bring it to light, therefore, a less prescribed version of analysis must be followed (Barthes, 1984:53). If this is true of cinema stills, how much more insight might such an approach offer to sign systems lacking phenomenal referents? The inference is that as well as being rigorous, the analysis must also be interpretative and to some extent intuitive.

The musical note can be conceived of as parallel to the linguistic phoneme, where a 'phoneme' is any of the smallest units of significant sound. Just as the linguistic phoneme has either no value at all or very little when uttered in absolute isolation, so the musical note is either without or with severely limited signification when played alone¹³. Clearly, then, the note is a relation. In a similar way the melodic sequence can be thought of as syntagmatic, and harmonic structures as paradigmatic. In this sense, a structural approach to music is a realisable project.

However, while the notion of *parole* may be readily seen in the actual musical sound carried by sound-waves, the question of music's *langue* is not so readily resolved. It is, in fact, the major problem confronting musical analysis, for, while in language it is always possible to appeal to some describable meaning, that option is simply not available in music¹⁴. For music is a 'meaningful context not bound to a conceptual scheme' (Schutz, 1964:159).

With music it is clear that to accept the concept 'sign' entails an acceptance of the opposition between sensible (i.e., the raw sound impinging on us) and intelligible¹⁵. This

¹³ The existence of individuals possessing 'perfect pitch' (the ability to name the pitch of a note without reference to an external agent (e.g. a musical instrument) may seem to contradict this point. However, perfect pitch is not static - as possessors age the estimation of pitch tends to drop by a semitone - and its very existence confirms the relational character of the musical note. For a note can only be called 'C' because it is not A, F# or any other value in the semiological system.

¹⁴ For a useful discussion of some of the implications of the tension between *langue* and *parole*, see Sturrock (1986:8-13)

¹⁵ '...the concept of the sign cannot in itself bypass this opposition between the sensible and the intelligible. The concept of the sign is determined by this opposition' (Derrida, 1972:250).

notion allows us to some extent to locate the ‘meaning’ of music in the text itself, and to bypass any appeal to a transcendent signified¹⁶. We are, in this sense, no longer the slaves of ‘meaning’.

A link between this version of music and post-structural analysis comes from Derrida. For Derrida, a significant event in the history of the social sciences is the abandonment of the search for a centre in structural analysis¹⁷. Previously, the concept of structure always entailed the notion of centre, or origin, which was conceived of as the point where the subdivision of contents, elements or terms was no longer possible. However, as a notion it was paradoxical in that although it was the phenomenon which governed the structure, by its functional existence it must escape structure itself (Derrida, 1972:248).

According to Derrida, by positing the existence of ‘centre’, reassurance was felt and anxiety mastered; freeplay was possible, but within certain limits which were not themselves available to freeplay. The history of art appreciation is full of the search for a centre. It is the desire of what Barthes calls an ‘average’ culture to be apprised of, acquainted with, the meaning of artistic texts:

Such a culture, defined by the growth of the number of listeners and the disappearance of practitioners (no more amateurs), wants art, wants music, provided they be clear, that they ‘translate’ an emotion and represent a signified (the ‘meaning’ of a poem); an art that inoculates pleasure (by reducing it to a known, coded emotion) and reconciles the subject to what in music can be said: what is said about it, predicatively, by Institution, Criticism, Opinion (Barthes, 1982:185).

Derrida and Barthes together urge us to treat the object of study as inherently uncertain. We cannot know that what we understand as the ‘meaning’ of a work of art is, indeed, its

¹⁶ This notion resonates with Gilroy’s conception of black music as ‘anti-anti-essentialist’. The essentialist position holds that black music is transmitting essential truths about ‘blackness’, while the opposite position suggests that music speaks to the ‘here and now’, and nothing more. Both are inadequate for Gilroy:

... I believe it is possible to approach the music as a *changing* rather than an unchanging same. Today, this involves the difficult task of striving to comprehend the reproduction of cultural transitions not in the unproblematic transmission of a fixed essence through time but in the breaks and interruptions which suggest that the invocation of tradition may itself be a distinct, though covert, response to the destabilizing flux of the post-contemporary world (Gilroy 1993:101)

¹⁷ Interestingly, Derrida gives a ‘centre’ for this ‘event’, in citing Nietzsche, Freud and Heidegger as being in some senses ‘responsible’ for it. (Derrida, 1972:250).

meaning. In this reading, the search for a meaning is itself literally meaningless. But this does not entail abandoning the study; what it suggests is that we try to describe the way in which we work with the text to produce 'sense'. Later in this study, for example, (Chapter 4) I seek to take this notion a step further to suggest why a certain musical form at a certain time and in a particular society might have made 'sense' and how it still has the potential to make 'sense' today.

A note on forms of musical representation¹⁸

I have earlier (pages 7-8) outlined the problem of the graphical representation of musical works. McClary, van der Merwe and Schuller offer one solution, but the use of orthodox notation is specific to the classical tradition. The compromise I am offering here is the use of charts, or schemata. The setting out of musical pieces in chart form is not new (see McClary 1992:25 and 45, Schuller 1977:157, 165 and 261 or Wright 1987:190-242), but it has tended to be done to show intrinsic musical patterns. My aim is only partly to show such features. In the main I intend the various schemata to assist in identifying recurrent features of music ('matrices') which allow us to approach affinities of form and hence genre.

Along with the use of visually helpful schemata, more orthodox methods are employed, such as population statistics and social history. An important part of this research has been other works in the area and these are interrogated in the light of data arising from textual analysis. The net result is the location of the musical work in its time and place and allowing its voice to be heard in those contexts. While true objectivity is not a genuine possibility, this methodology does allow some distance and gives some space for a two-way exchange of information between the data and the theory. Too often, the underlying theory is allowed to shape the musical data itself. This happens even with those authors I have been recommending above as providing examples of good practice.

¹⁸ Remarks on forms of musical representation have also been made in the Preface.

Chord sequences (also called chord charts and chord progressions)

This type of chart has been referred to in the preface. These are the most common form of written musical instructions found in the popular music field. The origin lies with the Baroque figured bass - and thus may be further evidence in support of van der Merwe's assertion that the split between classical and popular music did not occur until the end of the eighteenth century. They are of great value to rhythm section (continuo?) players because they specify only the chords to be played and do not restrict the player to any particular chord inversion or melodic line. They are, then, on the one hand easier to read (many players can sight read chord sequences but not formal musical notation) and on the other better suited to music which relies heavily on improvisation, such as jazz and many types of popular music. They allow the reader to see at a glance certain similarities of form, and allow the identification of certain matrices (such as 32 bar chord sequences, or indeed similarities of harmonic progression). As we shall see below, Cole Porter's 1956 song *Now You Has Jazz* can be shown by this method to have clear references to twelve-bar blues despite having no obvious blues-like quality at the aural level¹⁹. The use of this type of notation is facilitated by the fact that Western popular music tends to be constructed in sections of two bars length which are combined into lines of eight bars. Simple folk tunes may remain at the length of eight bars, or they may combine with other similar constructions to form pieces in multiples of eight - normally 16 or 32 bars. Thus, a pattern is built up on the page of lines of eight bars in length. This is convenient both to read and to understand underlying patterns.

Grids

An example of this type of diagram has been given in the preface. These work at a higher level of abstraction than do chord sequences, in that they attempt to show the overall structure of complex musical pieces. As such, they are mainly of value where pieces having multiple themes are concerned. However, again, they can allow comparison of

¹⁹ The theme tune for the popular television programme *Blind Date* is also a twelve-bar blues. This has little analytical interest, except to show how adaptable the genre has become, and how acceptable a form which has a non-standard length.

form between apparently disparate musical genres. In this thesis, the technique is mainly used to show similarities between marches, ragtime and early jazz.

McClary adopts a critical position, locating Bach firmly as a radical, at least potentially. Our 'kidnapping' of Bach is meant to enable us to allow Bach to speak today with the same radical voice he used in the seventeenth century. McClary is greatly influenced by Adorno, a debt she openly acknowledges.

Van der Merwe implicitly locates folk music with working class, whether urban or rural. This equation is made on a taken-for-granted basis. Via the notions of 'parlour music' and 'matrices' he is able to link pre-industrial, industrial and post-industrial proletariats in the same musical community, but again it is mainly extra textual theory and presupposition which guides the locus of musicality.

Post-modernism in the form of Derrida's notion of arche-writing allows us to consider recorded work and text as the same thing. This is especially useful where folk/popular music is concerned because its transmission does not depend on being written and never has. Arche-writing is a concept employed by Derrida as a way of countering the logocentrism of structuralist forms of analysis. Derrida considers the search for an original, natural language misplaced, for any such language was in itself already a 'writing'. We cannot therefore possess language, because all language, spoken or written, is arche-writing, the system underlying them both, and hence by definition external (Derrida 1976:56). With music, unlike language, the desire is to see the 'real' music in the text - the text, rather than the sound, is central. The text is seen as the arbitrator of disputes; if there is a question over how a piece of music should sound, the appeal is made to the text, if possible in the composer's own hand. This has caused popular music during this century to be systematically devalued, for a 'text' defining performance does not normally exist. However, if we develop the notion of arche-writing to suggest that sound and the written text are two dimensions of the same thing, there is no supremacy due to the written text; indeed, it is, as far as popular music is concerned, simply superfluous.

This cultural dominance of the written text has had the effect in some quarters of bringing about attempts to transcribe recorded works (often of jazz piano pieces) (see, for example, Dapogny 1982). Such transcriptions are always likely to be approximations, and do not stand for the music they represent from the simple standpoint that the transcription is of improvisations in the first place. The stability of the music on the paper is unfaithful to the recorded work. But if *all* writing on music is dismissed then even chord sequences or grids would be unavailable. The notion of arche-writing allows us to consider some form of notation as both possible and desirable. In this sense, the schemata are a useful compromise. They preserve a notational record of the work without pretending to be a transcription and they allow a detour around the problem of representing 'live' performance (recorded or not) of music not normally fully notated.

Where writers feel the music cannot speak clearly to them on certain issues, they often turn to lyrics. This is true of some of the pieces addressed above; Frith sees lyrics as a possible move towards aesthetics of popular music, McClary uses the words of *Wachet Auf Auf* as a way of exploring the soul-Jesus dialogue and attitudes to gender. Gilroy also sees words as a way of exploring misogyny. Lyrics can help to reinforce a point, but the music should remain analytically paramount. Otherwise, there is the risk that a form of logocentrism may obscure the music itself and there might be a temptation to attend to vocal pieces at the expense of non-vocal.

The next three chapters of this thesis will address different forms of popular music this century, utilising the method outlined above. These are: *Pep*, a piano piece by Jelly Roll Morton; an interrogation of the 1956 Cole Porter musical *High Society*; a consideration of some of the Beatle's works in connection with Meller's work; and, finally, an overview of the Chicago 'Jazz Age' to attempt to understand the working of myth in that connection.

Conclusion:

By way of concluding this chapter, I offer the following:

Studies denying the text a voice offer closed prescriptive interpretations. The conclusions may be valid but without the text in some form it is impossible to know. It is certainly legitimate to ask whether other areas of sociology be inclined to accept assertion as valid methodology. They also function as textual closure. The writer's views of the text become those of the text and close other possible readings.

Musical texts, as any others, do not signify simple modes of feeling. They are not wholly transcendent, signifying eternal reality; they are also not anti-anti-essentialist. They are, instead, products of our interpretative work and are authored as such. They belong to the *socius* but they can still be located within known social moments.

I take seriously the notion of arche-writing. Music, folk or other, recorded or notated, shares a similar quality. Essential to understanding the musical sign is understanding the notion of 'trace'. No musical sign stands alone. Instead, whatever we assume to be its 'meaning' the musical sign carries connotations which we do not necessarily fully appreciate (either as 'composer' or 'listener' authors) but which contribute to that 'meaning'.

To investigate the 'meaning' of a musical work is to look for homologies in the way recommended by McClary. However, her particular method (using quotes from published works) is more attuned to the orthodox tradition than to popular music.

For my purposes I am advocating mainly the use of two chart forms. First, the overall 'grid', suitable for multi-thematic pieces such as rags and early jazz. Second, chord sequences showing the underlying harmonic structures as well as some data on larger structures (such as the number of bars). Other forms of diagram, such as structuralist triangles, can also be used. Information generated by this method can be triangulated with social and cultural history to draw supported conclusions.

The object is to look beneath the pheno-text (the kind of information generated (presumably) by attending to the lyrics of popular song) and to approach the geno-text via the text itself. The method recommended here at least allows movement towards deep meaning structures while avoiding (a) the assumptions of most work on popular music and (b) the elitist overtones of McClary's work.

Chapter 4: *Pep* - New Orleans Jazz and Homology

Introduction and Background

Jazz music has for some decades been the object of serious study. The immediate pre-war period in Europe and the United States saw a revival of interest in the earliest known jazz form, that which flourished in and around New Orleans at the turn of the century.

The initial focus on the roots of jazz led inevitably to a serious concern with its prehistory. Without doubt it appeared quite suddenly on the scene, with few or no clues as to its forerunners. At first, it was considered that the matter was settled by locating two cultural strands supposedly evident in the music, these being African and European. This thesis has been retained without question in most books dealing with the subject. In its simplest form, it holds that slaves and ex-slaves in New Orleans retained much of their African musical heritage, and this was 'mixed' with white 'European' style music to produce jazz. This is the origin of the Creation myth of New Orleans jazz (and, since New Orleans jazz is usually taken as the starting point for histories of twentieth century popular music, stands as the principal Creation myth for popular music of the twentieth century). The complicated theoretical question of the origin of jazz as a socio-cultural form is, in such works, considered settled before it is even asked.

The 'cause' of the music is known, is the implication; why bother to question it again? This most crucial and possibly revealing issue is thus assumed to be no issue at all. All that is required of writers is to give further proofs of the pre-existing theory, grounded in myth.

Usually running concurrently with this theory is another component of the myth which holds that New Orleans jazz developed in the particular way that it did by virtue of cheap instruments available after the Civil War. The inference is that New Orleans blacks had no way of playing instrumental music prior to that time:

they cultivated the art of music, always a permitted avenue of achievement to the Negro, the one avenue where he can safely achieve success and prove himself the “superior” of the white man.

Cheap instruments, left behind by the Confederate Army bands, filled the pawnshops. Creole freedmen could afford to buy instruments and pay for music lessons as few other Southern Negroes could. (Lomax, 1956:78)

Despite the fact that research has shown both theories to be inadequate from an historical point of view (as will be shown below), they are still adhered to presumably because they render the difficult and complex issue of the origins of jazz harmless. There is undoubtedly, some truth in them, but they are not sufficient in themselves, whether jointly or separately, to account for the socio-cultural form known as New Orleans jazz. They are major components of the Creation myth.

This Chapter will show, by the examination of a jazz piece, that the attempt to assign ‘causes’ to the origins of New Orleans jazz is futile, since the music itself amounts to the rejection of origin, of ‘centre’. It is to the broader ongoing process of society that we must look, not to explain the music, but to attempt to increase our knowledge and understanding of it from a sociological perspective. As will become clear, this perspective is one of very few, indeed possibly the only one which can truly approach the musical text itself.

At a superficial level, it is quite true, and indeed inescapable, that jazz must in some sense be seen as the Cultural outcome of the experience of black people, originally from Africa, in the European cultural atmosphere of New Orleans. The mistake is to assume that that is all that can be said. The sociology of jazz can hardly overlook the fact that there are a highly interesting and - post 1865 at least - fairly well documented set of relationships surrounding the genesis of jazz. At least one writer from an ethnomusicological point of view has expressed some of them in binary opposite form, so compelling is the pattern:

Downtown.....and...Uptown
Mulatto.....and...Black

Upper Casteand...Lower caste
 Trades and Professions. ...and...Day labourers
 Accepted (somewhat)... ..and...Jim-crowed
 Educated.....and...Illiterate
 Sophisticated.....and...From the country (Lomax, 1956:84)

Here, Lomax is offering a refined form of the argument that jazz is a product of the fusion of African and European musical forms. The variant of the thesis as offered by him is that the productive fusion occurred when the Creoles of New Orleans, segregated for the first time in post-Reconstruction Louisiana, were forced to mix with Uptown blacks. Thus, the European music played by the Creoles had, for the first time, to compete with African influenced blues and African-style rhythms, and out of the mix came jazz. While the binary opposites given by Lomax are a useful start, they are posited on a set of rather naive and taken-for-granted notions about culture and cultural forms which do not stand scrutiny from a sociological point of view, however well they fulfil common-sense expectations. It is worth indicating here, however, that Lomax's thesis is challenged in at least two specific areas here. Firstly, according to Lomax's assertion, the Creole Jelly Roll Morton should have learned to play blues as a secondary skill, more 'European' styles (such as ragtime) having been mastered first. This is indeed the sequence of events offered by Morton in the biographical series of recordings made by him for the Library of Congress in 1938. However, one of Morton's contemporaries has described him as a good blues player before he learned any other styles. Secondly, and this criticism can be levelled at all writers on jazz who posit the naive "African music + European music = jazz" equation, work in the field by Paul Oliver has suggested that any connection between the drumming of the West African rain forest and jazz is far from straightforward. This study has seriously compromised those works on jazz - virtually all of them - which posit this connection. (Oliver, 1970).

I wish to put the case in this section for a reworking of some of the basic ideas used in the study of jazz. The sociological perspective - hardly surprisingly - provides a strong base for such a study. For the sociological tradition has come up against, and if not vanquished, has at least come to terms with many of the issues which have proved stumbling-blocks to students of jazz. For example, sociologists are warned from the start

to be wary of taking for granted a respondent's claims, and it was his willingness to do just that which, to some extent, led Lomax to formulate a theory which is now highly questionable. Numerous ethnographies have faced this same problem, and one way around it is the use of the notion of 'thick description'(Geertz 1993:6-10). We do not have to rely on informants' testimonies, whether Jelly Roll Morton telling us that he did not play the blues, or his contemporary telling us that he did; as Moerman put it: 'Folk beliefs have honourable status but they are not the same intellectual object as a scientific analysis' (Moerman, in Turner, 1975:55). Sociology should take seriously the utterances of men who are or have been close to the phenomenon of jazz, but it must also take other factors into account. The tradition of cultural analysis, moreover, has taught us to beware of looking for 'causes' of cultural phenomena. Cultural forms do not 'just happen', it is true; but on the other hand, the occasion of their appearance is likely to involve more than a simple meeting of cultures. It would be an obvious fallacy to say that all that George Orwell's work signifies is the conjunction of his upper class upbringing and the proletarian life-styles in which he to some extent participated, for example. This point does have to be noted, but there is much more to Orwell's work than that. With literary work the ludicrous nature of such facile arguments is fairly clear; yet, while it is less clear where music is concerned, it is nonetheless true. The fact is that the myth has taken the place of a serious investigation. For example, it has been known for most of the century that the French Quarter of New Orleans, a district considered central to the development of jazz, was populated, in the decades surrounding the turn of the century, by immigrants from Italy and Ireland, as well as by the 'colored' Creoles and 'Negroes' of Lomax's book. These Italians (in bands such as the New Orleans Rhythm Kings and the Original Dixieland Jazz Band, amongst others) were at least as prominent in the history of early jazz as black performers yet rate scarcely a mention in Lomax's book. This is a reflection of another myth - the Noble Savage - which holds in part that because they were not black they could not play jazz. The myth is not enough; one way forward, suggested by sociological work in other cultural areas, is the close study of a musical text of jazz, and this will be undertaken in the second part of this Chapter.

As far as I am aware, this has never been attempted so far in terms of the cultural elements in jazz, and indeed was not attempted from any point of view at all until

Schuller's highly influential *Early Jazz* (Schuller, 1969). In view of the economic impact of jazz and its related American musical forms, it is time to begin to remedy this neglect.

New Orleans

New Orleans was founded in 1718 and named after the duc d'Orleans, then Regent of France. It was the administrative centre of French Louisiana until it was ceded to Spain in 1763. In 1800, however, it was returned to France, and sold, along with the rest of Louisiana, by Napoleon to the United States in 1803. This is the treaty known as the Louisiana Purchase, and was significant in opening the West to US expansion. For Louisiana was not the comparatively small area of the State of Louisiana today; it was a vast territory which stretched from the Gulf of Mexico to the Canadian border. It was and remains still the most Latin of America's cities. As Oliver puts it:

In 1803 New Orleans, as part of the Louisiana Purchase, became American. French traditions persisted and to some extent persist still, and among these was a liberalism towards the Negroes of the city not to be found elsewhere. The confining of slave celebrations to Congo Square might be seen as a contraction of these liberties, but drumming, along with other forms of musical expression, nevertheless continued in the predominantly Catholic city to a degree that the Protestant state could not tolerate. (Oliver, 1970:81)

There can be little doubt that the French and Spanish background to the history of New Orleans is greatly implicated in the culture of the city. Not only were there differences in law and custom concerning the treatment of slaves (Banton, 1967:110), the slaves' statuses as religious beings ensured that they received human treatment:

In the Spanish view the slave had a right to become a Christian, to be baptized, and to be considered a member of the Christian community. Slave and master must both recognize their relationship to each other as moral beings and as brothers in Christ...

In the British West Indies, by contrast, slaves were almost completely denied the privileges of Christianity. In the United States there was no systematic opposition to Christian instruction for the slaves, but little mission work was undertaken by white ministers of religion relative to the number of slaves. When Christianity spread among Negroes in the

Southern States it was largely through the leadership of Negro preachers. (Banton, 1967:112)

This is not to idealise a most unsatisfactory state of affairs, for a Christian slave is still a slave. But as a moment in the cultural background of jazz, it is worth being aware of the implications of the colonial history of the town in which it emerged.

There is general - indeed inevitable - agreement on the primacy of New Orleans in the history and sociology of jazz.

As Oliver states, New Orleans allowed African traditions of drumming and dancing to continue long after they were banned elsewhere in the United States. It is not entirely clear when the Congo Square (now Beauregard Square) dancing came to an end, but according to Lomax, African drums could still be heard in New Orleans at the time of the birth of Jelly Roll Morton, that is, until the 1890s. (Lomax, 1956:78).

In his work, *Music in New Orleans*, dealing mainly with the period 1791-1841, Kmen investigates that part of the Creation myth concerning the origins of jazz which holds that after the Civil War, pawnshops were full of ex-military band instruments which newly liberated blacks could afford. They were thus able to form bands which, because of the type of instruments available to them, took on the traditional New Orleans front line of cornet (later trumpet), trombone and clarinet. Like the 'cultural mix' perspective of the myth, there is undoubtedly some truth in this, but it is much too simple. From Kmen's musical/historiographical point of view the 'explanation' simply does not account for all the known facts about black music in the city. He cites various sources to attest to the African drumming and dancing, as in the following quote from one Christian Schultz, writing in 1808:

"They have their own national music, consisting for the most part of a long kind of narrow drum of various sizes, from two to eight feet in length, three or four of which make up a band. The principal dancers are dressed in a variety of wild and savage fashions, always ornamented with a number of the tails of the smaller wild beasts." (Kmen, 1966:227).

This, however, was not the whole story. Africa, to be sure, is suggested in this and other descriptions, but blacks had been sought after as musicians playing European instruments, from Colonial times, as Southern shows:

On August 6th, 1767, a prospective slave buyer reading the Virginia Gazette was offered...a bargain:

TO BE SOLD a valuable young handsome Negro Fellow about 18 or 20 years of age; has every qualification of a genteel and sensible servant and has been in many different parts of the world...He...plays the French horn...He lately came from London, and has with him two sets of new clothes, and his French horn, which the purchaser may have with him.

Judging from the evidence, slave musicians most frequently were fiddlers. (Southern, 1983:27).

Numerous 'Runaway' listings quoted by Southern describe fugitive slaves by their musical ability, in many cases stating that the absconder had taken his instrument with him. One such reads:

RUN AWAY: a Negro fellow named Peter, about 44 years of age...he carried away a fiddle, which he is much delighted in when he gets any strong drink. (Virginia Gazette, May 4, 1769). (Southern, 1983:28).

As Oliver puts it, referring to this frequent occurrence:

To read of a slave escaping with only his clothing and a violin, or attempting to carry with him both a violin and tambourine reveals much. (Oliver, 1970:21).

By the early nineteenth century, it is quite clear that European style instruments were being used alongside the African drums in Congo Square, and that European melodies were being played:

However much of the primitive [sic - HC] there was in the Congo Square dances, it seems apparent that they were borrowing rapidly from the culture around them. (Kmen, 1966:229).

As Kmen goes on to observe, from the earliest reports it is clear that free Negroes held balls which resembled the ones for whites. Although illegal, slaves frequently attended these gatherings and in order to discourage that the police often raided Negro balls, arresting any slaves and fining their owners. Kmen mentions a first-hand description of one such raid:

'The orchestra, he said, played the same dances, gallopades, cotillions, etc. that one heard at white balls.' (Kmen, 1966:231).

The orchestra consisted of 'a clarinet, three fiddles, two tambourines, and a bass drum'. Kmen goes on to remark:

Virtually all avenues of contact with European music were open to Negroes. At the white balls a section of the hall was reserved for the free colored. They couldn't dance, but they could watch and listen. Slaves too must have gotten in often... (Kmen, 1966:232).

Kmen makes it clear that the opera, an important cultural event in New Orleans, was as much enjoyed by the city's blacks - free and slaves - as by the whites. Blacks were allowed in to the opera houses but were segregated.

Thus a visitor from Alabama was struck by hearing Negroes in the streets of New Orleans humming operatic melodies. But for them it was just natural. (Kmen, 1966:233).

A further highly influential European form of music mentioned by Kmen and seemingly every writer on jazz is martial music. The city had and indeed still has a passion for brass bands and parades, a feature for which it is famous. Kmen underlines the significance of this:

It was only human that they (Negroes) share the city's mania for brass bands and parades, and the fact that the free colored had their own militia companies gave the Negro a chance to play as well as to march. It was a Negro militia drummer, Jordan Little, who drummed the Americans into line at the Battle of New Orleans...And it was more than merely drumming. One company, the New Orleans Independent Rifle Company, advertised in 1820 for two young men of color, promising to provide them with keyed bugles, teach them to play, uniform them, and pay them monthly. (Kmen, 1966:233).

Lest it be thought that these musico-cultural influences have been adduced as *ex post facto* explanations, it is worth remarking at this stage that in the recordings made by Jelly Roll Morton for the Library of Congress in Washington DC in 1938 (i.e., long before most books on jazz had been written), in which he described at length turn of the century New Orleans, he mentions every one of the above phenomena except for the African. He performed his jazz adaptation of the *Miserere* from Verdi's *Il Trovatore*, described the ways in which the marching bands played well known marches such as *Stars and Stripes Forever*, and gave his version of the manner in which *Tiger Rag* was transformed from a French quadrille of five sections. Citizens of New Orleans, in sum, were no strangers to music. It was a part of life, and not confined to the concert hall. Most certainly New Orleans citizens did not have to wait for left-over musical instruments to create music. The myth, as is the nature of myths, does not stand up to investigation, although it might be founded in some truth - possibly there *were* instruments in pawnshops after the Civil War.

New Orleans jazz, instead, must be seen as emerging from a complicated set of social relations. It most certainly came quite abruptly on to the scene, but its cultural background is not entirely lost to us. This affords the almost unique opportunity of studying a cultural form in its emergence together with fairly well documented ethnographical details. This might yield information not only of the specific instance of New Orleans jazz, but could also provide some insights into music more generally and hence increase our knowledge of social communication.

Music as communication has long been a paradox for, as Schutz put it in his essay *Making Music Together*, it is a 'meaningful context not bound to a conceptual scheme'. (Schutz, 1964:159). It could be said that the 'meaning' of music is itself; it has no possible referent elsewhere. We ought therefore to be left to ourselves in its apperception and yet we are not. It quite clearly means something to others as well, and that 'something' is through and through social. Even taking the limiting case of performer and audience - one performer, one listener - we must still infer a social bond between the two.

There is, however, yet another strand to music, and that is that, although in general music is a social event, in any one case it is also cultural. It is only by positing this that we can explain the existence of so many kinds of music around the world that are not cross cultural. Interestingly, and damningly for the 'cultural mix' theory, jazz has never been popular in West Africa in which it is supposed to have roots. Indeed, according to Oliver, West African musicians are incapable of hearing more than minor points of similarity between jazz and their own music (Oliver, 1970:6). Our comprehension of a piece of music is heavily dependent upon our cultural orientation. However, there are generalizations to be drawn, as, for example, the utter sociality of music. And there are others, for example, form. This appears also to be culturally conditioned - for example, form allows us to know when a piece has stopped - and in a sense the 'meaning' of a piece is conveyed in its form. In the second section I propose an analysis of a fairly obscure piece by Jelly Roll Morton - *Pep* - to show what continuities and discontinuities of form might be revealed.

It is probably clear by now that a study of a musical text has some advantages over studies of literary texts in that there is no temptation to be drawn into a literal interpretation. We may deal with the multi-vocality of symbols without feeling obliged to justify it, and indeed if we are to make sense of music at all, we must do this. I believe that this holds good for all cultural products, and it is in this field that I hope this study will yield further dividends.

PEP: Structure, Sign and Centre

As the preceding introduction has, hopefully, made clear, jazz is predicated on a set of ambiguities, paradoxes. When we look at the people among whom jazz emerged - the poor Italians, Blacks and Creoles of New Orleans¹ - we see people who both before the Civil War and after it were both part of and yet apart from American society. As has been seen above, it is tempting to express these relations in binary opposite form:

Africa	....	Europe
Black	....	White
Folk	....	Sophisticated
Affectual	....	Rational
Deviant	....	Conformist
Gemeinschaft	....	Gesellschaft
Improvised	....	Notated
Improvised	....	Composed

An argument can be made that the ‘sign’ of jazz is in some senses a product of the mediation between the above and other binary opposites. Some are obvious, and some more involved. Thus, while it is clear from the introduction that ‘Africa’ and ‘Europe’ stand in opposition, the last two binary opposites in the list above may require some clarification.

More than any other well known Western music, jazz relies on improvisation. However, the earliest jazz, New Orleans jazz, was never given to what is now known paradoxically as ‘free form’; it always required some underlying structure on which the improvisations could be based. Thus, as mentioned above, Morton used a piece by Verdi (*Miserere* from *Il Trovatore*) as a base, and Mary Lou Williams recorded a version of Dvorak’s *Humouresque*. Both jazz versions rely on improvised variations. However, the use of classical pieces is rather unusual, and jazz performances as a rule are based on well used harmonic sequences (e.g. *Won’t you Come Home Bill Bailey*), 12 bar blues (e.g. *St.*

¹ This clearly infers that the creation of New Orleans jazz can be seen as a *social* rather than *racial* (as is often supposed) event.

Louis Blues), or popular songs not originally written for jazz performance (e.g. *The Sheikh of Araby*). But, as Schuller has written:

In jazz, the dividing line between composer and performer is a fine one, subject to considerable overlapping in the sense that all jazz players can be considered composers since they are in effect composing extempore. (Schuller, 1969:135).

As Schuller remarks, this kind of composing is ‘related to and determined by’ the artists’ roles as instrumentalists and performers. Improvisation thus stands opposed to composing which is context free, i.e., is not intimately related to performance, and does not gain its meaning from its setting. Following Garfinkel (1984), then, it is quite legitimate to posit another binary pair:

Indexical (Improvised) ... Objective (Composed)

Improvisation could, in this schema, be considered as indexical composition, while composition per se might be thought of as objective composition. The difference is that objective composition relies on a pre-worked concept. Referring to Morton, Schuller writes:

He certainly composed an impressive number of “tunes” that became staples of early jazz repertory, numbers such as *King Porter Stomp*, *Wolverine Blues*, *Milenburg Joys*, *Georgia Swing*, *Chicago Breakdown* and *Wild Man Blues*. But most of these were more than mere thirty-two bar tunes or twelve-bar blues. They were original multi-thematic structures which embodied (like most ragtime) a definite, detailed compositional conception, which had to be retained in performance to a much greater extent than is usually required in jazz. (Schuller, 1969:135).

Thus, there is a high degree of structure in the work of the man normally thought of as the first true jazz composer². But when we look for it in the recorded works, it is present only in the conceptual sense. Of the half-dozen or so versions of *Wolverine Blues* recorded by Morton, for example, no two are the same, and none is the recorded version of any of the

² In fact there are very few of these. Others include Duke Ellington, Thelonius Monk, John Lewis, George Russel and Charlie Mingus.

three published versions known to me. This stands in opposition to ragtime, cited by Schuller, in which the published version remains paramount.

It is in order to work through some of these ideas that I propose a structural analysis of *Pep*. To reiterate, I intend this analysis to have implications beyond the historical figure of Jelly Roll Morton himself, and beyond jazz; hopefully, some of the conclusions may have utility in the broader field of communications.

***Pep*: The three levels of signification**

Just as Barthes identified three meanings in cinema images (Barthes, 1984), so too in music there are multiple levels of signification.

In *Pep*, three levels can be provisionally identified through the piece, but two provisions should be made. Firstly, these levels are not proposed as exhaustive of the signifying practices at work within the piece; and secondly, there is no necessary correspondence between these levels and Barthes' three meanings.

There is firstly an external level of signification which assists us in locating the piece within its social context. At the internal level, however, there are two signifying codes. There is a musicological code which will be noted but not dwelt upon. However, the second internal code (the third overall) is at a deep level and has considerable sociological significance.

***Pep*: external signification and structure**

In general, music satisfies the criteria of semiological systems. It has phoneme-like elements which are relational in character and which combine syntagmatically and paradigmatically to form higher constructs. However, its lack of obvious referent means that it quite emphatically rejects any correspondential relation between signifier and signified, yet it nevertheless has meaning. In the course of the musical flux, in the play of metaphors and metonymies, the sensible (i.e., the raw sound impinging on us) becomes intelligible. For Derrida:

...the concept of the sign cannot in itself bypass this opposition between the sensible and the intelligible.

The concept of the sign is determined by this opposition. (Derrida, 1972:250).

We cannot, then, retain the concept 'sign' and abandon the opposition between sensible and intelligible. This notion allows us to some extent to locate the 'meaning' of music in the text itself, and to bypass any appeal to a transcendent signified. In some ways, it seems that music excites only emotional areas of the mind, without involving cognitive centres at all. Two conclusions can be drawn from this. Firstly, is not this in fact the case with all art, and not just music? It is, perhaps, more clear where music is concerned since there is no obvious referent, but any art worthy of the name signifies at a level other than that of the phenomenal, a point brought out forcefully in modernist art. The production of meaning through 'pure' signifying practice in music might, then, allow of insight into the workings of similar processes in other art forms. Secondly - and this is perhaps more germane to the present concern - while the appeal is not to cognition, it is nevertheless the case that in the shadowy, inexplicable areas of the mind a communal response is elicited. Ego cannot know that the response called forth by a piece of music in alter is the same as ego's response, yet it appears to be identical. Think, for example, of the audience at a concert, or the mass responses evident at the 'Live Aid' concerts of 1985.

The parallels of music to socio-cultural responses in other areas have not gone unnoticed. In the paper mentioned above, Schutz develops a cogent argument in which music is seen as a special case of social interaction, and a study of music will, he holds, clarify other non-conceptual aspects of communication. Presupposing both performance and apperception, holds Schutz, is the 'musical culture', the set of typifications and expectations which are socially transmitted and understood, and which form the backdrop for the musical performance itself. The performance is the social relationship of music, and for Schutz this relationship is between composer and 'beholder' (where 'beholder' refers to both performer(s) and listener(s)). The beholder participates in the experiences of the composer at the sub-mundane level of the stream of consciousness. (Schutz, 1964:174)

Another approach is that of Levi-Strauss, as we have seen:

The myth and the musical work are like the conductors of an orchestra whose audience becomes the silent performers.

If it is now asked where the real center of the work is to be found, the answer is that this is impossible to determine. Music and mythology bring man face to face with potential objects of which only the shadows are actualized, with conscious approximations (a musical score and a myth cannot be more) of inevitably unconscious truths, which follow from them. (Levi-Strauss 1969:17-18).

If anything is to be made of these remarks, it is that if music has a centre, it is a most elusive thing. For Schutz, the centre is in a transient social relationship, while for Levi-Strauss, although we may feel that there is some 'focus', it lies beyond determination.

According to Derrida (1972), a (then) recent event in the history of the social sciences is the abandonment of the search for a centre in structural analysis. Previously, the concept of structure always entailed the notion of centre, or origin, which was conceived of as the point where the subdivision of contents, elements or terms was no longer possible. However, as a notion it was paradoxical in that although it was the phenomenon which governed the structure, by its functional existence it must escape structure itself:

The centre is at the centre of the totality, and yet, since the centre does not belong to the totality (is not part of the totality), the totality has its centre else-where. (Derrida, 1972:248).

According to Derrida, by positing the existence of 'centre', reassurance was felt and anxiety mastered; freeplay was possible, but within certain limits which were not themselves available to freeplay. The history of art appreciation is full of the search for a centre - the question, What does it all mean? is its epitome. The question itself is neither nonsensical nor foolish; at some stage it is quite legitimate to ask it, but the mistake is to assume that it is the only question, and that in answering it the work of art has yielded its

ultimate secrets. It is the desire of what Barthes calls an average culture to be apprised of, acquainted with, the meaning of artistic texts:

Such a culture, defined by the growth of the number of listeners and the disappearance of practitioners (no more amateurs), wants art, wants music, provided they be clear, that they 'translate' an emotion and represent a signified (the 'meaning' of a poem); an art that inoculates pleasure (by reducing it to a known, coded emotion) and reconciles the subject to what in music can be said: what is said about it, predicatively, by Institution, Criticism, Opinion. (Barthes, 1982:185).

The form in which *Pep* is written has elements which make it immediately available to facile, average culture analysis. Speaking of Jelly Roll Morton, Lomax quotes Morton's publisher, Walter Melrose:

"But, so far as Jelly Roll originating anything, he didn't do that. All Jelly did was to come along and write additional numbers in the style that goes back to Scott Joplin in the '90s. Scott Joplin was his God; and, really, things like *Maple Leaf Rag* and *Grace and Beauty* were his models. Jelly always worked with two twelve-bar strains, modulating into trio, just like Joplin." (Lomax, 1956:188).

Technically, there are some serious mistakes in this criticism, assuming that Lomax has properly quoted Melrose. However, they may be ignored, since our concern is with overall form and not with detail.

Figure 1 shows a schematic plan for Joplin's 1899 composition, *Maple Leaf Rag*:

*Fig. 1 Plan for Maple Leaf Rag (Key I: A flat)*³

Section	In	A ¹	A ²	B ¹	B ²	A ³	Br	C ¹	C ²	D ¹	D ²
Number of bars	—	16	16	16	16	16	—	16	16	16	16
Key areas	I—							V—		I—	

The other piece mentioned by Melrose, James Scott's *Grace and Beauty*, published in 1909, has the following format:

Fig. 2 Plan for Grace and Beauty (Key I: A flat)

Section	In	A ¹	A ²	B ¹	B ²	A ³	Br	C ¹	C ²	D ¹	D ²	
Number of bars	4	16	16	16	16	16	4	16	16	16	16	
Key areas	I—							IV—				

It can be seen from these two examples that the form of classic ragtime is complex and multi-thematic. But this form did not originate among ragtime composers. It is found in marches which at the time that ragtime was emerging were extremely popular in the United States. Any march at all would demonstrate the similarity, but the following is the plan for Sousa's *The Washington Post*:

Fig. 3 Plan for The Washington Post (Key I: G)

Section	In	A ¹	A ²	B ¹	B ²	C ¹	C ²	Br	C ³	Br	C ⁴
Number of bars	8	16	16	16	16	16	16	8	16	8	16
Key areas	I—						IV—				

³ The letters A, B, C, etc. in plans such as this refer to the various themes of the pieces. A2 refers to the second statement of theme A, and so on.

In. = Introduction

Br. = Bridge passage, usually (but not always) involving a modulation (key change).

Key area refers to the keys in which the various themes are written.

I is the original key of the piece, and following normal practice, IV signifies the key based on the fourth note of the scale of the original key. This is the subdominant. A change to a fifth above, the dominant, would be indicated by V.

If this similarity of form requires any underlining at all, it could be mentioned that the tempo indication on the original published version of *Maple Leaf Rag*, by far the most successful in sales terms of all the rags, is *Tempo di Marcia*.

The form, indeed, is considerably older even than this. The march form has been outlined as an immediate precursor because of its obvious proximity in time. The New Orleans composer and pianist Louis Moreau Gottschalk (1829-1869) is also interesting as a connection between early jazz and European music. Gottschalk wrote in the style of popular music of his time and deliberately incorporated Cuban, Spanish-American, African and other influences which he heard in Louisiana:

By the time of Louis Moreau's birth in 1829, New Orleans had been part of the United States of America for twenty-six years, thanks to the Louisiana Purchase. But French influence persisted and extended to the black slaves as well as the "free persons of color" who had come from the West Indies. The blacks spoke a fascinating Afro-French *patois* that came to be called "Créole", which they also used in the many "Black Creole" songs, such as "Miché Preval", "Musieu Bainjo", and "Pov' piti Lolotte"⁴, that were as familiar to French-speaking whites as the arias they heard at the French Opera. Although Louis Moreau left for France when he was thirteen, we know that he too heard these songs and remembered them in his music.

Louisiana, then, and particularly the city of his birth, epitomized all the influences that were to go into the making of Gottschalk's music and personality: French, Spanish, West Indian (or Caribbean), Afro-American, and American (Chase, 1976:9).

His polkas, especially, sound as if they could have been written by Scott Joplin, except that they are more demanding of the pianist than Joplin's work. The *form*, however, is entirely consistent with the thesis that jazz should be thought of as developing out of a complex set of influences:

⁴ This tune was reworked by Gottschalk in 1845/6 as *La Savane* (RO 232, Op3).

Fig. 4 Plan for Polka in a flat, RO275, 1859 (L M Gottschalk)

Section	In	A ¹	A ²	B ¹	B ²	Br	A ³	A ⁴	C ¹	C ²	A ⁵	B ³	A ⁶	Coda
Number of bars	—	12	12	8	8	2	12	12	16	16	12	8	12	4
Key areas	I—								V—		I—			

Fig. 5 Plan for Polka in B flat, RO273 (date unknown) (L M Gottschalk)

Section	In	A ¹	A ²	B ¹	A ³	C ¹	Br	A ⁴
Number of bars	—	8	8	8	8	16	4	8
Key areas	I—					IV—		I

Gottschalk's composition, *Ynéz* (1860) is of considerable interest for its rhythm as well as its style. It bears some similarity to Joplin's *Solace - A Mexican Serenade* published in 1909, not only because they share the *habañera* rhythm; they are written in the same meter (2/4 time) and the use of harmony is similar in both. The form is more simple than the polkas, marches and rags we have been considering, having only two themes (although with the close key relationship we would expect). The *habañera* rhythm, however, is of great importance, since it emerges at numerous points in jazz and popular music. It appears in Morton's *Jelly Roll Blues* (1912) and in his *New Orleans Blues* (which he claimed to have written in 1902, but it is unlikely to have been as early as that) and in *Mama Nita*, first recorded in 1923⁵. It is also the basic rhythm of the *Charleston* and is part of the general rhythmic repertoire of jazz and, through jazz, popular music. Chase has this to say about the rhythm of *Ynéz*:

This stylish Cuban *danza* may have been composed in Havana in 1860 or 1861 when Gottschalk probably had more than one lovely *Ynéz* as student. A *danza* was a popular dance. It was also piano music for the urban salon and, later on, the recital platform. It is believed that the term *danza* originated perhaps with the English country dance, becoming

⁵ In 1938, during the Library of Congress recordings, Alan Lomax asked Morton if he had heard of Gottschalk. Morton confirmed that he had. An interesting if highly speculative further link is that Gottschalk published a paraphrase of the *Miserere* from Verdi's *Il Trovatore* and Morton had his own jazz version of the same piece in his repertoire.

contradanza in Spain and eventually *danza* in Cuba or *danza habañera* (after the Cuban capital), and finally just *habañera*.

The meter is 2/4 and the basic rhythm that of a dotted eighth note followed by a sixteenth and two eighths - the *habañera* rhythm, the name itself from the dance (Chase 1976:21).

The description of the rhythm of *Ynez* would be completely accurate for Joplin's *Solace*. It also occurs in numerous blues and constitutes the bass line of *And Then He Kissed Me*, a popular song from the 1960s as well as the Beatles' *The Ballad of John and Yoko*. It is the basis for the rhythm of Elvis Presley's early hit *Teddy Bear*.

The reason for this diversion into Gottschalk has been to show how broad the musical influences on early jazz were. The simple notion that African and European influences combined to produce jazz is not nearly sufficient to start to understand it. It is clearly a complicated socio-cultural manifestation.

I have been suggesting, however, that musical *form* is a reliable indicator of relations between music. It allows us to generalise texts without becoming too concerned with the details of the individual text. As we have seen, part of the musico-cultural heritage of America within which jazz developed was the multi-thematic composition which explored numerous contrasts and included as least one key change. About half Morton's compositions share this form. This might be seen as justification for Melrose's criticism that Morton merely copied Joplin, but before moving on by way of specific example (*Pep*) to show the sense in which that critique is ill-founded, one other piece by Morton will be shown in plan form to demonstrate the similarities between this major part of Morton's work, ragtime, marches, polkas and other forms.

Fig. 6 Plan for *Wolverine Blues*, recorded 18th July 1923. (Key I: B flat)

Section	In	A ¹	B ¹	A ²	Br	C ¹	C ²	C ³
Number of bars	4	16	16	16	4	32	32	32
Key areas	I				IV			

(N.B.. In this version of *Wolverine Blues*, as in many other pieces, Morton extends the final appearance of the third theme by two bars. However, he was inconsistent in this practice, and since such a detail merely clouds the issue, it will be overlooked.)

As mentioned above, no two versions of any Morton piece are the same, and it is usual therefore to state which recording is being referred to. This is in complete contrast to either marches or ragtime, in which the published text is dominant. As will become clear above, this is a fundamental difference.

Fig. 7 Plan for Pep, recorded at the Library of Congress June (?) 1938 (Wright 1980:90) (transcribed in Dapogny 1982:379) (Key I: F)

Section	In	A ¹	A ²	B ¹	B ²	A ³	Br	C ¹	C ²	C ³
Number of bars	4	16	16	16	16	16	4	32	32	32
Key areas	I						IV			

The only other existing version of *Pep*, recorded 8th July 1929 has a similar plan except that theme C appears only twice.

The antecedents of the form most commonly adopted by Morton, therefore, are clear. As can be seen, the form itself is highly variable, but it is a recognisable form, the main elements of which are:

Introduction;

Two contrasting themes in the tonic key (key I);

Bridge passage, with modulation to the subdominant; and

One or two themes in the subdominant (key IV).

Van der Merwe's (1993:93) notion of the 'matrix' helps in underlining the significance of this observation. Matrices are culturally prescribed musical elements or frameworks working at various levels which are available to all composers and which are readily (although usually unconsciously and unreflectingly) recognised by listeners.

'Matrix' in this sense means something close to the theme of the classical set of variations, or rather those elements in the theme which are repeated in the variations. It also has something in common with the 'forms' of traditional classical theory (van der Merwe 1992:94).

To sum up: this is the form taken by virtually all marches and genuine ragtime, and it is also the form in which about half Morton's compositions are written. But just as there are significant differences between Sousa and Joplin, so there are between marches and ragtime on the one hand and jazz on the other (as here exemplified by *Pep*). The next step will be to examine the grounds for the external structure of *Pep*, but before leaving the phenomenal, one obvious difference presents itself, and that is that the final section of many of Morton's works are of 32 bar duration, while ragtime and marches tend to limit themes to 16 bars. However, popular song and jazz standards are more generally of 32 bars length, and Morton's use of this duration in composition is an indication of his commitment to jazz rather than ragtime. But, as we shall see, there is ambiguity here, for while composers such as Duke Ellington and major figures such as Louis Armstrong abandoned, during the course of the 1920s, the ragtime/march format, Morton was slow to forsake it, composing in this style until the 1930s. Only in his final burst of composing activity (1938-1940) did he finally relinquish it. The use of the 32 bar final theme, then, shows a commitment both to the ragtime form - stylised, conventional - and to patterns of performance based on improvisation calling for freer, less determined compositions.

The tyranny of the written musical text

The status of written musical texts is a problematic one. Schutz has discussed a paper by Halbwachs in which the 'language' of musical notation is celebrated as the means by which the collectivity of musicians is actually held together. As Schutz rightly points out, to view musical notation as a semantic system is quite improper, for it is an instruction, and at best an imprecise instruction: 'The musical sign is nothing but an instruction to the performer' (Schutz, 1964:166).

Culturally speaking, the dominance of the written musical text is a recent phenomenon. The notion of the written text as the centre, the point of reference for a piece of music,

coincides with the emergence of the modern world, a bourgeois culture which seeks to subdue that which it cannot comprehend. In a way, this amounts to a reworking of Weber's problem. Since there is no instrumental rationality in musical aesthetics, there is at least a rationality implicit in the performer following the written musical text, a value rationality in which the end is a given. This attitude has inevitably led to a reification of musical canons, for example the Bach canon which is held to be a manifestation of '...perfect, absolute, universal form and truth' (McClary, 1992:19). As we have seen McClary shows that it is possible, working from within musical texts, to deconstruct this reification and to demonstrate the social grounds from which the music springs. The musical establishment has developed an overall strategy to reduce the recognition of signifying practices in music, especially of the eighteenth century and McClary argues that Bach has been kidnapped by the post-renaissance rationalist movement. She advocates a counter-kidnap.

Finally, I would propose the age-old strategy of rewriting the tradition in such a way as to appropriate Bach to our own political ends...My portrait of Bach presented earlier clearly exhibits characteristics of the post-modern eclectic, of the ideologically marginalized artist empowering himself to appropriate, reinterpret, and manipulate to his own ends the signs and forms of dominant culture (McClary, 1992:61-63).

The method McClary has used has rigour and scholarship behind it and not just assertion, as is common in work on popular music. McClary actively engages in a detailed analysis of two of Bach's texts, the first movement of *Brandenburg Concerto No.5* and Cantata 140, *Wachet Auf*. Her method involves lengthy quotations from musical texts believed to be faithful to Bach's original or drawn from the original texts themselves. However, jazz presents its own challenges because aside from recorded improvisations there is no value or second-order rationality in the form of definitive texts to 'stand for' a piece.

The two recorded versions of *Pep* are quite different, while remaining recognizably the same work. Morton insisted that jazz improvisation was improvisation on a theme; the melody was not to be totally lost. This again emphasises his ambiguous quality, for, from the mid-20s onward in the work of men like Earl Hines and Louis Armstrong, melody was treated as merely an occasion to approach underlying harmonic structures on which

improvisations could be constructed. Morton conceived of himself as a composer in the formal sense (i.e., objective), and yet had a commitment to improvisation. This ambiguity meant that he was never able to take the step taken by others and dispense with the melody altogether. The use of the 32 bar final theme in the context of the form of *Pep* shows a commitment both to earlier ragtime and to patterns of performance based on improvisation calling for freer, less determined compositions. There is also a suggestion here of the intrusion of what van der Merwe calls 'parlour music'⁶. Morton conceived of himself as a composer in the formal sense (i.e., objective), and yet had a commitment to improvisation. This ambiguity meant that he was never able to take the step taken by others and dispense with the melody altogether.

However, of all the various recordings Morton made of some of his pieces (some half-dozen of *Wolverine Blues* alone), no two texts are alike. Most, indeed, differ conceptually from the others while remaining clearly the same piece played by the same player. This can be heard with the two versions of *Pep*, but any of the multiple recordings would have made the point - even those made on the same day. Morton thus abandons the dominance, the authority, of any one version, including the written, in favour of difference. This difference is highly productive. I shall, indeed, argue that differences identifiable at the aural level in the two renditions of *Pep* have considerable social significance. A piece authoritatively entitled *Pep* against which other versions may be measured, then, does not exist, and yet *Pep* does. Once again, we are faced with the contradictory, the ambiguous, the paradoxical, for while it makes no sense at all to speak of *Pep* as a unitary, obvious piece of music, yet in the two versions of it which exist there is enough common material to identify them as somehow the same - but the same as what? We can only, surely, approach the improvisation here in terms of its metaphorical, paradigmatic relationship to a centre which has no literal existence. It is a problem, but one which does not present itself until the search for a centre is undertaken.

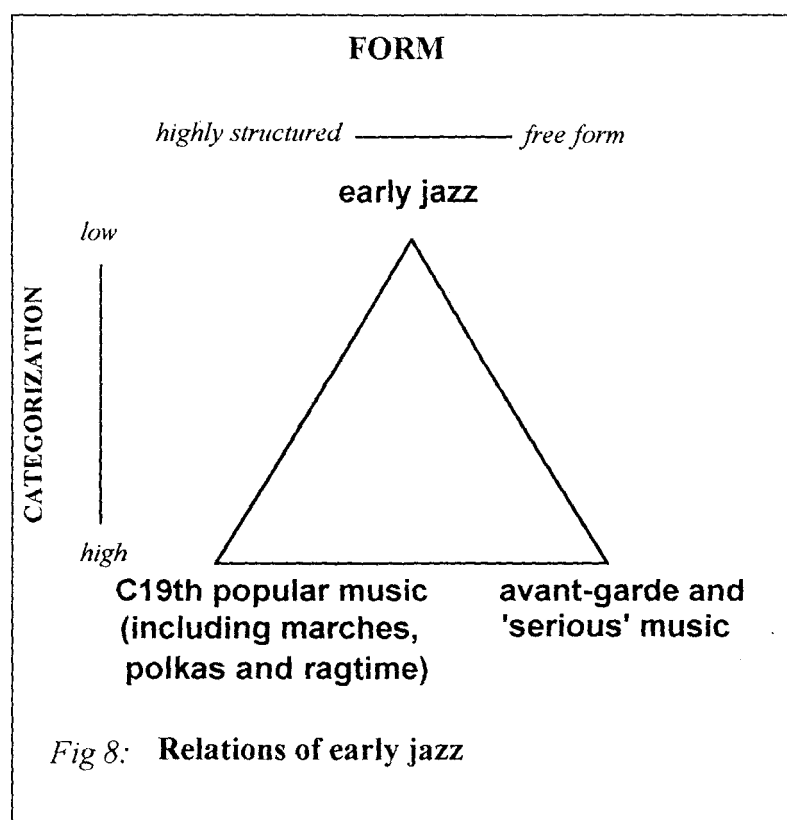
There may be little or no room for extemporisation on the 'classical', 'serious' (suggestive of the suppression of free play?) concert stand today, but this has only been

⁶ Although not discussed in these terms, the 32 bar sequence is typical of 'parlour music' identified by van der Merwe (1992:17-18 and Chaps.26-28) as both the foundation of modern popular music and the descendant of eighteenth century music before the split between 'popular' and 'classical'.

the case since the beginning of the nineteenth century. Not only could the great composers (Bach, Handel, Mozart, Beethoven, *inter alia*) improvise, they were expected to. Baroque music left large opportunities for improvisation, one feature of which, the figured bass, survives today only in the shorthand 'chord sequences' used particularly in jazz playing although found throughout popular music. The notion of the written text as the centre, the point of reference for a piece of music, thus appears to coincide with the emergence of the modern world, a culture which seeks to subdue that which it cannot comprehend. As Fiedler puts it: 'The middle brow reacts with equal fury to an art which baffles his understanding and to one which refuses to aspire to his level.' (Fiedler, 1957:546).

Music, even the most simple, is both, in the sense that all music, from *Three Blind Mice* to Beethoven's *Fifth Symphony* shares a lack of phenomenal referent. This might explain the attempt to trivialise it as mere 'dots on a page'.

Before leaving the external study of *Pep*, a look at its relations with other music in terms



of a structuralist diagram is helpful, as we have already seen above (page 56). *Fig. 8*

demonstrates the ambiguous quality of early jazz. While highly structured pieces and avant-garde work share a high degree of ability to be identified and categorized, early jazz does not. Also, while early jazz has a formal structure which is central to its 'good sense', it shares with avant-garde a considerable amount of free play, in that its centre is not an obvious datum.

This diagram is an aid to explanation, but it must not be seen as the explanation itself. To discover what *Pep* may tell us about the social origins of New Orleans jazz requires a close study of the text itself in all its ambiguity. For, useful though a study of form is, it approaches only that which Barthes, following Kristeva, terms the pheno-song:

The pheno-song...(is) everything in the performance which is in the service of communication, representation, expression, everything which it is customary to talk about, which forms the tissue of cultural values (the matter of acknowledged tastes, of fashions, of critical commentaries), which takes its bearing directly on the ideological alibis of a period ('subjectivity', 'expressivity', 'dramaticism', 'Personality' of the artist) (Barthes, 1984:182).

Clearly, the pheno-song should be addressed, and as far as *Pep* is concerned, has been addressed above; but that is not an end of it. There is another level at which music might be approached, and Barthes terms this the geno-song:

The geno-song is the volume of the singing and speaking voice, the space where significations germinate 'from within language and in its very materiality'; it forms a signifying play having nothing to do with communication, representation (of feelings), expression; it is that apex (or that depth) of production where the melody really works at the language - not at what it says, but the voluptuousness of its sounds-signifiers, of its letters where melody explores how the language works and identifies with that work (Barthes, 1984:182).

Barthes has modified Kristeva's original concepts of pheno-text and geno-text so as to be able to use them in the context of singing, which is his main concern, and so I feel no compunction in pressing them into my service. If the notion of geno-text has any utility,

it is not, at least at this stage, in terms of materiality, but rather in terms of the codes which it brings into focus.

As Barthes puts it, arguing against discourses on music which are mainly adjectival:

...rather than trying to change directly the language on music, it would be better to change the musical object itself, as it presents itself to discourse, better to alter its level of perception or intellection, to displace the fringe of contact between music and language (Barthes, 1984:180).

The search, then, is not for adjectives which describe and hence sublimate and trivialise the music, but to proceed from an interrogation of the text itself, to let it speak. What Barthes recommends is that writing about music should be a way of doing without such writing, that the writing should disappear. This paper cannot do away with writing altogether, but seeks to point to the potential for dispensing with the intrusive nature of words in a close study of the musical text.

The following analysis will involve, for the time being, themes A and B of *Pep* only. The reason for this is that theme C, while having clear continuities with themes A and B also demonstrates an interesting feature related to the different times of recording of the two versions.

***Pep*: the internal level**

The musicological code and the note 'D'

As noted above, there are at least two signifying codes within *Pep*. Themes A and B are in paradigmatic relation in that both rely, in different ways, on the device of descending semitones as the basis for the thematic material. This is the musicological code and is merely noted. The note D is important musicologically in the key of F major, for it is the tonic of the relative minor (D minor). What this means is that both share the same key signature (one flat). While of considerable musical significance, the concern here is

sociological significance and so, as with the musicological code, the issue of the relative minor is bracketed

The sociological code and the significance of the note 'D'

At a deep level within the piece there is a relation indicating an interesting code working through it. This code is connected with the persistence of the note D throughout themes A and B. In terms of jazz harmony, D has a set of interesting relations with the key of F, the key of the first two themes of *Pep*.

Figure 9 shows the musical relation of D to the roots of the major triads (the basis of Occidental tonal music) in the key of F major. These intervals (6th, 3rd, 9th) are extremely common in early jazz. This approach can be expanded to include all the chords which appear in the first two themes of *Pep*, noting the relation of the note D where one formally exists. ('0' signifies no formal relation.)

Fig. 9 Interval relations⁷ of D to the major triads of F major

Chord	Relation
F	6th
B ^b	3rd
C ⁷	9th

To suggest, as is suggested by *figure 10*, that D has no harmonic, paradigmatic relation in about half the chords used in these themes would appear to contradict the statement that, in some way, D is common to these themes. In fact, relations of D at the level of theory can be shown for those chords marked '0' above, but to do so is to move outside the relevant range in which *Pep* exists (its discourse). It is also, as is shown below, to offer

⁷ The term 'interval relation' is meant to signify those intervals within the 'relevant range', that is, the culturally prescribed version of harmonic and melodic correctness within which Morton and his contemporaries worked, for *Pep*. This point is perhaps clarified by considering the ways in which we interpret writers of the past - say, Chaucer or Dickens - in terms of the range of linguistic and literary tools culturally available to them at the time of writing. As McClary writes 'it is only up against the norms and semiotic conventions of a style that the strategies of an individual piece can be conceived as significant' (1992:21).

an essentially quantitative description of the workings of the note, and this is alien to its mode of existence within the piece.

Fig. 10 Musical relation of D to the chords in the first two themes of Pep

Chord	Relation	Theme in which chord appears
F	6th	A,B
C ⁷	9th	A,B
G ⁷	5th	A,B
D ^{b7}	0	A
D ⁷	tonic (1st or 8th)	A,B
E ^{b7}	0	A
E ⁷	7th	A
C ⁶	0	B

Fig. 11 Theoretical relations of D to roots of chords in themes A and B outside the 'relevant range'

Chord	Relation
D ^{b7}	Flattened (or diminished) 9th
E ^{b7}	Major 7th
C ^{min6}	Major 2nd (or 9th?)
C ⁶	Major 2nd (or 9th?)

Figure 11 does little to advance our understanding. Mere description (the adjectives attacked by Barthes), although favoured by musical theory, cannot. Such analyses explain away the very issues in the music which we should seek to confront. By neutralising disparate voices within the musical text reassurance is offered and normality restated. By contrast, to approach the recurring D in these themes requires rather an interpretative and intuitive approach.

The first four bars in each theme could be stated thus:

Fig. 12 *Pep*: Bars 1-4 of Themes A and B

Bar	1	2	3	4
Theme A	E ⁷	E ^{b7}	D ⁷	D ^{b7}
Theme B	F	C ⁶	C ^{min6}	D ⁷

Reference to *figure 10* will show that an 'interval relation' between the chords in figure 10 and D exists in each theme in only two of the bars. But theme A is a chromatic sequence which ends with bar 5 which is C⁷ - not shown in figure 12. C⁷, the dominant 7th of the key of F therefore begins the statement of tonality. (On its first statement, the atonal character of theme A is even more apparent since it follows an equally atonal and chromatic introduction.) 'C' is thus a critical moment in these first few bars, for it stands ambiguously syntagmatic both in the atonal chromatic sequence of the first four bars and in the tonal sequence of the subsequent four.

If, therefore, we include C in this sequence, we find, interestingly, that D stands at the centre of the new sequence:

E	E ^b	D	D ^b	C
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Hence, the relations of this sequence depend for their chromatic sense on the presence of D at the centre, for, if D were not there, the sequence would not be chromatic. In fact, there are a number of paradigmatic replacements for the chord of D⁷ in this sequence, all of which destroy the chromaticism. (Perhaps the most satisfactory of these replacements is the chord of A^{b7}.)

As to the first four bars of theme B, Morton plays the note D as the top note throughout. As has been shown (*figure 10*), it is difficult to theorize this note in all the chords, but nonetheless D is, as it was in theme A, a central issue. There is a suggestion from aural evidence, again a matter of interpretation, that the D here was played unintentionally in the first instance, and then retained. This interpretation is strengthened by the fact that it is not present in this overt fashion in 1929, nor in the restatement of the theme in 1938.

If D was, and I think that it was, unintentionally stressed, then I find that exceptionally interesting for two main reasons. Firstly, it says something about improvisation and the way in which it is able to make sense of an appearance, even accidental, and furnish it with a history and a future. This, I think, is identical to the way Garfinkel recommends that we understand members to use the documentary method of interpretation in the production of good sense (Garfinkel, 1984:77). Secondly, it seems that Morton is, in his playing, doing what I am doing in my writing; making explicit the implicit. If he had not played a D in any of these chords (as was partly the case in 1929), I suggest that it would still have been D which held the key to the meaning carried by these chords. It is the relations of the other notes in the chords to D itself which gives them their meaning, just as it had been in the first four bars of theme A. This reading of the text resonates with Barthes's 'obtuse meaning' (Barthes 1984:53).

The second four bars of each of the first two themes are:

Fig. 13 Pep: Bars 5-8 of Themes A and B

Bar	5	6	7	8
Theme A	C ⁷	F ⁶ /D ⁹	G ⁷	C ⁷
Theme B	G ⁷	C ⁷	F	C ⁷

Reference to *figure 10* will show that an 'interval' relation exists between D and all these chords. The centrality of the note is here explicit.

Just as, at the musicological (less deep) level, we identified a relation between these two themes - descending semitones - so, at this deeper level of signification there is clearly another. It is one which is caught as we listen to the music, but it is not necessarily recognised. Following Barthes, what has been attempted so far in this Chapter is 'to change the musical object itself, as it presents itself to discourse...to alter its level of perception or intellection'. In the interpretative space thus opened has appeared the geno-text of *Pep*, going beyond communication. Some of the implications of this will be indicated in the conclusion.

At the level of the music, Morton has quite clearly rejected orthodox popular music harmony in which the tonic (in this case the note F) would be at the centre. Instead, he has offered a set of relations at the centre of which is a note which stands in productive tension with the other harmonies of the piece. Nevertheless, orthodox harmony is not totally overthrown (so that, for example, the home chord of each of these themes is F and not D), and this means that we are offered two centres which, since they are not the same, is an impossibility. The ambiguity which was noted at the surface level of form thus manifests itself also at the deepest levels of the piece.

Interim Summary

So far this paper has attempted to demonstrate that the familiar theories concerning the origins of jazz are quite inadequate from the level of the music itself. Yet most work in the sociology of popular music is quite content to discuss the music without ever once approaching it directly. Dick Hebdige, for example, writes authoritatively on Reggae and its socio-cultural roots and implications without discussing any one piece of actual music:

And so, ska was resilient, armoured music; 'rough and tough' in more ways than one (Hebdige, 1982:432).

There are numerous examples of this approach to the sociology of popular music, and quite apart from repeating Barthes's criticism of the use of adjectives in musical analysis, it could be pointed out that if, in a discussion of T S Eliot, a description of his work were offered unsupported by examples, we would feel justified in not accepting the conclusions. Yet, where music is concerned, and especially popular music, such analyses are the norm. There are, of course, technical difficulties in presentation to be overcome, but it would seem that since there is something to be said by musical textual analysis, then they simply must be overcome.

There is more to New Orleans jazz, then, than either the 'cultural mix' theory or the 'left-over instruments' theory (two components of the Creation myth) can tell us, and this has been demonstrated by an examination of a concrete example, an actual piece of the

music. What possible conclusions might be drawn from this displayed signifying richness will now be briefly examined.

New Orleans Jazz and Black America

As has been noted, music is through and through cultural, and it is only by virtue of the existence of culturally conventional, 'average' pheno-texts that we can recognise the geno-texts which contradict or otherwise question them. In this particular case, if the culturally prescribed form of marches and ragtime were not to exist, it would not be possible to outline Morton's interrogation of it. Equally, if it were not for a whole theory of Western harmony, it could not be shown that Morton had been engaged in deconstruction. Music, like all other cultural products, exists as part of a 'language game', and in some senses we rely on artists to both speak that language and also to question it; to make us aware of its limits and the form of life which both constitutes and is constituted by it.

But does the deconstructive work of early jazz indicate a questioning of a language game, or is that work so fundamental as to constitute a new language game altogether? It is both and this accounts for its ambiguity. As we have seen, we cannot assign a centre to *Pep* and this is true of much early jazz, if not all. The music is, indeed, in a state of flux, of movement. Even at the level of microscopic analysis it refuses, so to speak, to be tied down.

Does, then, the geno-text of themes A and B of *Pep*, as a metaphor for New Orleans jazz as a whole indicate something about the society from which it emerged and to which, initially, it spoke? If a cultural product is anything at all it is a way of expressing that culture's conception of the world, and from the point of view of New Orleans Creole society (in which Morton firmly placed himself) at the turn of the century and before, the world was a most ambiguous place. In a communal experience shared by many people of mixed race, they found themselves accepted by neither black nor white. While by history, inclination and culture they considered themselves closer to white society than to black, after emancipation in 1865 white attitudes hardened to all non-whites, especially

once the ex-slaves left the country to enjoy the comparative freedom of the cities⁸. And New Orleans, as remarked above, was traditionally liberal in its attitude towards Blacks, among which Creoles were now, to their chagrin, included.

As the twentieth century progressed and industrial America boomed, there was an increasing demand for labour for the factories in the North, a demand accelerated by the First World War. According to Lomax, by the 1920s some half-million Black Americans had migrated from South to North, mainly to Chicago, New York and Washington, D.C. (Lomax, 1956:178).

Goodwin (1990) identifies two reasons for the great migration, sentimental and economic. The sentimental reasons encompassed:

... racial violence and the social outrages endured by Southern Black Americans, and their fears and feelings of the evils of lynching, Jim Crow facilities, unsatisfactory crop settlements, and the lack of legal redress in the courts.

... The economic causation for migrating ... centered around the infestation by the boll weevil of the cotton crops, land erosion brought on by floods and drought, decline of cotton prices, and the depression of 1920-21 (1990:18).

Of the scale of the migrations, Banton writes:

Negro Americans of the twentieth century have been caught up in two migrations: from South to North and from country to city. In 1910 eight negroes out of ten lived in the eleven states of the confederacy...Only 1,900,000 lived in other states. But the minority grew more rapidly - to nearly 4 million in 1940 and over 9 million in 1960 roughly half the Negro population of the United States (Banton, 1967:348).

According to Banton, the black population of the Middle Atlantic and East North Central areas of the North region (encompassing Chicago, New York and Detroit amongst other cities, but not including Washington, D.C.) rose from 718,706 in 1910 to 2,337,692 in 1940. This 225% increase includes offspring, of course, but nonetheless illustrates clearly the scale of the migration. (Banton, 1967:349, adapted from table 4).

⁸ The issue of poor whites, especially Italian immigrants, in New Orleans at the turn of the century is interesting, important and under-researched. This is probably because their importance in the development of jazz has only relatively recently been recognised, partly because of the workings of the 'noble savage' myth.

Jelly Roll Morton was a part of this migration from early in the century. The ambiguity of his cultural experiences as a New Orleans Creole together with the migratory impulse shared by him with many other citizens of the deep South clearly resonates with the ambiguity and state of flux identified in his music at the level of structuration and subsequent deconstruction. It is not fanciful to conclude that the note D and its relations in *Pep* signifies not only a moment in an obscure musical code, but an entire social experience.

Paul Gilroy (1993) is even more explicit as to the relations of black music to black migration, identifying structural links between the black Atlantic diasporic communities and black music.

The power and significance of music within the black Atlantic have grown in inverse proportion to the limited expressive power of language. It is important to remember that the slaves' access to literacy was often denied on point of death and only a few cultural opportunities were offered as a surrogate for the other forms of individual autonomy denied by life on the plantations and in the barracoons ... I want to propose that the possible commonality of post-slave, black cultural forms be approached via several related problems which converge on the analysis of black musics and their supporting social relations. One particularly valuable pathway is provided by the distinctive patterns of language use that characterise the contrasting populations of the modern, western, African diaspora . The oral character of the cultural settings in which diaspora musics have developed presupposes a distinctive relationship to the body - an idea expressed with exactly the right amount of impatience by Glissant: "It is nothing new to declare that for us music, gesture, dance are forms of communication, just as important as the gift of speech. This is how we first managed to emerge from the plantation: aesthetic form in our cultures must be shaped from these oral structures".

The distinctive kinesics of the post-slave populations was the product of these brutal historical conditions. Though more usually raised by analysis of sport, athletics and dance it ought to contribute directly to the understanding of the traditions of performance which continue to characterise the production and reception of diaspora musics (Gilroy 1993:74-75).

In Gilroy's view, performance is central to black music - hence the centrality of improvisation to jazz - and the unfinished (or what I have characterised as uncertain)

character of black music can be located in its origins in slavery (1993:105). This is entirely consistent with the analysis of *Pep* above, although arrived at in different ways. As has been shown, however, European elements are prominent in the text and these are under-theorised in Gilroy's work.

***Pep* - Theme C and stability**

The third theme, theme C, of *Pep* is unremarkable in structure and is a common Morton matrix for his trio sections, especially at this time.

The third strain is a typical Morton thirty-two-measure structure, one which closely resembles the third strains of *Shreveport Stomp* and *Stratford Hunch* and which Morton uses similarly to improvise variations to close the performance (Dapogny 1982:379).

It can, however, be read as the synthesis of a number of codes operating within *Pep*.

Trio sections, such as theme C of *Pep*, have a long history deriving from European music. The origin of this practice lies in the sonata form which became popular in the baroque⁹ era (about 1600-1750). The word, which in this context makes no reference to the number of performers or instruments, is used to describe subordinate divisions of various dance movements, such as minuets as well as scherzos, sonatas and marches. It is often in a different key to the main sections of the piece and usually in a different style. Once again, links with the European tradition are quite explicit in this and other jazz pieces sharing the form.

Theme C, in its first appearance, confirms the status of the march form of *Pep*. It is a normal trio section and functions in the way that the trio functions in the popular marches of the late 19th and early 20th centuries; following a modulation to the subdominant, the trio section is a calmer, more measured theme and deliberately contrasts other themes of the piece.

⁹ *Baroque* derives from the French for 'bizarre' and was originally attached to architectural styles of the period. By extension it came to describe the music.

During this period the trio section became the more prominent section in marches in the USA and it is in this developed sense that we find it in *Pep*. Its contrasting, calmer and more plaintive theme offers considerable stability after the turmoil and uncertainty of the first two themes. However, in a number of ways this stability is threatened even in the first appearance of the theme before Morton develops it in improvisation. The melodic line itself, romantic in texture, tends to play around the notes of the triads on which it is formed and, by avoiding yet remaining close to the most obvious tones, both confirms those tones and at the same time makes their dominance far less certain. But it is the *break*¹⁰, at bars 15 and 16, which offers the most potent challenge to stability. In themes A and B we saw that the most important melodic device and which formed a cognitive link between the two themes is the device of descending by semitones, although a crucial distinction is drawn by Morton in the manner in which this is done. In theme C, in the break, semitone movement is again asserted, but this time in an *upward* direction. The heavy syncopation of this makes it difficult to reproduce using chord symbols, but it is approximately as follows¹¹:

Bar 15	Bar 16
F ⁷ F ^{#7} / G ⁷	/ A ^{b7} A ⁷ B ^{b7}

Although this pattern is present in all three presentations of theme C in 1938, meaning that we can infer that it was the original idea for this part of the theme, it is only present in the first presentation in 1929. The break is not emphasised during the second 1929 presentation and, although it follows a generally upward progression, it can be much more easily shown in diagrammatic form:

Bar 15	Bar 16
F ⁷ F ^{#7} G F ^o	F E ^o B ^b F ^{#o}

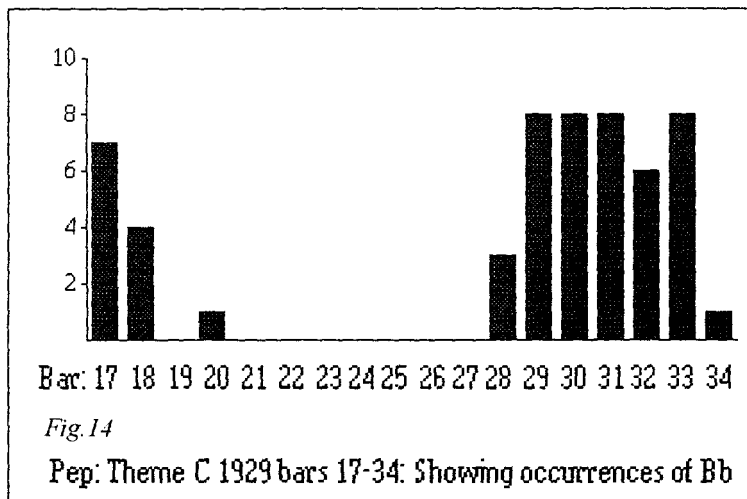
¹⁰ **Break.** A span of time, usually two measures, during which explicit statement of the pulse, *not* the pulse itself, is suspended. (In Morton's solo playing this was accomplished by his stopping the stridelike left hand. In band performances the rhythm section rests.) The term is also used to denote the music played during the suspension of the statement of the pulse (Dapogny 1982:509).

¹¹ The underscore () is meant to signify 'tied' chords. The chords thus joined are held throughout the two beats of the bar.

This is a typical Morton 'fill-in' and is not at all related to the tension-creating locus of the piece. The significance of this will become more clear below.

One further point could be made concerning the first presentation of the trio in 1929, and that is the sense of melancholy which pervades it. This is caused by the combination of a number of factors coming together at the keyboard. Some interrelated factors acting in synergy could be cited: the construction of the chords played by Morton (featuring octaves); the timbre of the piano played and Morton's touch at the keys. There are almost certainly other factors at work, but it is important to note that none alone could produce the melancholic effect and this can be easily demonstrated. For example, Fats Waller often recorded on the same piano and melancholy is not a feature of his work, although it is often present with Morton. The melancholy atmosphere gives a further sense of stability because it provides a temporary centre for the piece, a centre which is paradoxically cognate with the lack of centre in themes A and B, for it resonates with the longing of the diaspora for a home.

However, in 1929 this atmosphere and this stability is not allowed to remain in its original, melancholic form. On the contrary, and again paradoxically, stability is emphasised through dramatic and dynamic development. The first eight measures of the second presentation do remain fairly faithful to the melody as stated in the first presentation, with the principal change being a shift upward by an entire octave, thereby immediately conferring a brighter tone. Morton retains the playful avoidance of the chords, even emphasising it with a trill in the third bar (which is almost ironic in context). However, after the first eight bars, Morton becomes much freer with the piece, and typical jazz variations begin to occur with considerable frequency - the shifted tonic (co-tonic) re-emerges prominently (in this case, G, since the piece has modulated from F to B \flat) and false relations ('blue notes') start to be heard with greater frequency. And a further notable change is that, although the shifted tonic is restated, at the same time the 'real' tonic becomes more and more obvious. Bars 17 and 18, after the altered break mentioned above, quite clearly elevate the tonic, B \flat , to a position of importance. This does not last, however, and the next eight bars avoid the tonic altogether, at least in the melody (it is unavoidable in the 'relevant range' of harmony available to Morton). But its



importance is not eroded, at least partly because bars 25 and 26 emphasise the ‘false relation’ of B \flat , which is D \flat (this, of course, is a shifted reference to the prominent D in themes A and B). However, from bar 28 until the end of the piece, B \flat is almost the only

melody note played. It is possible to show this in tabular form, by counting the occurrences of B \flat as the main melodic note in each bar in quavers (Table 1).

The same point can be made graphically, as is shown in *figure 14*. The matter is emphasised by pointing out that there is a maximum of 8 quavers in any bar, and only 6 available in bar 34 (the final bar). Morton actually ends the piece on a B \flat 7 chord, a distinct challenge to orthodoxy, but a typical Morton ending and fairly common in folk music.

Table 1 Pep: Theme C2 1929 bars 17-38: showing occurrence of B \flat

Bar:	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34
B \flat quavers	7	4	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	8	8	8	6	8	1

Theme C, therefore, at least in 1929 and at least in its second presentation, shows a marked change in emphasis. What it amounts to is the triumph of the tonic over the shifted tonic which dominates themes A and B. It is the triumph of stability over flux and is almost certainly a reflection of the ‘Jazz Age’ in Chicago and New York where Morton had worked since 1922 and where he had enjoyed considerable success. But it was not only Morton who enjoyed the freedom and comparative wealth of the northern USA during the 1920s; it was an experience shared by the diaspora already celebrated in themes A and B. But where, in those first themes, the rootlessness of the diasporic

population had been emphasised, the contrasting third theme is a celebration of acceptance and belonging.

Most works on the cultural history of this time testify to the feeling of acceptance and belonging experienced by the Southern diaspora. Most, however, including the most scholarly, succumb at least in part to some of the myths of Creation and the Noble Savage. Two among many are quoted here by way of example, with a *caveat*: although expressed in romantic ways, these works are expressing an essential truth about 1920s Chicago and New York as far as black immigrant populations are concerned.

As the red lights went out in Storyville, the money and the glory finally departed New Orleans. The grand procession of wedding-caked riverboats and snake-hipped lumberrafts had long since petered out into a trickle of drab barges. The railroads had put the Crescent City and her river on the antique list and had elected Chicago, the rail hub, capital of the great valley. So the word went down the line - "Man, Chicago is the money town, and listen, you can be a man in Chicago." Eventually most competent jazzmen caught the Northbound Illinois Central.

The shift of New Orleans musicians to Chicago was only a gracenote in a big movement. The factories and mills of wartime America needed fresh supplies of labour and for the first time were hiring great numbers of Negroes. Those factory whistles cried freedom to the black masses down in Dixie, impoverished by sharecropping and segregation. They left their mules in the cotton rows; they ceded to Mr. Jim Crow his unpaved back alleys. And, unmoved by either the promises or the threats of their white bosses, who, suddenly concerned for their health, told them they would die of homesickness in cruel, cold Yankeeland, they headed North in one of the remarkable migrations of human history. In five years a half million Negroes moved North, one tenth of them settling in Chicago's South Side.

Thus the jazzmen of New Orleans found in Chicago an audience of newly independent Negroes, fresh from South U.S.A., hungry for Southern Negro music and able to pay for it. Negroes with cash money in their jeans every Saturday night, Negroes who were called Mister and Missus every day in the week - when these folk heard the triumphant and happy New Orleans marches leap out of the trumpet of King Oliver, when they heard their own deep song, the blues, voiced in gold by a big band, they began to shout (Lomax 1956:178-179).

White jazz personality Eddie Condon later claimed that in 1924-26, at the height of the jazz age, a trumpet held up in the night air of the Stroll [South State Street - HC] would play itself. Stores remained open twenty-four hours a day to serve those enjoying urban life after years of rural tranquillity. During the day, women wearing what the *Defender* [a black Chicago newspaper - HC] called “head rags of gaudy hues” leaned from tenement windows while small groups of men asserted a more public presence on the sidewalks. At night the crowded sidewalks rang with music and laughter, the cabarets, vaudeville and movie theaters interspersed with “gaudy chile, chop suey, and ice cream parlors.” Thirty-fifth and State streets offered a cosmopolitan “Bohemia of the Colored Folks,” where “lights sparkled, glasses tinkled,” and crowds of people circulated, around the clock (Kenney 1993:14-15).

These have been quoted at some length to make two points. First, the sense of arriving, acceptance and freedom experienced by the diasporic population is quite explicitly stated. Second, both authors have been caught up in the myths. Texas folklorist Alan Lomax is a world authority on folk music and yet can write about leaving ‘mules and ... cotton rows’, clearly invoking the rural myth. Kenney, Associate Professor of History and American Studies at Kent State University, repeats without comment Eddie Condon’s absurd story of trumpets playing themselves. I am not suggesting that either believed it; but, for example, Kenney’s statement does not have a place in a work calling itself a “cultural history”, or at least not without comment.

One other point worth making at this stage is that it is a mistake to see the great migration as a single, individual event. The migrations began early in the century, and rose to climaxes in 1916-1919, during the 1920s and later in the 1940s¹² (Goodwin 1990: 28 and 82; Kenney 1993: 11). The migration was not a matter of individuals finding more congenial roots elsewhere; it was a social and cultural manifestation, a concept explored at least in a preliminary fashion by Gilroy who argues that the concept allows us to view

¹² Yet another cause for the 1940s migration was increases in racial, political and social disorders, following the Second World War. Three states in particular led in racial mob violence; Alabama, Georgia and Mississippi. From 1888 to 1955 the numbers of persons killed by mob violence in the southern states combined, totalled nearly three thousand, and the violence of the 1940s was of particular concern. A Presidential Committee on Civil Rights reported that “while available statistics show that, decade by decade, lynchings have decreased, this Committee has found that in the year 1947 lynching remains one of the most serious threats to the civil rights of Americans. It is still possible for a mob to abduct and murder a person in some sections of the country with almost certain assurances of escaping punishment for the crime. The decade from 1936 through 1946 saw at least 43 lynchings. No person received the death penalty, and the majority of the guilty persons were not even prosecuted” ... These acts of violence provided a backdrop to the migration of large numbers of southern blacks to the North (Goodwin 1990:85)

various black communities as part of a ‘*changing same*’ (Gilroy 1993:xi). In terms of the migrations this century from the Southern to the Northern U.S.A., *Pep* stands as a testament to both the diasporic permanence of black American culture and to the temporary stability afforded in the North.

Since Morton recorded *Pep* again for the Library of Congress folk music archive in 1938, it is actually possible to test this hypothesis. The first two themes remain essentially the same as far as the significant symbols are concerned (especially the D), and the first presentation of theme C has the same melancholy timbre to it. However, theme C is repeated twice in 1938. In both, the ascending figure in the break in bars 15 and 16 is retained. This quite clearly is a sign which makes a distinction with the 1929 performance, for it signals the retention of the underlying meaning of themes A and B. It might, indeed, be instructive to compare the occurrences of B♭ in bars 17-32 of the final presentation of theme C in 1938 (there is no extended ending in the 1938 version).

Table 2 Pep: Theme C3 1938 bars 17-38: showing occurrence of B♭

Bar:	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32
B♭ quavers	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3	0	1	4	0

This shows very definitely that by 1938 the certainties and security represented in the musical text by the tonic were considerably less evident. America had been through the Great Depression and the booming industries of the North had either laid off the black employees wooed from the South or had become far less paternal to them. The effect of the world recession was literally catastrophic:

The effects of economic depression rolled outwards with a ghastly and irresistible logic. The social gains of the 1920s, when many people’s standard of living had improved, were wiped out. No country had a solution to unemployment and though it was at its worst in the United States and Germany it existed in a concealed form all round the world in the villages and farmlands of the primary producers. The national income of the United States fell by 38 per cent between 1929 and 1932; this was exactly the figure by which the prices of manufactured goods fell, but at the same time raw material prices fell by 56 per cent and foodstuffs by 48 per cent respectively (Roberts 1983:848-9)

Morton himself, on a personal level, had seen his considerable finances wither to nothing and his own popularity as a band leader completely overshadowed by Duke Ellington and Count Basie, amongst many others. According to Lomax, who interviewed Morton about this period in 1938, the depression affected him greatly:

Jelly Roll's pencilled notes to Mabel [Morton's wife] show how the Depression had cracked his confidence. He figured it was every one for himself in this cold midnight period (Lomax 1956:227).

I am not trying to argue that it was Morton's 'intention' to alter his approach to the third theme of *Pep*, but instead to show the homology between the society of which Morton was a key, active and important member and the art he was able to produce. In this case, using identical thematic and harmonic material the change in the social experience of urban Americans is made explicit.

One further way of comparing the appearance of the tonic in this part of *Pep* is to contrast actual occurrences with possible (based on the 'relevant range' of harmonies available to Morton).

Table 3 **Pep: to contrast theme C final presentation 1929 and 1938 with possible occurrences of B \flat .**

Bar:	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34
1929 B \flat quavers	7	4	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	8	8	8	6	8	1
1938 B \flat quavers	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3	0	1	4	0		
chords	C 7	F 7	B b	%	F 7	%	B b	B b 7	E b	%	B b	G 7	C 7	F 7	B b	%	C 7 /F 7	B b
Poss. B \flat	8	0	8	8	0	0	8	8	8	8	8	0	8	0	8	8	4	6

The opportunities for stating the tonic in 1929 had obviously been taken up, but to a far lesser extent in 1938. This suggests very strongly an homology. The tonic in Western music clearly represents stability. It is on this basis that the tension which emerges in, for example, Bach concertos, is developed.

The opening movement of the Brandenburg Concerto No. 5 qualifies as a tonal composition. Its background progression opens in a key it unambiguously defines as its tonic (D Major), proceeds through a number of other keys (in order: A Major, B Minor and F# Minor), then returns to re-establish the tonic key, thus achieving tonal closure. And throughout, its surface harmonic syntax is unrelentingly devoted to directing the ear to the next goal, instilling desire in the listener for attainment of that goal, and playing with (teasing and postponing, gratifying) the expectation of imminent closure ...

The standard Vivaldi-style concerto grosso movement begins with the presentation by the large group of a stable block of material, the ritornello. A ritornello represents a microcosm of the entire movement: it defines the tonic and principal thematic material, introduces at least a moment of instability in the middle, and then returns to the stable tonic and closing material to conclude (McClary 1992:23-4).

As listeners, we yearn for the return of the tonic which is suggested and then delayed before, finally, our wishes are gratified. In *Pep* we can see very clearly the same process at work but at the level of the social. Morton's rendition is not the plaintive cry of an individual who feels hard done by, as Lomax would have us believe; it is the expression of a culture at the mercy of dominant forces.

Conclusion

What this study has shown is a profound deconstructionism at work in Morton's music. He works within an established form, and yet refuses to be tied by it; and works within orthodox harmony yet rejects its strictures.

According to van der Merwe (1992) the device of the 'double tonic' in the same relation found in *Pep* (tonic to 6th) is:

...extremely common in African music, and it is strange that a pattern so popular in both Africa and Scotland should have virtually died out in the United States (1992:206).

This folk device, however, has an echo in the parlour music device of the 'co-tonic' (van der Merwe 1992:229). Indeed, van der Merwe explicitly states that 'Yet another possibility is the co-tonic on the sixth' (1992:230). Thus, while the folk route to the false tonic was becoming closed to Morton, it still existed in the parlour possibilities. In these terms then, does the note D in *Pep* signify an echo of Africa or a parlour intrusion into the first two themes? The former would be consistent with a purely folk performance and the latter with a 'straight' popular performance. Yet as we have seen neither of these interpretations satisfactorily explain on their own the signifying practices in the piece. Quite clearly, the tonic and its relations is central to understanding the piece in its social context; its triumphal statement in the major section of the work in 1929 is an affirmation of stability; its denial in the same theme in 1938 signifies the overthrow of stability.

Moreover, in terms of Williams's notion of *structures of feeling* (Williams 1977:128-135; Filmer 1995) (see above, pages 53-4), it is clear that at the level of semantic figures Morton is indicating possibilities other than those available to ragtime players or to the popular music industry. Our understanding of the homologies in *Pep* is enriched by the fact that we do not necessarily understand them clearly. What is it to speak of an homology which makes its home in a diasporic community? At one level, we can speak, as Gilroy (1993) speaks, diachronically, of the Black Atlantic community, a community in movement; but this, at any one moment, synchronically, is stable, and can be counted,

a census, at fixed addresses. *Pep* opens for us an interpretative space which, in its uncertainty, is rich and fulfilling; its structures of feeling are multivocal, and yet real.

What art continues to speak to is humanity, although it may emerge in an infinite variety of cultural forms. It makes us aware of these forms, and rejects attempts to limit it to one voice. But the analyst's approach to art must mirror this deep complexity and address profound levels of artistic texts. Only in this way can impression and opinion be transcended.

This paper is a microscopic interrogation of contradictory signs apparent at the aural level. It is also, at a general level, an attempt to move towards an analytic of communication. In other words, it was prompted by considerations similar to those which led Barthes to investigate the 'third meaning'. What it demonstrates quite clearly is that it is **relations** which define meaning at a deep level and not phenomenal 'truth'.

This work shows that it is possible to work at the microscopic¹³ level with musical texts and to draw analytical conclusions. Yet most work in the sociology of popular music is quite content to discuss the music without ever once approaching it directly. Where music is concerned, and especially popular music, such analyses are the norm. This is what Geertz calls 'thin description' as opposed to thick description where: 'Analysis...is sorting out the structures of signification...and determining their social ground and import' (Geertz, 1993:9).

Following this advice I have shown that beneath what may appear to be theoretically simple matters of musical fact lie sets of relations having implications for the study of culture and society reaching far beyond the work of art itself.

¹³ The notion of 'microscopic' analysis is borrowed from Geertz (1993:21).

Chapter 5: *High Society*, Theodore Adorno and the Popular Music business

There are periods in the development of popular styles which are highly significant. The development of jazz out of ragtime, marches, popular song, blues, with innumerable European and African traditions is one moment that is rich in signifiers; as Susan McClary shows, using structural analysis, Bach's writing stands similarly between two cultural moments:

One of the principal ideological disputes with which Bach was continuously entangled was that which occurred between the more orthodox strains of Lutheranism versus the pietistic. While this split is no longer of pressing interest to us, it did affect Bach's career directly (and, quite frequently, uncomfortably), *and it informed his compositional choices* (McClary 1992:51 my emphasis).

Thus, even Bach, widely held to express eternal verities in his music, can be shown to be expressing earthly ideologies and political concerns also.

There was a time in the 1950s when the 'music business' then known as 'Tin Pan Alley' underwent a profound change, perhaps as profound as the change in its informal name. It had been established during the years towards the end of the nineteenth century and, despite a challenge to a powerful body in the USA, ASCAP (discussed below), around 1939-40, enjoyed a relatively safe oligopolistic position. The emergence of a group of anarchic musicians in the form of jazz players, both 'modern' and 'traditional' heralded the beginning of the 'youth culture' and seriously threatened this system. In the United Kingdom, Ronnie Scott and Tubby Hayes led influential modern jazz ensembles, while Ken Colyer, Humphrey Lyttleton and Chris Barber - whose banjo player, Lonnie Donegan, popularised a 1920s urban black US music called skiffle - were leaders in the traditional field. In the end, the response of the system was to change. For example, during the 1950s the popularity of a song came to be measured by sales of phonograph records rather than sheet music. This started a long process which saw the transfer of power from the established music publishers, with the routines of plugging and the groups of established and respected songwriters, to the situation we have today where record companies control the scene and anybody can be a songwriter.

A well-known film, released in 1956, has some clues to cultural processes happening at that time. It has never enjoyed critical acclaim, but remains popular, presumably for the songs written by Cole Porter. There was in 1987 a West End revival at the Victoria Palace. The plot of the film is based on a 1939 picture, itself based on a stage play, called *The Philadelphia Story*, which starred Cary Grant, James Stewart and Katherine Hepburn. Most critics hold that *High Society* is a poor imitation of *The Philadelphia Story*. Viewed as film art, this perception may be valid. However, *High Society* is a musical film and it is my contention that the musical content of the film defines its relevance, rather than the performances of the actors. As will become clear, I intend 'musical content' to have a meaning going beyond the songs in the film, good as they are. It is worth stating here that my concern is not with cinematic elements of the film, or with the film musical as a *genre*. I am concerned with the music and pitch the analysis at that level.

The stars of *High Society* are Grace Kelly, Bing Crosby and Frank Sinatra. Performing also, in an ambiguous role, is Louis Armstrong. In a number of ways, Armstrong's part is precisely what marks this film as interesting as a document of this period of change in the music business.

Armstrong's role is highly complex. He has, at least, the following functions in the film:

Dramatic Chorus

Black minstrel

Servant

Popular musician (and bandleader)

Jazz musician

Artist

Comedian

In addition, one of Crosby's lines in *Now You Has Jazz* makes reference to Armstrong's well known origins in New Orleans. The very title of the film, to a person with some knowledge of New Orleans jazz, would certainly call to mind the New Orleans Rag

(developed from a March of the same name) with the most famous of all clarinet choruses, also called *High Society*. Moreover, a jazz fan would also be aware that Crosby, while a crony of Bix Beiderbecke and others in the 20s in New York and Chicago, was part of the 'jazz age' (an expression probably coined by F Scott Fitzgerald in an eponymous collection of short stories) which first created Armstrong as a world figure. The film, then, has a powerful sub-plot relating it to New Orleans jazz and has, in a complex series of roles, the most famous New Orleans jazz musician ever.

Why would Cole Porter, one of the most successful and witty of the songwriters of the first half of the twentieth century, introduce this musical overtone? *The Philadelphia Story* itself has almost no mention of music, and certainly music has no particular function in the film. There is definitely no mention of jazz, New Orleans or otherwise. The dialogue and plot of *High Society* remains very faithful to the earlier film in other respects. Cole Porter would not normally have been inclined to invoke a musical setting in which he had no place. From the point of view of popular musical success, there was no particular reason for this invocation. In the event, many of the film's numbers were popular hits, including *Samantha* by Kenny Ball, a British 'trad' jazz bandleader whose bands often included musicians known for New Orleans jazz leanings. Other hits were *True Love* (also recorded by a British 'trad' band, Terry Lightfoot and his New Orleans Jazzmen), *Now You Has Jazz* and *Well, Did You Evah*. The latter was a song from a 1939 show, *DuBarry Was a Lady* (sung on that occasion by Betty Grable). All other songs were written for the film (although some background music is based on earlier 1930s Porter hits). It is quite justifiable to say that the choice of *Samantha* and *True Love* as vehicles for British trad bands, and their success in such a setting, is because of their inclusion in a film where the musical content suggests New Orleans jazz. The songs themselves are not obviously jazz material, at least no more than any other; in the original, *True Love* was a waltz.

The point is that there is no obvious reason for the strong references to New Orleans jazz in the film. The reason given for Armstrong's appearance at all is that he is appearing at the Newport Jazz Festival¹, run by Crosby's character, C K Dexter Haven. Interestingly,

¹ **'Newport Jazz Festival**

The annual musical celebration known as the Newport Jazz Festival has for more than 25

although the film flits quite comfortably between illusion and extra-textual references, Armstrong is the only character who retains his 'real-world' identity in the film. The device of the jazz festival does not really work, partly because even in the shadow reality created by the film a jazz festival with one band is no festival, and partly because Armstrong's *persona* is much more rooted outside the film than inside it. We do not need the excuse of the jazz festival, although it is arguable that the characters in the film do. The heavy intention of the Director (Charles Walters) to keep Armstrong's *persona* deliberately ambiguous works quite well.

It is worth remarking that it is not possible to argue for Armstrong's inclusion in this film as an attempt to maximise audience potential by having in the cast a popular entertainer. Bing Crosby and Frank Sinatra fill this role, even without other stars such as Grace Kelly. In any case, jazz musicians, even well-known ones, are not obviously 'popular' stars, probably because their music defies categorization which is essential for the marketing of music as a commodity. Armstrong is not prominently featured in the film, but his function is crucial for understanding the film as a musical. Armstrong featured in a number of films from 1931 to 1969, but in none is his *persona* more complex than in *High Society*.

Let us take each of the *personæ* suggested by Armstrong's role in turn in order to try to understand their significance.

years attracted the foremost jazz artists, who play extended jam sessions for huge audiences. Organized by jazz promoter George Wein, the first festival was held on July 17 and 18, 1954, on the tennis court of the Newport Casino in Rhode Island, and included among its performers such stars as Ella Fitzgerald, Dizzy Gillespie, and Stan Kenton. By 1960 the festival had moved to a park, was held for 4 days and nights, and attracted thousands of jazz lovers. In 1969 and again in 1971, Wein featured several rock music groups whose followers brought disruption and riot to the town, which finally revoked permission to hold the festival in Newport. Now held simultaneously in New York City, Stanhope, N.J., and Saratoga Springs, N.Y., the festival's great popularity is witness to the reemergence of jazz after its years of eclipse by rock music.'

Bibliography: Goldblatt, Burt, *Newport Jazz Festival: The Illustrated History* (1977) Its location in New England. (source: The New Grolier Multimedia Encyclopaedia, Release 6)

Dramatic Chorus

As a member of America's 'aristocracy', educated at Yale, Cole Porter would, of course, have been familiar with the dramatic device of the Chorus. His musical, *Kiss Me Kate* (1948) was based on *The Taming of the Shrew*, which at least suggests familiarity with drama. It is likely that Armstrong's *persona* as *Chorus*, a character both in the play and outside it, interpreting the play for the audience, is quite deliberate. But why Armstrong, from the New Orleans black urban ghetto? The story of the film revolves around America's elite Society in which people like Armstrong would have no place even if they did have money; indeed, one of the sub-plots of *High Society* (but not *The Philadelphia Story*) is that 'taxes' are forcing the sale of the houses of the elite (although this is not reflected in the life-styles portrayed in the film). Armstrong is not an obvious choice, unless his inclusion is part of a sub-plot which attempts to say something beyond the text itself.

Armstrong clearly mediates between the screen reality and off-screen reality in a way none of the other characters do (although Crosby and Sinatra both trade jokes with each other which, for their good sense, rely on the audience's prior knowledge of their off-screen characters). Armstrong addresses the audience beyond the camera directly; neither Sinatra nor Crosby do this. After the opening number, the calypso *High Society*, Armstrong says to the camera: 'End of song; beginning of story', and at the close of the film itself remarks 'End of story!', thus in a highly obvious way taking the role of interpreter of the filmic reality. His commentary on the action throughout also serves to highlight essential turns of the plot and furthermore, to some extent, link the action to some of the musical numbers.

So we are still left with the problem; why Armstrong? For the answer to this it is necessary to appreciate the constant switches between on-screen and off-screen reality. Nowhere is this more obvious than in the song which particularly features Armstrong and Crosby, *Now You Has Jazz* (it is also instructive to consider the implications of the use of street-wise hip talk in this and other contexts of the film). During this number, Crosby and Armstrong indulge in banter which only has meaning given the well-known origins of

the two in jazz or jazz-based popular music. For example, Armstrong sings: 'As for France...' and Crosby remarks, 'I know you're big there!' Armstrong's band is introduced, one by one; this was the then current All Stars and included musicians who would be well known to jazz fans. More significant, perhaps, to jazz fans is the device of introducing members of the band. This has a conscious echo in Armstrong's 1925 recording (with his Hot Five) *Gut Bucket Blues*. In other words, Armstrong's character in the film, which is the same as his character off the film (even down to his New Orleans nickname, Satchelmouth), is deliberately invoking a set of meanings, both musical and other.

Other roles invoked by Armstrong:

Black minstrel

At the time that *High Society* was made (1955-6), America was ambivalent about its black population. Lynchings were still a feature in the South and the riots in Little Rock took place in this period, a period of significance for civil rights:

The first and most successful phase of the campaign for equal status for the Negro was a struggle to ensure him Civil Rights, of which the most important was the unhindered exercise of the franchise (always formally available but actually not in some southern communities) and new rights to equality of treatment in other ways which began to be granted to him by decisions of the Supreme Court in 1954 and 1955 (Roberts, 1980:987)

However, black performers were a well-known and respected part of the American entertainment scene - minstrel shows had been popular since at least the 1840s. While Armstrong might appear in his own right in films devoted to jazz or to him, in a film which takes as its setting 'aristocratic' America, one way of emasculating a potentially threatening character is to give a familiar, comfortable *persona*. The title sequence and the first scene of the film are Armstrong's band bus travelling to the festival (!) and, inside, Armstrong and his band are singing a calypso. Of course, the band would probably be sleeping in reality but this is a further touch to reinforce the happy, irrepressible minstrel image. The calypso style, made especially popular by Harry

Belafonte in the 1950s has importance here because it is a style which has amongst its signifiers black people, black people who inhabit a tropical island, who are always happy and want nothing more than to serve rum punch to tourists. Calypsos did not include bussing and Civil Rights in their referents.

Servant

It is interesting to consider Armstrong's position as a servant. As a musician, playing at a house party, he is in the role of servant - but so is every person hired on a temporary basis. Armstrong comes across as a servant more in terms of his relation to the Crosby character, C K Dexter Haven, who is connected with the music business. At times, in the film, his remarks as Chorus have the flavour of remarks which might be made by a 'gentleman's gentleman', where the servant so closely identifies with his master that he knows better what his master truly wants or needs. 'Right song, wrong girl', says Armstrong at one point.

Popular musician (and bandleader)

There is no question that Armstrong's popularity at this time can be discounted. However, this is emphatically not the reason for his inclusion in the film. As has been remarked above, there is no need to strengthen the cast with stars - it is powerful in this sense anyway, and there is no comparable Armstrong-like figure in *The Philadelphia Story* - but this role for Armstrong cannot be denied. The function of his inclusion, however, is to provide a stronger link with the reality of popular culture outside the film as would have been understood by the audience but not by the film's characters, such as Tracy Lord (Grace Kelly). The frame of reference for characters in the film is very much that of the film story without recourse to any other extra-film reality.

Jazz musician

In a similar way, the signifiers implicating a jazz background whether overt - such as Armstrong's sobriquets 'Satchmo' and 'Pops' used in the film - or covert - such as the use

of the title *High Society* and the device of introducing members of the band (found first in an early Armstrong recording) - apply mainly to Armstrong, although some attach to Crosby. However they arise, they are numerous and unmistakable throughout the film.

Artist

A slightly different issue is Armstrong's filmic role as artist. His position in the jazz world is ambiguous in this connection even today. In the even more confused popular musical world of the 1950s this function would have been only partially understood. However, and in this way Armstrong is actually tied into the film, in context it is clear that Armstrong has status as an artist, a popular artist to be sure, but having similar cultural space to that occupied by Cole Porter, Bing Crosby and, increasingly, Frank Sinatra.

Comedian

There are uncomfortable stereotypical images invoked by Armstrong which tie him in to the 'Uncle Tom' version of the Deep South such as the toothy and ready grin, the rolling eyes, the use of street talk and the raspy voice. However, as a resident of the Deep South brought up in poverty, Armstrong was not above exploiting this imagery and the stereotype of the 'good darkie'. Its referent, however is not only that, but also the minstrelsy tradition remarked upon above.

Armstrong has long occupied a cultural space at once creative (and therefore potentially subversive) and typical (and therefore harmless). Meltzer has this to say of Armstrong's film appearances:

The divisive function of racism as a practice was filtered out of the celluloid myth-stream dream of jazz. The fact of black was presented in stereotypes of the simple-minded, servile, therefore harmless darkie, or the sleekly sexual, sinister hep-cat, veiled in code of language and movement, dangerous. One of the most durable jazz presences in film was Louis Armstrong who, over the decades, appeared in a variety of disguises - cannibal, bartender, Crosby's bug-eyed companion in an abandoned house, barefoot on a cotton

bale. A monumental smile as if pushing into some unknown gravity; his rumbling voice talking or singing or laughing, gargling crunchy gravel, his instant sweat and big, white handkerchief polishing his smile. Everpresent on film, radio or television, Armstrong remained a smiling, shining, ebullient cipher everyone knew (Meltzer 1993:145).

It is clear that it was his function as racial cipher that attracted Porter to him as a performer in this film².

The Music

Armstrong's musical role in the film is highly revealing. He plays short accompanying phrases in two songs - *Little One* and *Samantha* - but, despite the complex nature of his signifying practices in the film, is fully featured in only two, *High Society* and *Now You Has Jazz*. What might this imply?

Van Der Merwe (1989) develops a useful concept to explain much of popular song in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. There is an important kind of popular music which he calls 'parlour music'. He shows its origins in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as well as its prevalence during the first half of the twentieth:

Starting from around 1790, the classical tradition gradually pulled away from a mass of middle- and lowbrow music. The latter, which I call 'parlour music', covered an enormous spread of social class and artistic pretension. It was enjoyed by dustmen and dukes, burglars and bishops. Between it and folk music lay a wide territory where folk and commercial popular dance music interacted: a world of semi-professional musicians, rustic dance bands, broadside ballads, and the like. Scholars now point out that much of 'folk music' really belonged to this world...At the other end of the spectrum parlour music melted into the lighter classical forms such as opera and ballet. Nor was any great stylistic

² The reference to Armstrong as cannibal comes from a Betty Boop cartoon of the 1930s. Meltzer ties this in to a version of racial angst:

*the cannibal black, the devourer, the black plague. insatiable men and women
free-ranging through (or buried within) the white jungle of psyche*

*a thirties Max Fleischer cartoon: Betty Boop pursued by the round black sun of Louis
Armstrong - "I'm Gonna Get You, You Rascal, You" - chasing her from the cannibal
kitchen stew-pot through a rippling jungle phantasm*

*if the black's a cannibal, the white becomes what's beheld; in the frenzy of what is
blissfully dubbed postmodern is a trophy room of cannibalized cultures; to consume is to
be consumed (Meltzer 1993:13).*

distinction made between sacred music and the more solemn secular types. The same basic homogeneity of style overrode class distinctions: 'The Eton Boating Song and 'Oh! Mr Porter'...may be worlds apart socially, but they speak the same musical language (van der Merwe, 1989:17-18)

Cole Porter in fact was one of the dominant 'parlour music' exponents this century along with figures such as Irving Berlin and, in the UK, Noel Coward. The style is thoroughly European in origin and appears in light classical music, such as operas and ballets, as well as in popular music.

Given that Porter was a major exponent of the parlour style, it is not surprising that most of the numbers in *High Society* are written in that form. The only two which diverge are *High Society* and *Now You Has Jazz*. This is highly significant³.

These are the numbers, of course, which feature Louis Armstrong. This means that not only is Armstrong's role as a character in the film ambiguous and unusual, but also that his musical function in the film likewise signifies a duality of purpose.

Arguably there are three main components of popular music this century: parlour music, African folk music and European folk music. As Merwe shows, it is not easy to make clear distinctions between the latter two, partly because folk musics the world over share certain facets in common and partly because African and European folk song borrowed extensively from each other in the United States. It is my contention that the specific and identifiable component of European folk music in major twentieth century popular music styles has been minor but has always been present. The battle has been fought over the relative contents of 'parlour music' and African folk music.

Slowly and, it now seems, inexorably, during the 1950s, black music was asserting itself as the popular music style in the USA. Inevitably, this meant the domination of folk music, mainly African in origin, but considerably tempered by European influences. *High Society* demonstrates one way in which this slow revolution is documented. Firmly

³ The chord charts for the songs in *High Society* are shown in Appendix 1 and clearly show the distinction between Armstrong's vehicles (*High Society Calypso* and *Now You Has Jazz*) and the other songs in the film.

escapist as it is, the Armstrong character introduces mid-50s America, but in an acceptable form. Louis Armstrong was middle-aged and long recognised as an ‘Uncle Tom’⁴ figure: ‘Billie Holiday...said after watching Satch on television, “I love Pops, he “Toms” from the heart.” ’ (Jones and Chilton, 1975:207). This was a way of referring to the impending triumph of black music over parlour music in a safe way and also a comfortable way, for New Orleans jazz was familiar, not like the sounds coming from Los Angeles, Chicago, New York and, above all perhaps, Memphis. Cole Porter’s audience would not be confronted by overtly sexual gestures nor offended by raw rock and roll, Little Richard style; instead, Louis Armstrong sings a calypso and plays and sings, with Bing Crosby, a modified twelve-bar blues (*Now You Has Jazz*) in which, by implication, Armstrong is referred to as a rock and roll player. There was, to be sure, a time in the 1950s when ‘jazz’ and ‘rock and roll’ were used interchangeably by the white public, and the two terms have a long co-history in black America (a fairly frequent line in 1920s and, presumably, earlier blues, with numerous variants, is ‘My Daddy rocks me with a steady roll’ - a frank reference to sexuality common in early jazz and blues).

The presence of Bing Crosby in the number *Now You Has Jazz* also tends to dilute the impact of a piece of music which is played by musicians who understand how to play music with a high African component and is clearly based on the dominant form of early rock and roll, the twelve-bar blues. Crosby’s asides (calling to mind the ‘Road’ films with Bob Hope and, indeed, other recordings such as *Zing a Little Zong* with Jane Wyman), introduce into the number the sort of wittiness and intellectual flippancy common in Porter’s parlour music but entirely foreign to twelve-bar blues. There are times when genuine New Orleans polyphony starts to assert itself, but when Crosby announces that the band (*Le tout ensemble*, he says, at once sophisticated, witty and patronising) is to play, the All Stars play a riff - the trademark of 1930s swing, not of New Orleans jazz. Swing was a white style (its most popular exponents are still famous today and include Benny Goodman and Glen Miller) which would have been familiar to and popular with any of the film’s audience over 20 years of age. Although the Big Bands of swing were still performing in the mid-50s (and, indeed, some still do today, but largely for their nostalgia), popular music in the first half of the decade was banal.

⁴ This expression derives from the character in Harriet Beecher Stowe’s abolitionist novel *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* (1852).

Hot-diggity, Dog-diggity, If I Knew You Were Coming, I'd Have Baked a Cake are two titles from that period, monosyllabic, moronic and very parlour at least in mode (i.e., the note relations defined by scalistic conventions). So swing itself by this time was not what sold records but it retained at least a jazz feel - a non-threatening jazz feel.

The Armstrong character, then, allows signifiers of the 1950s and its popular music revolution to enter the film without interfering with the comfortable image of America portrayed. This is the true reason for his inclusion. Rock and roll had already appeared in Hollywood; *The Blackboard Jungle* (1955) had produced a hit - *Rock Around the Clock* - for Bill Haley. The film *Rock Around the Clock* was released in 1956, the same year as *High Society*, and *The Girl Can't Help It* (1957 - almost contemporary with *High Society*) would feature Fats Domino, Little Richard and Gene Vincent in performing roles. A spate of films was to follow, each of which gave up any real pretence to a story line in favour of a platform for popular artists. This was not necessarily new, but what was new was the accent on youth. This was certainly not the case with *High Society* in which the youngest actor is Grace Kelly who sometimes looks embarrassingly out of place amongst her toothsome suitors. *High Society* stands out as a brave attempt to merge the musical style of the 1930s with the 1950s.

Perennial Fashion

Theodor Adorno, apparently, wrote *Perennial Fashion - Jazz* in about 1960 ('For almost fifty years, since 1914 when the contagious enthusiasm for it broke out in America, jazz has maintained its place as a mass phenomenon' (Adorno, 1967:121)) and therefore not long after *High Society* was made - certainly while it was still doing box office business (it was certainly on release in 1963-64). It might be instructive to see if Adorno's thoughts can help to illuminate some of the interesting dark corners of *High Society*.

It is not certain from *Perennial Fashion* that Adorno is writing about jazz as I have been construing it here, that is, as a musical form which is highly linked to its folk origins. In places it seems as though he is: 'However little doubt there can be regarding the African elements in jazz, it is no less certain that everything unruly in it was from the beginning

integrated into a strict scheme' (Adorno 1967:122). Elsewhere, he equates jazz with the popular culture 'industry' which looks as though he is confusing jazz (which has only been truly popular in short bursts) with Tin Pan Alley. It is only in this way that it is possible to make sense of his thesis that jazz, over the fifty years he refers to, had not really changed.

Adorno's thesis is that jazz has few musical characteristics to recommend it. Syncopation is its main ingredient and this is simply mixed and rehashed with '...semi vocal, semi instrumental sounds, gliding, impressionistic harmonies and opulent instrumentation' (Adorno 1967:124). There is, for Adorno, no composition in jazz (in which he is mainly right), but instead it uses popular songs and overlays its few special effects. The reason for this is that jazz is not only a part of the capitalist system, it stands as a metaphor for it:

Just as no piece of jazz can, in a musical sense, be said to have a history, just as all its components can be moved about at will, just as no single measure follows from the logic of the musical progression - so the perennial fashion becomes the likeness of a planned congealed society, not so different from the nightmare vision of Huxley's Brave New World (Adorno 1967:124-5)

Thus, the 'culture industry' assiduously roots out anything that is new, in jazz and everything else, in the service of comfortable, predictable, non-threatening uniformity. 'Experts' on jazz are merely dupes who are incapable of describing what they like in 'precise, technical musical concepts':

Anyone who allows the growing respectability of mass culture to seduce him into equating a popular song with modern art because of a few false notes squeaked by a clarinet; anyone who mistakes a triad studded with 'dirty notes' for atonality has already capitulated to barbarism' (Adorno 1967:127)

Jazz 'experts' in their rejection of the 'tradition' of serious music are like the 'disciples of logical positivism' who throw off philosophical culture. But even this is surpassed by non-expert fans who, intoxicated by mass culture, follow, just as do the followers of dictators.

Having explained how jazz is put in the service of capitalism, Adorno goes on to answer the question of its undoubted appeal. Despite being rehashed, simple and formulaic, Adorno recognises that jazz still has some kind of appeal. The answer to this lies in psychoanalysis, for jazz is ‘the mechanical reproduction of a regressive moment, a castration symbolism’ (1967:129). In listening to jazz, we are castrated:

“Give up your masculinity, let yourself be castrated”, the eunuchlike sound of the jazz band both mocks and proclaims, “and you will be rewarded, accepted into a fraternity which shares the moment of impotence with you, a mystery revealed at the moment of the initiation rite” ‘ (Adorno 1967:129)

In support of this, Adorno gives no real evidence except that it ‘can be substantiated in countless details of the music as well as of the song lyrics’ (Adorno 1967:130). He backs up this claim by citing the antics of an ‘early jazz bandleader’, Mike Riley, whose band actually worked during the 1930s. Riley apparently would play *Dinah* while dismantling his trombone⁵. This and the fact that Louis Armstrong’s performances were once compared to the great castrati of the eighteenth century are offered in support of the castration theory of jazz. Castration for Adorno (and for psychoanalysis) signifies a loss of power, in particular, the power to confront and overturn the hegemony supported and represented by jazz. For Adorno, the expression ‘long hair’ (signifying an intellectual, including classical musicians) as opposed to short-haired ‘hip’ jazz players is highly revealing, for it calls to mind the Samson myth. The Philistines have taken control.

So there we have it. There is on the one hand a conspiracy by capitalism to furnish a predictable and safe product which in itself also appeals to a mass desire for castration (Adorno does not say what the appeal is to women, nor mention them at all). These are the two loci of the paper - conspiracy and castration.

However, there is another theme running through the text, the theme of syncopation. The word itself is etymologically related to the Italian word for ‘stumbling’ and the Late Latin *syncopare*, to swoon. Its root, *syncope*, denotes heart failure in one sense and a sudden

⁵ This clown-like tradition still endures; experienced players can get a note out of the minimum part of an instrument and the ‘musical tea-pot’ (a cornet mouthpiece in the spout of a tin pot) is an old gag.

cessation or interruption in another. Adorno deliberately invokes these supplementary meanings at various points in the paper:

[Speaking of jazz 'experts'] Rebellling feebly, they are always ready to duck, following the lead of jazz, which integrates stumbling and coming-too-soon into the collective march-step' (Adorno 1967:127-128).

While the leaders in the European dictatorships of both shades raged against the decadence of jazz, the youth of the other countries has long since allowed itself to be electrified, as with marches, by the syncopated dance steps, with bands which do not by accident stem from military music' (Adorno 1967:129)

The fact that of all the tricks available, syncopation should have been the one to achieve musical dictatorship over the masses recalls the usurpation that characterizes techniques, however rational they may be in themselves, when they are placed at the service of traditional totalitarian control (Adorno 1967:126)

Syncopation is therefore ranged alongside the Fascist and Communist dictatorships of the twentieth century. In the first quote above, there is another image of impotence (presumably to bolster the notion of castration) linked with syncopation which should be noted (in German, *kommen* has the same erotic referent as the English *come*). One way of syncopating is to anticipate the beat - hence 'coming-too-soon'. There is here the clear implication that jazz players and adherents are immature and subject to *ejaculatio praecox*.

It is probable that the image Adorno seeks to conjure is the goose-step, a metaphor for twentieth century totalitarianism of 'both shades'. To many people alive in the mid-twentieth century the goose-step is a still powerful symbol, both arrogant and inherently comic. George Orwell wrote:

The goose-step...is one of the most horrible sights in the world, far more terrifying than a dive-bomber. It is simply an affirmation of naked power; contained in it, quite consciously and intentionally, is the vision of a boot crashing down on a face. Its ugliness is part of its essence, for what it is saying is "Yes, I am ugly, and you don't dare laugh at me", like the bully who makes faces at his victims (Orwell, 1968:81).

Through this sub-text, then, Adorno is clearly saying that jazz is not merely another opiate of the masses but a threatening menace - a menace to true human nature⁶.

But what, for Adorno, is true human nature? As we have seen, Adorno implies that descriptions of music should be precise and technical; there is a musical tradition to which jazz does not belong; its African origins are 'unruly'; and, perhaps most revealingly, it converts 'rational' musical techniques into 'irrational' control mechanisms. For, in reality, in arguing against jazz as an art form, Adorno has adopted the position taken by Weber some fifty years before.

The difference between ancient music and the chromatic music which the great musical experimenters of the Renaissance created in a tremendous rational striving for new musical discoveries and indeed for the purpose of giving musical form to "passion", lay not in the impulse to artistic expression but rather in the technical means of expression. The technical innovation, however, was that this chromatic music developed into our harmonic interval and not into the Hellenic melodic half and quarter tone distance. This development, in its turn, had its causes in the preceding solutions of technical problems. This was the case with rational notation (without which modern composition would not even be conceivable); even before this, in the invention of certain instruments which were conducive to the harmonic interpretation of musical intervals; and above all, in the creation of rationally polyphonous vocal music (Weber, 1949:31)

Weber expresses a view of music no different to that taken by Adorno - it stands in a European tradition, it is rational and to describe it is a technical rather than emotional process. And it is this view of music which expresses, for Adorno as much as for Weber, genuine twentieth century human nature. In truth, Adorno's thesis is idealist rather than materialist in spirit; Marxist materialism as a metaphor for social structure has credibility when it deals with material production, but has problems when confronted by the production of symbols. Thus, Adorno is unable to give substance to his thesis; he mentions only two musicians by name - a minor bandleader, Mike Riley, and a figure

⁶ These three codes at work in *Perennial Fashion - Jazz* can be thought of as concentric circles, progressing from relatively surface to deeper processes. The outer circle can be thought of as the totalitarian system, the middle capitalism while the innermost circle is the castration complex. While they are separable for analytic purposes, as here, in the context of the paper they are intimately joined and are part of the same process.

universally known as an entertainer rather than as a jazz player, Louis Armstrong - and, in his conflation of Tin Pan Alley with jazz, seriously undermines his argument. Certainly, he does not threaten or debase his argument by discussing any one piece of jazz music. Let us be clear; Adorno at least has a point when discussing the popular music industry. It does work with formulas and resists change. In this, it is no different to other parts of capitalist economies. But to lay this at the door of jazz is bizarre, although some parts of jazz were clearly imported into popular music. The fact is that true jazz - and by this I mean certain recordings made by the acknowledged masters of the medium such as King Oliver, Duke Ellington, Charlie Parker and Jelly Roll Morton amongst not too many others - is highly ambiguous. It can be shown that, through the workings of the different codes at play within jazz, it is deconstructionist in character, and that is the true threat - although unexplicated and possibly only partially recognised - identified by Adorno.

There are certain clues to Adorno's view of man and music within the paper. In the passage quoted above, he properly notes the mistake of confusing 'a triad studded with 'dirty notes' for atonality'. The triad is the basis for European 'rational' harmony, consisting (in the major mode) of the tonic of the scale, the third and the fifth. But atonality is the rejection of all that the triad stands for and, although there is atonal jazz, we can infer that Adorno was not referring to that. What Adorno had in mind was the propensity of jazz players to 'play in the cracks', a reference to playing notes which lie figuratively 'in the cracks' between piano keys. These notes are not in the diatonic scale. This is very much a folk way of doing things. What Adorno has clearly seen is that jazz does not reject Western harmony in that the triad remains supreme, but he fails to comprehend that in its practice jazz simply ignores it in favour of the music. For example, King Oliver's famous three choruses in 'Dippermouth Blues' have whole bars where the cornet swings between semitones ('in the cracks'). This is not merely 'dirty notes'; jazz players knew what they were doing then and were feted for it by an appreciative and knowledgeable audience. Collier describes the three choruses as they appear in the 1926 remake *Sugar Foot Stomp* in these terms:

This is a new version of "Dippermouth Blues" made with the Creole Jazz Band, which contains Oliver's classic and much-imitated cornet solo. Here is exposed the essence of jazz. There is only a handful of notes here; the whole thing lies in how Oliver shades them.

The three choruses are built around the blue third, the pitch of which Oliver constantly varies. The notes are then colored by the opening and closing of a mute. And, finally, they are placed at odds to the beat in such a way that it is very hard, even with repeated listening, to figure out precisely where they lie. In sum, throughout this solo the few notes that Oliver takes as his starting point shift like a kaleidoscope. It is impossible to write out even an approximation of this solo in any system of available notation. Among jazz musicians of the 1920s and thirties it was a landmark; and no wonder, for it contains so much of what is important in jazz (Collier 1981:88-89).

Collier has been guilty of some exaggeration here; it is clearly possible, for example, to write out an approximation of this solo. It depends how the word 'approximate' is interpreted. In this sense, Adorno has provided a counter-balance to the tendency of fans to read too much into the music they love, but unfortunately he has been guilty of throwing out the baby with the bath water. Indeed, insofar as jazz strains the very limits of conventional practice while ostensibly working within it, it stands as a metaphor for the subversion of capitalism rather than its icon.

Adorno sought to read into jazz and popular music everything he hated about the twentieth century. By so doing he invested it with an economic and political significance which is not sustainable at the level of the music itself. Indeed he offers little support for his theory; rather, it is accepted as given. Jazz does not speak to the version of humanity which, as we have seen, Adorno supports. This rational, sophisticated, technically competent man does not lie at the heart of jazz. Instead, at its core, there is a simpler being, one in touch with humanity of all ages and all cultures, for it was above all, and remains, a folk art. If it indulges in syncopation, it is because it shares this device found with folk music throughout Africa and Europe (and hence America). It is also found in classical music where the effect sought is the same as in jazz. What is interesting in jazz is not its economic and political signifiers, but its social referents and the play of its social (rather than political) codes represented by Merwe's notion of parlour music, African and European folk music.

Perennial Fashion and High Society

Where might this discussion of Perennial Fashion - Jazz lead us in the analysis of *High Society*?

Adorno's thesis is largely supported. As we have seen, when Armstrong's band is introduced and begin playing *ensemble*, they play a swing riff - comfortable, rhythmic and completely non-threatening for mid-50s audiences - and not a New Orleans polyphony. But, as the analysis above has shown, this was a deliberate device. The popular music establishment was under threat and part of the function of *High Society* at that time was to defuse the unexploded bomb that had been discovered. Moreover, most of the music in the film, witty, sophisticated and pleasant though it is, is parlour and inherently non-controversial anyway. It is music designed by and for the popular music industry and as such would certainly support Adorno's general argument (i.e., that capitalist enterprise seeks to standardise and to influence the buying public).

So, the film is part of the response of the establishment to the massive changes in popular music just beginning; Adorno's thesis in its code of medium depth (capitalist conspiracy) is broadly supported. But it is supported precisely because the film was designed to protect capitalist interests.

The issue is, then: can Adorno's thesis explain major changes in popular music? On the face of it, only with the greatest difficulty, because the thesis is all about maintaining the status quo. There have been two major changes in popular music this century: first, the emergence of jazz in the early decades (not, as Adorno would have us believe, precisely in 1914); and second, the rise of rock and roll in the 1950s. In order to investigate these issues, and to test Adorno's thesis, it is necessary to do two things: first, to look at the structure of the music industry in the USA (since it was there that these changes first happened); and second, to look at the music.

The Music Industry in the USA

Ryan (1985) takes a systemic view of cultural production. His thesis rests on the 'production of culture' debate which rejects the notion that cultural products mirror the social values of the society in which they are found. Instead, because the choice of cultural products at any time is necessarily limited, audiences make choices reflecting products nearest their values. Therefore, to understand the relation of symbols to social structure, it is essential to look at culture-producing organisations (1985:2-3).

By way of illustration, Ryan traces the history of The American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers (ASCAP) throughout the first thirty years of its existence. ASCAP was formed as a direct consequence of Federal legislation in 1909 giving the copyright owner a right to be 'compensated for the public performance of his/her work for profit' (1985:11). The law was to have a decisive effect on ASCAP. Not only did it owe its origins to an Act, it was to establish its domain through the Courts, and was finally to have its virtual monopoly broken through antitrust action in Washington.

An important part of Ryan's argument rests on the style of music considered appropriate by ASCAP in the years of its ascendancy and near monopoly (mid 1920s-1940). This is the style known today as 'standards' - tunes which have some popularity but are not current hit material. This is what van der Merwe calls 'parlour music' and what Adorno is writing about, at least in part. There was a financial reason for it; ASCAP's complex payment system saw to it that, although current popularity was necessary for membership, it was not for the division of funds which relied upon a ranking system which protected established publishers and composers. There was discrimination against two genres in particular: 'race music' (what we now call 'black music', including jazz, blues and gospel music) and 'hillbilly' music (now called 'country'). Ryan clearly shows this discrimination by outlining the experiences of a famous jazz composer (Jelly Roll Morton) and a world famous hillbilly writer (Gene Autrey) when they applied for ASCAP membership (and hence, for access to royalties, especially from radio). These are given as examples only - their experiences were common amongst composers in these genres. Not only did those in charge at ASCAP benefit from this discrimination; publisher

members gained since, if their composers were not ASCAP members they had the choice of either keeping the composers' royalties on top of the publishers' royalties or paying them on. Ryan quotes from a letter of June 1940 by Morton to Thurmond Arnold, the Assistant Attorney General investigating ASCAP in Washington:

My first knowledge of (ASCAP) was in the year 1925, whilst playing a date at Spring Valley, Ill. A man walked up to me and ask me to join (ASCAP). I agreed that I would, "but" would speak to my publisher on it, Walter Melrose, which I did, he enticed me not to bother with it and spoke ill of (ASCAP). I knew Melrose was my publisher and did not want to offend him, so I passed it by, only to learn later he was a member...(Ryan, 1985:6-62)

The subsequent difficulty of Morton and other jazz figures to gain admittance to ASCAP calls this statement into question. However, some facts attest to its veracity. First, at the time and in the place Morton refers to, he was extremely popular. His first hit for Melrose, 'Wolverine Blues', was so popular in the mid-West region that the first band Bix Beiderbecke joined was named after it - *The Wolverine Orchestra*. Second, at this time (1925) ASCAP was still establishing its domain and would undoubtedly have found a genuine composer in the highly popular jazz field an important recruit. Lastly, ASCAP employed field agents who had considerable autonomy and freedom of action. This accords with Morton's recollection. Aside from these financial concerns, Ryan identifies another reason for the concentration on 'parlour music'.⁷

⁷ An interesting parallel between Ryan's thesis and Kennedy's work on the Indiana recording company *Gennett* may be drawn. Kennedy correctly locates the *Gennett* recordings of jazz, blues and country music styles as fundamentally important to the development of American, and by implication now the world's, popular music. This small label was a division of the Starr Piano Company of Richmond, Indiana:

The 1920s was an amazing era for the young recording industry. small record labels proliferated, partly because of the Gennett family's legal triumphs over Victor Records ... During the decade, record companies grew parallel with America's emerging jazz, blues and country music styles. Gennett Records, in particular, embraced these new genres on the fringe of the music mainstream. In fact, Gennett was one of the first record labels to cater to both the segregated white and black record markets. The Richmond studio might record a black jazz band in the morning, and a white Appalachian string band in the afternoon (Kennedy 1994:xvii).

Two of the artists recorded by *Gennett* when ignored by major labels were Jelly Roll Morton and Gene Autrey, both cited by Ryan in connection with ASCAP. Although Kennedy does not ascribe a 'production of culture' role to *Gennett*, his thesis is entirely consistent with that view. And certainly, for jazz fans at least, the *Gennett* repertoire of the 1920s is essential for understanding the origins of the music. The complicated nature of the issue is made explicit by Kennedy's research which has shown that an important private customer of *Gennett* was the Ku Klux Klan which had a prominent position in Indiana during the 1920s.

Table 1 shows the place of birth of ASCAP's membership between its incorporation in 1914 and 1948. It is not difficult to draw the conclusion (drawn, in fact, by Ryan) that this indicates a high proportion of immigrants living on the Eastern seaboard of the USA, many Jewish, in the original ASCAP membership who had been forced into areas, like music, of marginal economic activity. They used music for upward mobility and hence needed to establish the acceptability of their portfolios:

The rhythms and especially the lyrics of black music and country music seemed foreign, unsophisticated and threatening to the carefully constructed image. Given the strong sense of cohesiveness, both social and economic, it is no wonder that ASCAP...would react so negatively to music that sounded so different and was made by people so different from themselves. When they did incorporate "race" and "hillbilly" influences, it was in watered-down versions with music and melody altered to suit their own tastes (Ryan 1985:74).

This is a seductive idea. However, to use as evidence Table 1 to support it is parlous. Ryan actually offers it without the column for percentages given here. Although it appears to support his conclusion, the table itself is meaningless without a knowledge of the populations of the states. Appendix 1 contains two full calculations based on Pearson's correlation and two graphs showing lines of regression for the relationship between ASCAP membership and US population by state (an average of available data between 1910 and 1940 has been taken). Population data comes from Andriot (1983). There is not an exact match between Ryan's data and that of Andriot Associates (the Virgin Islands do not appear in Andriot, for example, and there is no data on 'Foreign born'), but there is enough agreement to compare the two. The first calculation and graph show the data including New York. The second shows the same data, excluding New York. The graphs clearly show the influence of New York on the regression line, and to a lesser extent, Massachusetts. Without New York, the slope of the regression is far less marked and all is closer to the population graph of all states.

State	Number	Percentage
Alabama	11	0.59
Arkansas	9	0.48
California	50	2.66
Colorado	11	0.59
DC	15	0.8
Connecticut	28	1.49
Delaware	1	0.05
Florida	8	0.43
Georgia	9	0.48
Hawaii	8	0.43
Idaho	1	0.05
Illinois	116	6.17
Indiana	31	1.65
Iowa	20	1.06
Kansas	14	0.74
Kentucky	21	1.12
Louisiana	20	1.06
Maine	7	0.37
Maryland	21	1.12
Massachusetts	102	5.43
Michigan	33	1.76
Minnesota	4	0.21
Mississippi	37	1.97
Missouri	37	1.97
Montana	1	0.05
Nebraska	12	0.64
New Hampshire	5	0.27
New Jersey	51	2.71
New Mexico	2	0.11
New York	511	27.18
North Dakota	2	0.11
Ohio	59	3.14
Oklahoma	7	0.37
Oregon	4	0.21
Pennsylvania	140	7.45
Puerto Rico	6	0.32
Rhode Island	9	0.48
South Carolina	7	0.37
South Dakota	5	0.27
Tennessee	13	0.69
Texas	25	1.33
Utah	8	0.43
Vermont	5	0.27
Virginia	20	1.06
Virgin Islands	1	0.05
Washington	11	0.59
West Virginia	7	0.37
Wisconsin	20	1.06
FOREIGN BORN	335	17.82
Total	1,880	100

Table 4 Birthplace of ASCAP membership, 1914-1948

Ryan's hypothesis is, therefore, on the whole supported by the statistics but it still leaves unanswered a major question which is the extent to which, once the music publishing business became established in New York, it attracted songwriters from elsewhere for much of the business of selling songs at that time required 'plugging' - taking songs to publishers' places of business and then playing and singing them.⁸

The challenge to ASCAP, when it came, was decisive. In 1940, as well as being investigated under antitrust legislation (which case is technically still open), the radio industry launched a rival organisation, Broadcast Music International (BMI). Since ASCAP controlled all the popular parlour songs, BMI was forced to look elsewhere for a catalogue which meant that, with their captive market of radio stations, for the first time in prime slots race and hillbilly music was heard. According to Ryan the effects of this, although slow to materialise, were profound:

The effects of the massive social changes brought about by the second world war, which resulted in increased exposure to a wider variety of cultural forms, have been discussed by a variety of writers...Changes in technology and the nation's demographic profile after the war were, of course, also of importance. Nevertheless, it was the birth of BMI and the breaking of ASCAP's hold on the industry that gave country music, rhythm and blues and, ultimately, rock'n'roll, wider media exposure, a financial base from which to develop and a new found respectability (Ryan 1985:115).

Ryan's position could hardly be more opposed to Adorno's in tone and philosophical commitment. However, they would both agree on one point and that is that it is impossible to discuss popular music without considering vested interests in the industry. As with Adorno, Ryan's thesis fits in well with the analysis of *High Society* given above. The film, except in the moments where Armstrong is playing, is a 'parlour musical'. The music is highly 'respectable' and could have come from Porter's pen at any time since the late 1920s (as we have seen, one number is from 1939). So it could be said that *High Society* is a document of the slow demise of the parlour style in the face of competition from rock'n'roll dating from the breaking of ASCAP's monopoly in 1941.

⁸ I would like here to acknowledge the assistance given by Dr Clive Seale of the Department of Sociology, Goldsmiths College, for his assistance with appropriate statistics.

Indeed, the sub-text in *High Society*, not present in *The Philadelphia Story*, about the increasing impoverishment of the monied class, could also be read as a metaphor for the death of the parlour style as the dominant popular form.

The Musical Texts

Most of the music in *High Society* is parlour in style. The two numbers in which Louis Armstrong is prominent are *High Society Calypso* and *Now You Has Jazz*. The chord charts for all the songs in the film are given in Appendix Two. The visual appearance shows that these two tunes are very different in character to the others. Three others are worthy of passing note. *Little One* uses a chord sequence which, in places, resembles Duke Ellington's *Black Beauty* (1928). It is possible that this is an ironic reference (given that the 'little one' referred to in the song is Grace Kelly's character's small sister), but unlikely. *Who Wants to be a Millionaire?* uses a version of a very common matrix in parlour music, one which is found in material such as *Won't You Come Home, Bill Bailey*. This clearly underlines the status of these pieces as parlour pieces⁹. *Mind if I Make Love to You* has features making it reminiscent of Kurt Weill's song *Mack the Knife*, from *The Threepenny Opera* (*Die Dreigroschenoper*) (1928). This is especially noticeable in the first thirty-two bars where the first eight bars of each 16-bar sequence has a chord structure identical to Kurt Weill's song. The melodic structure is also very similar. There are two possible connotations here. First, Louis Armstrong had had a hit the previous year with *Mack the Knife* and it had thereby already entered the realm of popular song. Second, the book for *The Threepenny Opera* was written by Berthold Brecht who had fled Hitler and settled in Los Angeles during the war. His Communist connections had led to his investigation by the House Anti-American Activities Committee in the 1940s. Many of the McCarthy 'witch hunts' of the 1940s and 1950s centred on Hollywood (where *High Society* was made) and in the mid-1950s there was still considerable angst about Communist plots. To alter *Mack the Knife* from a song about a serial killer and to displace it from its potentially subversive background (including its arrival into the popular music arena via a black star's hit) is again evidence

⁹ Three other pieces are played in the film. These are all Cole Porter numbers from the 1930s, and all played in typical dance band arrangements as background during the party scene. The tunes are: *You'd be so easy to love*, *I've got my eyes on you* and *I've got you under my skin*. Again, there is no place for such music at a jazz festival and even in the film's incidental music there is evidence of its ambiguous quality.

of the function of this film as **palliative**. Moreover, to re-create it as a love song with explicitly sexual overtones is a tactic which both defuses the impact of the original and at the same time foreshadows the expressive revolution of the 1960s by acknowledging sexual explicitness in popular music in the rock and roll which was then emerging.

As with the overall connotations of the film as a whole, I am not suggesting that it was Porter's *intention* to produce parallels between his parlour-matrix writing and other, more suggestive texts, but that society, working in both him and us, has allowed the connections to be made. Moreover, the method of producing the apparently highly different texts (*Black Beauty* - *Little One*: *Mack the Knife* - *Mind If I Make Love To You?*) as chord charts enables these connections to be made quite explicitly.¹⁰

High Society Calypso

This song, which introduces the film, is also Armstrong's first appearance as Chorus. It is a deliberate attempt to copy the calypso style, popular at the time. It is based on a three-chord pattern, is deliberately simple and hence is folk-like. The verse, in which the story is unfolded, has the following chord sequence:

Key: F major

F	C ⁷	%	F	F ⁷	B ^b /B ^o	F	C ⁷ /F
---	----------------	---	---	----------------	--------------------------------	---	-------------------

This sequence could have come from any folk tune, as well as being a typical calypso. On top of an *habañera* bass (possibly a West African device according to Lomax (1956:62fn), but certainly Cuban) a strongly folk idiom is implied.¹¹

The sequence for the chorus (sung by the whole band) is slightly more complicated although shorter:

¹⁰ The chord charts for *Mack the Knife* and the first strain of Duke Ellington's *Black Beauty* are also offered in Appendix 2.

¹¹ Lomax's assertion is not unchallenged. The *habañera*, as we have seen, was used by Gottschalk as a Cuban form in the mid-nineteenth century and there is a suggestion of its origin in English country dancing. It is possible, however, that there is a similar West African form to which Lomax is referring. Whatever is the case, the fact remains that the implication is folk.

F	F/G ^o	^{D^b} / _F C ⁷	F	F	F/G ^o	^{D^b} / _F C ⁷	F
---	------------------	--	---	---	------------------	--	---

There is also a short interlude section, sung only once and, presumably, intended to provide variety:

F ⁷	B ^b	B ^b m	F	F ⁷	B ^b	F	C ⁷ /F
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There is here a clear introduction of a parlour mode into this otherwise folk sequence which reinforces the thesis outlined above. Overall, we have a calypso, a black folk style, with a chorus over-elaborated in parlour mode.

Now You Has Jazz

The song, *Now You Has Jazz* also has a verse and chorus, *de rigueur* for the parlour mode and certainly not uncommon in folk music (although much more likely to occur in the form it presents in *High Society Calypso* alternating with the Chorus; here it comes only once, at the beginning of the song; extremely parlour). It is, in fact, a typical Cole Porter verse ‘matrix’:

Whether the variation is conscious or unconscious, confined to one performer or spread between many, there are details which change, and something basic to every variation which does not change. The word ‘matrix’ is sometimes used for that something:

The song [Camborne Hill] is a parody on Jack Hall...the ballad about the chimney-sweep burglar who was brought up on Tyburn Hill on a cart to be hanged. (Admiral Benbow and The Irish Famine Song also use this as a matrix.) Kennedy, *Folksongs of Britain and Ireland*, p.229)

...a maqam [in classical Arabic music] is marked by certain melodic patterns and is a ‘matrix for composition’, not merely a note-series...(The History of Music in Sound, vol.1, p. 37.)

‘Matrix’ in this sense means something close to the theme of the classical set of variations. It also has something in common with the ‘forms’ of traditional classical theory. It is in this sense that I have decided to use the word in this book - not without misgivings, since it threatens to become part of the vocabulary of pseudo-scientific humbug, like ‘paradigm’ or ‘parameter’ (van der Merwe, 1989:94)

Where a matrix is concerned, the actual tunes or notes are not significant. What matters is the general pattern to which they conform.

The chorus of *Now You Has Jazz* is, however, very interesting. It is, for Porter, exceedingly simple in shape - not at all typical Porter: .

C	%	C ⁷	%	F	%	C	%
G	%	F ⁷	%	E ^{b7}	%	G ⁷	%
C	%	C ⁷	%	F	%	C	%
G	%	F ⁷	%	C	F	C	%

The following is the sequence for a simple twelve-bar blues:

C	%	%	C ⁷	F	%	C	%
G ⁷	%	C	%				

Although 'Now You Has Jazz' has a 32 bar structure - a parlour length - it can be seen, when divided into two 16 bar halves how closely the structure is based on the twelve-bar blues, the archetypal form of black music in America, and certainly the form that was in the ascendant in early rock'n'roll. Indeed, it is even closer for although, in the blues, the tonic (i.e., C) seventh is left until the fourth bar, in practice this could appear at any time in, and is sometimes played throughout, the first four bars.

The lyrics, also by Porter, are of some interest. Verses 3-5 are:

If you sail over the sea,
 Take my tip, they're all molto hip in Italy,
 As for France, b'lieve it or not,
 Frenchmen all prefer what they call le jazz hot.

Take a plane, go to Siam,
 In Bangkok today, round the clock, they like to jam
 Indians on the Amazon,
 Beat on bar and all of them are gone man gone.

From the equator up to the pole
Through the air you hear ev'rywhere rock and roll
From the east out to the coast,
Jazz is king 'cause jazz is the thing folks dig most.

Verse 3 has a typical sophisticated Porter touch with snatches of Italian and French discourse which would be both familiar to and expected by parlour audiences. Verses 4 and 5, on the other hand, are filled with rich signifiers, very few of which are parlour, although the overall effect of these lines has the kind of sophistication we might expect from Porter - a sort of verbal version of the matrix. Signifiers expressly parlour (in 1956) would be: *Take a plane, Siam, From the east out to the coast*. Signifiers having jazz as a referent would be: *jam, beat on bar, jazz, dig*. Signifiers having rock'n'roll as a referent would be: *gone man gone, rock and roll, dig*. The words to this song mirror the ambiguity of the music.

Conclusion

High Society is an interesting document of its time. It works at a number of levels but of particular relevance here is the way in which it should be seen as one way the popular musical establishment tried to negotiate the upset caused in the post-war years by the emergence of popular music much more folk-oriented than had been acceptable previously. Ryan seeks to explain this by reference to a number of organisational contingencies, including a ban on broadcasting of copyright material, while seeing little connection between pre-war popular genres and country and hillbilly post-war styles. Adorno seems not to have realised that there had been a post-war sea change in popular music, although his analysis could be said to hold good for any popular music industry under capitalism. Both Ryan and Adorno share a view of music as 'other' to the audience. Audience 'taste' is seen as either infinitely manipulable or as a given. Neither of these views are wholly satisfactory. As audiences, we are not mere 'cultural dopes' upon which the interests of others are played out. *High Society* demonstrates that here, at least, the popular music establishment made an attempt, at the level of music, to synthesise the parlour and folk styles. It was probably successful in the film but ultimately was going to fail because control of the music industry was already being

fragmented, a process which has continued. The following table is constructed from information found at various points in Ryan's book:

Table 5 Music Publishers and Writers in the USA, 1939-1985

Year	Publishers (US)	Writers (US)
1939	137	1,100
1964	3,500	6,000
1985	16,000	n/a

A similar expansion was found in record companies and producers who likewise were able to establish independence.

All cultural products are rich in codes, and this is especially so at times of change. The only way to approach these codes is by textual analysis, although the holistic view is also necessary from time to time to give some perspective. In this case, perspectives such as Adorno's and Ryan's are supported but are supported precisely because *High Society* is a closed text. There is an agenda at work which is to help the white psyche negotiate the social changes of the 1950s and in this task it is successful. This is not to suggest that it was the *intention* of Porter or of the director, Charles Walters, to create a propaganda film but it is to suggest that its musical pieces are closed texts because its social location speaks very powerfully through it. However, as a musical entity *High Society*, for all its enduring popularity, is a product of Tin-Pan Alley and cannot be considered the same conceptual being as jazz such as that produced by Ellington, Oliver, Morton or even Armstrong himself during the 1920s. Its referent as a film is not music at all; it is a political agenda which resonates with other products of 1950s Hollywood such as *The FBI Story* or *Strategic Air Command* in which a genial James Stewart in a gentle, scholarly and bumbling way calmly and with regretful but necessary violence makes the USA safe for 'right-thinking' folk. It is this agenda of control clearly playing upon versions of the barbarian threat myth which renders it available to analysis in Adorno's terms.

Chapter 6: Mellers, Beatles and Eternity

There is something of eternity about art and, perhaps, especially about music. As Mellers makes clear throughout his book on the Beatles *The Twilight of the Gods*, links between music, magic, religion and ritual are common the world over. As far as can be known, these links have existed since earliest times. Mellers argues that the Beatles, by reasserting a pre-literate, 'oral and aural' music, brought their listeners back into a naive state of musical appreciation in which their experience was spiritually rather than artistically enriched:

Pop [i.e., post-Beatles] has reasserted the spirit of fiesta which, whether secular or religious, allows us, momentarily (*sic*) released from Time, to emerge from our solitude and become one with creation. (Mellers, 1973:195).

There is, for Mellers, an Edenic vision in the Beatles:

It's this pristine quality that helps us to understand the potency of their appeal, the relevance of their mythology. (Mellers 1973:33).

This is exhibited in both words and music; in the early song *I saw her standing there*, the 'tune matches the innocence of the words, for it springs from the very origins of primitive song, using in the first strain only four tones, tonic, fifth, second (once) and flat seventh' (Mellers 1973:34). In the later sessions at Abbey Road, play took over:

George Martin's descriptions of the Beatles' chaotic sessions in the recording studio [towards the end of their career] still stress the playfulness of this activity (Mellers 1973:191).

The fact that the Beatles were self-taught and not immersed in the tradition of classical 'art' music only served to enhance this fresh, 'primitive', child-like quality of their music. More than once Mellers refers to the 'open eyed, open eared' quality of the music. Much of their output draws heavily upon folk music, both African and European. Most of the songs use the pentatonic scale (best known in the West as the 'blues scale') and 'false

relations' (best known in the West as 'blue notes'). As Mellers remarks, concerning the fade-out coda which ends *A Hard Day's Night*,

There's nothing comparable with this effect in the textbook harmony of the eighteenth or nineteenth centuries: although such modally derived progressions are common in the music of the sixteenth century and earlier - especially in keyboard music, since cadential perorations like this lie easily 'under the fingers' (Mellers 1973:44).

Mellers constructs for us a version of the Beatles in which they are consciously iconoclastic and unconsciously eternal. For Mellers, the ecstatic and religious overtones are quite clear. What was present from the very start at the level of music gradually came to deify the persons:

In so far as they remained empiricists, the Beatles were folk heroes; insofar as they were representative of electronic age man they were metamorphosed into gods - as John said, quite literally if momentarily more influential than Jesus Christ...All over the world girls dedicated their lives to Beatle-worship...Not merely the young, but the ancient, the maimed, the crippled, fought savagely to touch the magic Beatle forelock, the hem of the sacred coat, many believing that a miracle cure was feasible (Mellers 1973:192)

Mellers would not defend a 'strong' interpretation of his book which would want to claim that the Beatles 'changed the face' of popular music, but there is no doubt that he draws, consciously or unconsciously, on such a reading as a resource. There is, for Mellers, an appreciable and important distinction between Pop music before and after the Beatles. Clearly, what was removed was 'respectable' Tin Pan Alley (van der Merwe's *parlour music*) in favour of far deeper, more 'human' or 'authentic' modes of expression drawn from folk music. But in a number of ways this reading is both inadequate and insupportable. Indeed, in the book there are a number of discords where statements based on the 'strong' reading simply do not stand up to inspection. Post-Beatles teenage dance becomes: '...practical and functional in Collingwood's sense; an inchoate attempt to rediscover the springs of being' (Mellers 1973:184). It is a personal activity which Mellers contrasts with '...the romantic unreality of the previous generation's ballroom dancing' (Mellers 1973:184).

Mellers in this is surely wrong. The solitary dancing comes from a different tradition altogether, a black tradition including the *Cakewalk*, the *Black Bottom*, the *Charleston*, the *Georgia Grind*, the *Suzy Q*, the *Lindy Hop* and the *Jive* amongst many others. African dance today has improvisational soloists. False antithesis is a powerful sub-text in Mellers' work.

It is not only in dance that the false antithesis is found. Although Mellers is clear that the Beatles used US black rock and roll as a resource, it is not clear that its influence is strongly enough stated. This is important, since it affects the ontological status of the Beatles. In other words, were they saying something about life which had not been said before, or were they building on an existing edifice? Certainly, the use of folk devices such as pentatonic scales and blue notes could not be said to be new (otherwise how could they be 'folk'?). Mellers infers that the Beatles were the first to use these devices in a way which was fresh, naive - Edenic. By so doing, they implicitly overturned pop conventions and instituted a new order. The implications of Charisma (with all its religious overtones) are quite clear here:

...whereas in the pop music of the previous generation harmony- a European phenomenon associated with awareness of duality may be of some sophistication, in today's pop it is...rudimentary or non-existent. The nostalgic chromatics of a Jerome Kern, the cynically witty harmonic surprises of a Cole Porter, give way to primitive drones and ostinati. Even the wide-eyed, open-eared effects created in Beatle songs by mediant relationships and side-stepping modulations are the empirical result of the movement of melody, modally conceived, and of the behaviour of the hands on guitar strings or keyboard. Similar accidents occur in medieval and early Renaissance music, with a comparable synthesis of innocence and sophistication. (Mellers 1973:28).

Mellers implies throughout that particular advances made by the Beatles on the raw structure of rock and roll were of two kinds: first, imported folk roots most probably unconsciously introduced; second, fortuitous accidents mainly to do with the natural fall of the hands on keyboard or fretboard. Let us address these points in order.

The Roots of Beatles Music

Mellers argues, quoting John Lennon, that Liverpool on the 50s, still a major port, was full of music from all over the world and in particular from the USA. This was not only blues, but also Country and Western and later rock and roll (1973:31). With this was mixed 'the singing games and runes still acted out by school children in Liverpool streets' (1973:31). According to Mellers it was from these and other sources of popular culture that there sprang the folk elements in the Beatles. In order to underline the point, Mellers mentions that a rock version of *My Bonnie Lies Over the Ocean* was an early Beatles hit.

Students of popular music in the UK will almost certainly recall a point of contact here between this Beatles 'early hit' (surely an exaggeration) and the success achieved by Chris Barber's Jazz Band with *Bobby Shafto*¹ during the 1950s. Indeed, during the 1950s there was a vogue for folk music of the British Isles, whether performed formally (by Kathleen Ferrier) or with a national flavour (such as by Jimmy Shand and various Irish bands). It makes sense to locate the Beatles' offering as part of this tradition rather than to view it as evidence for the assimilation of folk traditions on the streets of Liverpool. It also makes sense to reinterpret the myth of the Beatles in the light of the popular music of the 1950s. Figures such as Little Richard had a far greater fundamental effect on the course of popular music in the context of the 1950s and it is here that one finds one source of the Beatles' approach to harmony and indeed other phenomena, such as vocal embellishments.

It is not enough to dismiss vocal embellishments as melismata as Mellers does. Naming a phenomenon is not the same as explaining a phenomenon. Little Richard's singing is full of these figures, deriving from a black tradition in America. Certainly, there are features common in folk singing, especially in North America, Europe, Africa and the Near East, and these can be bundled together as melismata. The phenomenon of 'tumbling', where the voice 'falls' from a high pitch, is found throughout. However, there is something else at work here. Little Richard's particular gimmick in his middle-50s records was a scream which introduced the instrumental chorus in the middle. Paul McCartney consciously

¹ The chord chart for *Bobby Shafto* is given in Appendix 3 so that it can be easily compared to Beatles tunes.

copied this on the early 60s reworking of Little Richard's *Long Tall Sally*. The theme was taken up again later by John Lennon (after the Beatles split up) in the early 70s, this time in a conscious effort to recreate the basic sense of the scream. It occurs in *Mother* (from the album *Plastic Ono Band*) in its true form - a primal scream². Little Richard's scream of release - a definite function of the scream in his early records - is here echoed in Lennon's reaction to the pain of parturition and parting, for this is a clear reference to his mother leaving him to be brought up by an aunt.

In *Lucille* (1957) Little Richard uses the device of the rising scream much as Lennon would some fifteen years later. In the use of melismata, and indeed the voice, the Beatles were not just drawing on a common stock of folk techniques; they stood as a part of a developing rock and roll tradition.

The Beatles did not do what Mellers claims. They did not return us to a pre-industrial, naive, state-of-nature, Edenic, organic view of community. They worked very much within a set of pre-existing traditions. At the time that Mellers was writing, however (1972), there was in existence a movement to return folk music to this condition. Within this movement there existed a feeling that, although Cecil Sharp and others had indeed done a service to folk music by preserving ancient folk texts, they had, by formalising it especially in notation, removed it from its authentic context and brought it into the concert hall for performance by more or less classically trained performers (such as Kathleen Ferrier). Individuals such as Martin Carthy and Maddy Prior and groups like Steeleye Span, Lindisfarne and Fairport Convention led the movement 'back to the roots' and, in a way which the Beatles never approached, married folk music to rock so-called 'folk rock'. There was only one real commercial success for this movement - *All around my hat* - but it persists still. One of the most recent attempts to revive it nationally had the name The Albion Band. This movement was a conscious attempt to revive the pre-industrial spirit. Although some of the songs it celebrated were of the industrial

² There is here a revealing irony; Lennon was introduced to Janov's primal scream therapy by Yoko Ono during the 1970s and it is clear that this has given intellectual impetus to his use of the device. Instead, therefore, of 'going back' to a state of nature (as Mellers would have us believe), Lennon has here intellectualised a primitive human impulse. He has, in a Heideggerian sense, rendered the phenomenon less authentic.

revolution, its impetus came from the rural myth. This is the resource upon which Mellers also draws and this is where his attention should be drawn.

Mellers is right in identifying the 'Edenic' stratum in post-war youth culture but is wrong in ascribing it to the Beatles. The Beatles, especially in their early days, were part of popular culture, not folk culture. Certain aspects of pre-Beatle popular music were highly folk-influenced (such as rock and roll), while some came of a different tradition altogether - parlour music. The Beatles were influenced by all. Certainly, with early Beatles recordings, there is nothing particularly surprising to those familiar with early rock and roll and other American popular styles of the 1950s. Indeed, much of the recorded output of the Beatles during their first years at Parlophone were cover versions of earlier hits, mainly of mid-1950s American rock and roll. These include *Dizzy Miss Lizzy*, *Bad Boy* and *Slow Down* (Larry Williams), *Rock and Roll Music* and *Roll Over Beethoven* (Chuck Berry), *Words of Love* (Buddy Holly) and *Kansas City* (Little Richard) amongst numerous others. *Twist and Shout* was not a Beatles composition. In each case, the influence of the original is clear, including precisely the kinds of vocal inflections and intervals identified by Mellers as demonstrating the Edenic grounds of the Beatles. What is more, the Beatles were not alone in this. Other British pop artists had been covering American originals since the 1950s and they too had attempted to copy the heavily blues-influenced vocal styles. Even Cliff Richard recorded a Chuck Berry original - *Forty Days*.

In the 50s, there is a rather neat fulcrum formed by the years 1954-56. During this period, records were cut and films were made which have radically changed popular music ever since. However, as with most changes of this kind, there is no clear break; rather, there is a gradual evolution with ground being given here and temporary ascendancy gained there. This has some implications for my argument, for to locate the Beatles as figures of their day is to include in that the very background which Mellers claims they stand opposed to. In other words, if we are to include Little Richard, Jimmy Shand, children's games and Kathleen Ferrier as influences on the Beatles, then why should we exclude Cole Porter, Irving Berlin and the other 'parlour' music writers of the twentieth century? There are definite overtones of this style of writing in Beatles music. One device used by the

Beatles in tunes such as *Things we said today* and *I'll be back* is the unexpected shift between major and minor modes. Mellers touches on these effects without noting that this is indeed a parlour device, at least of the twentieth century. Irving Berlin, in *Puttin' on the Ritz*, Cole Porter in *What is this thing called love?*, *I love Paris* and *Night and Day* both make use of this device. Indeed, Porter does in many of his songs what Mellers praises the Beatles for - matching words to music. In *Ev'ry time we say goodbye* this even involves a switch between major and minor chords as the lyrics state:

How strange the change from major to minor.

Another major 'parlour' songwriter of the first half of the twentieth century, George Gershwin, is most famous for *Rhapsody in Blue*, redolent in false relations and flattened sevenths, both features of the Beatles' work. *Rhapsody in Blue* enjoyed massive popularity in Britain between the wars and after. Mellers does not mention these parallels, instead choosing to locate Beatle influences in a mythic world where nobody listened to *Two Way Family Favourites* or *Housewife's Choice* or bought gramophone records. Instead, they 'absorbed' musical influences in the music hall, the pub and on the street. This is stuff of legend, not of the realities of popular culture in post war urban Britain. Liverpool was not a teeming organic community; it was a declining port with one of the highest rates of unemployment in Britain during the 50s and 60s. It is against a background of reality that we can best assess the Beatles, not myth.

Keyboards and fretboards

Mellers refers often to the fact that many Beatles compositions are influenced by the physical construction of the instrument usually piano or guitar - at which they were composed. Again, had Mellers looked more closely, he would have found this phenomenon in the true antecedents of the Beatles - black American rock and roll and rhythm and blues.

Mellers fails to identify boogie-woogie in Beatles music. This style of piano playing was hugely popular in both the USA and Britain before the war, although frowned upon (as

was all music having a black origin - the 'Devil's music'). This type of piano playing would indeed have been heard in the pubs of Liverpool (although whether any of the Beatles would have been old enough to hear it there before they went to Hamburg - i.e., before their style was defined - is doubtful). The early *I saw her standing there*, the middle *Lady Madonna* and the later *Revolution*, amongst many others all use varieties of boogie bass. Some of this was probably directly imported from American urban blues players, some via rock and roll, and at least one via a British jazz band, as we shall see. This is the source of much of the vibrancy and drive of Beatles music; and it is not original. Indeed, it was a common feature of much pop music of the time. It consists of a repeated figure usually of one bar length played in the bass - described as *ostinati* in musical theory (obstinate repetition) - and most typically consisting of quavers, thereby dividing the bar into eight (the origin of lines in pop songs such as 'beat me daddy eight to the bar'). The shape of the boogie bass is clearly dictated by the piano keyboard. Many jazz pianists worked characteristic figures into their playing which are possible only in certain keys - again, a constraint dictated by the keyboard. 'Bottle-neck' guitar playing came about as a result of a rethinking of the function of the guitar fretboard. The Beatles, again, should be seen as standing in a tradition of popular music rather than a revival of pre-industrial innocence.

The Beatles were by no means iconoclastic in their music. They certainly added vitality to their material in a new way, but this, though rare, is not unusual. Elvis Presley, for example, did just the same thing as he reworked black blues into a form acceptable to young white audiences. Jelly Roll Morton took the overworked idiom of ragtime and turned it into proto-jazz. These and other innovators were certainly creative, but were not genuinely iconoclastic in that they worked, quite consciously, in a well known and understood tradition. The Beatles stand in a similar relation to their music.

What of the other iconoclasm usually associated with pop groups of the 60s and 70s, the revolutionary, hotel-wrecking, drug taking, sexually promiscuous, threat-to-society image traded off by Bernice Martin (1981). Martin's claim is that the 'expressive revolution' of the late 60s for a time destroyed the boundaries between the 'instrumental' and the 'expressive' spheres. It was a time of liminality, of the *rites de passage* of an entire

when gods and men can meet. Taboos, especially sexual, were openly defied. This is a common view of the period, and groups such as the Beatles and Rolling Stones were in the van of this largely youth movement. It was certainly a time when a number of verities were challenged, but in order to assess it and the Beatles' contribution to it we should consider not just the phenomenon in isolation but, as with the music, its place in a structure of tradition. We must ask whether the pop groups of the 60s, invested with such significance by Mellers and Martin, were innovative in the expressive revolution or whether they were building upon existing foundations.

Mellers invests, as we have seen, the Beatles' music with too much originality. We have already noted how *Bobby Shafto* would have been familiar popular material through the hit recording by Chris Barber, and how a 'rock' version of *My bonnie lies over the ocean* would have traded upon this familiarity³. A closer point of contact between the Beatles and British jazz comes with *Lady Madonna* from 1968. This has already been mentioned in connection with boogie-woogie. It uses a 'walking' piano bass, a type of barrel house figure which would have been familiar to Basin Street honky-tonk customers in New Orleans in 1900, and probably before. Charles 'Cow Cow' Davenport recorded *Cow Cow Blues* in 1928 in Chicago, a 'race records' hit which uses the same device. In 1952 Humphrey Lyttleton recorded *Bad Penny Blues*, an enduring minor hit which sold well throughout the 50s and 60s in Britain and which was a regular item on record request programmes on the BBC. It too features a 'walking' bass. There is no doubt that this recording was either a conscious or unconscious resource in composing *Lady Madonna*.

These clues suggest that the jazz revival of the 50s and 60s might provide an insight into the ontological status of the Beatles as cultural iconoclasts. There are a few, mainly personal, documents covering that period. An overall assessment of its effect could well conclude that it posed a much more fundamental challenge to the accepted order in that it actively promoted a music previously associated almost exclusively with black artists, investing it with significance not merely the equal of all other forms of music (including classical) but obviously superior to popular music of the time. This quite clearly

³ At the same time that they recorded *My bonnie lies over the ocean*, the Beatles also recorded the 1920s hit tune *Ain't she sweet*. This is further evidence of their socio-cultural location in a 1950s and 60s which had not forgotten its own roots.

foreshadows the Beatles and, indeed, Mellors - who has nothing at all to say about it. Lonnie Donegan, Chris Barber's banjo player, was at the forefront of the skiffle craze of the mid 50s (which to some extent bridged the gap between jazz and guitar-based groups) and, indeed, the recording which ushered in that craze - *Rock Island Line* - was a Chris Barber recording. John Lennon's first band, *The Quarry Men*, is said to have been a skiffle group.

The reappraisal of popular music as an art form did not begin with the Beatles, or even with Melly. Jazz musicians, especially in the 'revivalist' movement (i.e., New Orleans revivalist) consciously sought to recreate a music which, they felt, was authentically human and reflected life as it actually is rather than the 'Moon, June', 'Walk, Talk' formulae of Tin Pan Alley. This view of folk music itself has deeper origins but when applied to jazz specifically and to New Orleans jazz in particular, it gained much momentum in the USA in the late 1930s, partly through the pioneering work of Alan Lomax and his recording, at the Library of Congress, of Jelly Roll Morton. Lomax presented a talk on these recordings for the BBC Third Programme (the 'culture' channel - now Radio 3) in the early 1960s.

Ken Colyer led a band which in its playing deliberately tried to recreate New Orleans jazz as it would have been heard in the city before the closure of the Red Light District - Storyville - in 1917 encouraged musicians to join the migration of Southern blacks to the North. Colyer maintained until his death a fanatical fervour that what he called 'the good music' was the only authentic music of the oppressed that was worth listening to. George Melly has written:

Later, as we heard more of the Bunk Johnson and George Lewis sides, we began, slowly but reluctantly, to appreciate the qualities of Ken's approach. It was primitive but serious. It was also patently sincere. The N.O. fanatics called Ken 'The Guv'nor'. With satirical intentions so did the rest of us. In time, however, it was no longer a joke. After the Crane River [band] broke up, Ken rejoined the Merchant navy with the intention of deserting in New Orleans. He succeeded, and got to play with the old veterans who were still alive. He got put in jail too, and came back to England an Heroic figure (Melly 1970:46)

Colyer had a rare fanaticism, but it was shared, in only slightly diluted form, by many of jazz fans⁴. Melly goes on to describe how Chris Barber took over Colyer's band and went on to make money:

A great many people made money...but not Colyer. Awkward as an old bear, often too drunk to play properly, he has played as he wanted to since the very beginning. His band had the first skiffle group.

At a recording session Ken went into the box to hear the play-backs and rejected the lot.

'You can't hear the fucking inner rhythms', he told the astounded engineer (1970:46-47).

This story also sheds some light on the 'outrage' sometimes applied to the behaviour of the pop groups. It is interesting to note that the Rolling Stones in the early 60s used to play at Ken Colyer's club, Studio 51⁵, in the West End.

Owning Up and other documents of the 'trad boom' stress the 'outrageous' behaviour of jazz musicians in the fifteen or so years before the Beatles formed. Sexual promiscuity, alcohol abuse and untamed behaviour all took place⁶. Anecdotal examples of this are very common. In *All This and 10%*, Jim Godbolt, a one-time jazz agent, writes of Mick Mulligan who ran the 'Magnolia Jazz Band' in the 50s and 60s:

"OH I do love Mickie", gushed one young lady. "He's so delightfully grubby and you know exactly where you stand with him."

Indeed on both counts. An extremely handsome buck he was nevertheless extremely careless about his appearance. "I'm the last of the Emerald Green Brigade", he informed a lady reporter from an evening newspaper, who quoted this admission.

⁴ Even today (1994) there is a corner in the 100 Club in Oxford Street which could, without irony, be described as a shrine to Colyer's memory. There is also a properly constituted Trust, called the Ken Colyer Trust, dedicated to preserving his memory and his style of playing. It has several hundred members, world-wide.

⁵ In 1995, after some lobbying by the Ken Colyer Trust, a blue plaque was erected outside Studio 51, marking it as Ken Colyer's club. The ceremony was attended by many establishment figures including the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Kenneth Clark. This clearly signifies the absorption of what had been seen as a 'threat to society' into mainstream culture. The one person who would have poured scorn on this activity - Ken Colyer - has been dead for some years.

⁶ Interestingly, hard drugs were confined to modern jazz musicians. This form of jazz never received the exposure and commercial attention afforded traditional jazz.

Amorous gentlemen who would bathe regularly, clean their teeth and fingernails, anoint themselves with various deodorants and eschew bad language in the presence of the desired one, would gape in disbelief that a drunken, hard-swearing figure should so effortlessly charm the girls (Godbolt 1976:63).

This image has very little to do with the image of the Beatles as it was presented by Brian Epstein in the early 1960s and not much in the later 1960s after Epstein's death. Colyer and Mulligan represent two sides of the jazz revival essential for understanding it as a youth movement - an evangelising impulse which claimed that this music only was unsullied by commercialism and therefore spoke eternal and authentic truth and a revolutionary impulse aimed at overturning convention⁷.

Mellers has misunderstood that there was a complicated interface between approaches to popular music in the period 1955-65. Revivalist jazz, although espoused by an increasingly radical youth movement, was nevertheless recognisable to a generation of musicians, agents, managers, song publishers and pluggers brought up on parlour music. When the pop groups came along - and at first the Beatles were one group among many - the popular music establishment, while recognising the need to administer to popular taste, was confused:

Before the tour commenced the organizer gave Don firm instructions that when the show played Liverpool, on no account was a group called the Beatles to play more than two numbers, further advising him that the promoter of the show also managed the Beatles and would insist on more, a delicate situation where Don was advised to "use his loaf". Don used his loaf, the Beatles played only two numbers and a possible fortune slipped through his fingers. [Brian] Epstein asked him to represent the group in London and Don replied, "Mr Epstein, there are five thousand groups like that in London all looking for work. They wouldn't stand a chance. You keep them working round here where they are known."

Later, when Don proclaimed that he "hadn't got a pot to piss in" he ruefully meditated on what might have been.

He wasn't the only one (Godbolt, 1976:159).

⁷ Even in the 1990s, Trade Union rallies have jazz bands to accompany their marches. This link with radicalism was first forged in the 1950s.

The Beatles were very firmly part of the music business, more tied in, through Epstein's influence, than groups like the Rolling Stones or the Who or even Ken Colyer and Mick Mulligan. With Mick Mulligan George Melly often played the Cavern Club in Liverpool:

The Cavern, where we played on Sunday nights, has become world famous as the womb of the Liverpool sound, but in those days it was staunchly trad though just as packed and steamy...

Just before we transferred [to another club] the management had begun to use a Beat group sometimes, instead of a local trad band during the intervals. In 1963 when the trad boom began to fade a little these took over the whole session. Among the other groups were 'The Beatles' (Melly 1970:213)

The Temperance Seven, playing recreations of mainly white 1920s jazz rather than trad, became hugely popular in the early 1960s. Their big hits, including *You're driving me crazy* and *Pasadena* (both written in the early 1920s) were recorded for Parlophone, the Beatles' label, and were produced by George Martin, the Beatles' producer.

Frith and Horne emphasize this continuity between New Orleans revivalist players and later pop by emphasizing the role of art colleges, including Goldsmiths College, in the development of both styles (1989). The link between them is rebellious youth culture; as Frith and Horne state, Humphrey Lyttleton's earliest concerts were sponsored by the Young Communist League's Challenge Jazz Club (1989:72). After discussing Godbolt's (1984) remarks about the 'flowering of an alien culture', Frith and Horne remark:

Godbolt is referring only to the 1950s jazz music here, but this story contains many of the threads that were woven into the even more successful 1960s rock movement - 'authenticity' measured (against commercialism) by white Britons' successful imitations of black Americans; music as a self-conscious suburban cult; musicians from different class backgrounds coming together in a social milieu which defined itself as proletarian (Frith and Horne 1989:72).

Explicitly, Frith and Horne remark that musicians from art schools 'may have started something new - British beat -but they were part of a cultural tradition (73).

It is against this general background that the Beatles should be assessed, not against a mythical urban organic community. The Beatles had a history, both social and musical. They were therefore not Edenic. As part of a youth culture and as part of a popular music revolution they are best understood in a wider context and were not at all iconoclastic in behaviour or music. There are clear homologies expressed in much of their work displaying links, via music with both the musical and cultural milieux from which they sprang. Folk music and the walking bass have been identified as two. Their use of Liverpool childrens' song signifiers (in some of the later albums) and street smut ('fish and finger pie') afford numerous other examples. However, it is fair to say that their massive global popularity allowed them to stand for the iconoclastic spirit at work in post-war youth culture; even in the early 1960s their irreverent attitude to convention - including smoking on television - made them a focus for a movement which stood outside themselves. While Epstein was alive, however, it is difficult to imagine any of them claiming to be a member of the 'Emerald Green Brigade'. Later the material wealth accumulated as a consequence of their success gave them a freedom of action and expression afforded to very few individuals. During this time their capacity for thumbing their noses at convention was almost limitless, but their music remained firmly conventional and located in the popular music traditions they had grown up in. The one member who came closest to intellectualising the youth movement - John Lennon - was then and up to his death disappointingly banal in his thought. He certainly engaged, with Yoko Ono, in some bizarre episodes such as the 'sleep-in', but his musical record of the events around that time, *The Ballad of John and Yoko*, is difficult to take seriously as a revolutionary document:

The men from the press said 'We wish you success,
It's good to have the both of you back'

The number itself harks back to earlier themes. Its repeated chorus is:

Christ! You know it ain't easy, you know how hard it can be.
The way things are going, they're going to crucify me.

This is a clear reference to Lennon's announcement during a tour of the USA that the Beatles were more popular than Christ, a remark which caused uproar. The structure of the number itself is a modified twelve bar blues over the type of bass called *habañera* and often thought to have a Spanish origin. In fact, its origin may be West African (according to Lomax (1956:62fn⁸)) and is also the basis of the 'Charleston' rhythm, a quintessentially 20s style. It is also found in a variety of boogie-woogie related styles, perhaps most obviously in the playing of Jimmy Yancey.

Conclusion

The Beatles were not iconoclasts. In Britain they certainly built upon a record of challenging conventions going back to the early 50s and undertaken mostly by revivalist jazzmen. Their music had within it something of the eternal, but then so does all music. It was not, as Mellers claims, so naive and fresh-faced as to be Edenic. It has distinct and traceable roots in popular music from the 50s and before. The adulation they received was not new. Frank Sinatra and the 'bobby soxers', Johnny Ray, Elvis Presley and in Britain Frankie Vaughan and Tommy Steele all predated the Beatles and all received mass adoration. The behaviour they exhibited after the death of Epstein, their manager, had more to do with the whims of rich young men than the kind of genuine establishment-challenging found in the jazz revival of the 1950s and 60s. The Beatles never really stood out against nuclear warfare or championed radical causes; the jazz revival was implicated in both these. Lennon's one genuine anti-establishment action was to return his OBE to the Queen. Otherwise his radicalism was vocal; the kind of radicalism the very rich can indulge themselves in⁹.

However, much of the music which the Beatles drew upon was indeed close to folk styles, and in some cases was indistinguishable from folk music. The early Presley *Sun* recordings of the mid-1950s come into this bracket, but so do Kathleen Ferrier's popular

⁸ Lomax may not be fully correct in this assertion, as has been noted above (pages 135-6).

⁹ I am not convinced that the lyrics of pop songs are good guides to their 'function' or 'meaning'. However, the lyrics of *Revolution* quite clearly reflect Lennon's views. Gradual change, he infers, is all right, but 'if you go talking about destruction, don't you know that you can count me out'. These were words hardly likely to inspire revolutionary students in Paris in the 1960s, but they are, of course, sentiments familiar to the 'respectable' British working class, now known to advertising people as the C2s and Ds from the Registrar General's classification.

recordings. These originals do indeed carry with them a freshness and naivete but this is not found in the Beatles. Instead, especially in the early recordings, what we find is an earnest attempt to flatter their musical heroes.

The issue then is: why has Mellers read so much into the Beatles? Firstly, there is little evidence that Mellers is sensitive to those phenomena which comprise the working class cultural milieu out of which the Beatles came. It is clear that once it is realised that the Beatles stand in a tradition they at once cease to be Edenic (although they can be vital and fresh). This realisation also gives impetus to the investigation of the roots from which their music springs. It is here that the Edenic threnody might still be heard.

Paradoxically, this realisation also serves to rehabilitate the Beatles for it allows us to treat The Beatles as a socio-cultural event rather than the Beatles as musical geniuses. For they, far from being iconoclasts, were icons themselves of a youth movement which had an acceptable face. Just as, in the 1950s, Louis Armstrong was seen as the acceptable face of non-parlour popular music, so in the 1960s the Beatles could demonstrate a non-conventional approach to culture without threatening society in the way that the Rolling Stones were perceived. The Beatles (or at least George Martin) used a string quartet on *She's leaving home*, and a classical trumpet player on *Strawberry Fields Forever*. They also had religious impulses. All these and similar events added up to a group of young men who, while outrageous in some ways, were basically 'good'. Their acceptability was endorsed by actions such as talking to Field Marshal Montgomery. The fact that the B side of *Strawberry Fields Forever*, *Penny Lane*, contained a smutty reference to 'fish and finger pie' was lost on an establishment which had discovered its working class and found that it was good.

In a similar way the American middle class discovered black musicians and blues singers in the 1920s and 30s. In a story which has the ring of truth, Albertson describes the outcome when Carlo Van Vechten, the New York socialite who had written the novel *Nigger Heaven*, invited Bessie Smith, along with her accompanist Porter Grainger and friend Ruby, to a society party. After refusing a dry martini and insisting instead on

whisky, Bessie sang several blues punctuated by more whisky. After the last number, Grainger urged Ruby to get Bessie out, before she 'shows her ass':

All went well until an effusive woman stopped them a few steps from the front door. It was Bessie's hostess, Fania Marinoff Van Vechten.

'Miss Smith,' she said, throwing her arms around Bessie's massive neck and pulling it forward, 'you're *not* leaving without kissing me goodbye.'

That was all Bessie needed.

'Get the fuck away from me,' she roared, thrusting her arms forward and knocking the woman to the floor. 'I ain't never heard of such shit!' (Albertson 1975:126-7).

Parts of New York society, especially John Hammond, remained faithful to black blues and jazz. Hammond, who died in 1987, often used his own money to finance recordings of black artists, including recordings of Bessie Smith in 1933 when she was in decline. Other observations will be made about the relationship of the white middle class to black culture, but a further parallel may be drawn at this point between the Beatles' middle class manager Brian Epstein and the white managers of prominent black jazzmen - Irving Mills with Duke Ellington, Joe Glazer with Louis Armstrong and Harrison Smith with Jelly Roll Morton.

Mellers has developed a romantic view of the Beatles and of their music. There is little doubt that the group had a considerable influence on popular culture during the 1960s but they were not alone and certainly not original. They represented the acceptable face of youth at that time which was a time of change in Britain. If change was inevitable, the feeling was, and had to be accepted, it was better that it was represented by smart boys with clean, if slightly long, hair. At least they were not lip-curling, hip-rotating, threatening teddy-boys. It is often forgotten that the reason for the OBEs in 1966 was for 'service to British exports'. Their music was, for all that Mellers detects glimpses of atavistic truth, cleaned-up versions of far more 'authentic' source materials, even when the tunes are original compositions. However 'earthy' 'primitive' or 'Edenic' Beatles lyrics were, they never approached the kind of genuine working class expression found in Chicago 'race records' of the 1920s. For example, in Cow Cow Davenport's recording of *State Street Jive* (1928), Ivy Smith talks over the blues piano:

I'm goin' down on State Street - my man's down there and I'm gwine find him. Gonna stop by 209 - old John's place, get me some of that good liquor, have me a whoppin' good time.

The conclusion must be that Mellers was unaware of the history of the Beatles, both their music and their attitudes.

A note on the musical texts

The chord charts for Beatles tunes mentioned in this Chapter are given in Appendix 3. These display a mixture of parlour ingenuity and folk simplicity. *Lady Madonna* and *The Ballad of John and Yoko* present, graphically, simple structures. *Lady Madonna* also illustrates, in the rising sequence:

D/A	F/G	A
-----	-----	---

the sort of folk composition referred to by Mellers in which the artist is as much motivated by the physical characteristics of the instrument (in this case the piano keyboard) as by the conventions of tonal composition. A more adventurous middle section of sixteen bars is heavily influenced by conventional tonality and is contrasted with the overwhelming simplicity of the alternating tonic and sub-dominant harmonies elsewhere. This, in itself, is indicative of the parlour and folk strains in Beatles' music.

The Ballad of John and Yoko is composed of three sixteen-bar sections (rows 1 and 2; 3 and 4; 6 and 7) and row 5. The three sixteen-bar sections are actually extended twelve-bar blues, with the first four bars elongated into eight. This shows a structural similarity to *A Hard Day's Night* with three twelve-bar sections and a middle eight bars in the same arrangement. *A Hard Day's Night*, however, does not use a version of the typical twelve-bar blues structure.

Strawberry Fields Forever comes to us now as rather dated and self-conscious 'psychedlic' pop. Nevertheless, its chart displays a structure clearly derived from within an orthodox paradigm. Although there are some irregular bar lengths within it, it still falls into a pattern recognisably parlour, with two similar eight-bar rows and a contrasting eight bars in the middle. If the first eight bars had been repeated before the middle eight, the structure would have been archetypically parlour.

Penny Lane appears to be atypical. This, however, is at least partly because a coda has been used instead of a repeat of row 1. It can also be seen that the pattern which starts to be established in rows 1-4 is a typical parlour pattern of two almost identical eight bar lines followed by a contrasting 'middle eight' and ending with a repeat of line 1. Instead

of a return to the beginning, however, there follows a repeat of the 'middle eight', after which the parlour pattern reasserts itself¹⁰. In the place of a repeat of the first line, however, the song ends with the coda as a variation. There is also strong evidence of parlour influences mixing with folk practices. The first two bars, repeated in rows 2, 4, 6 and 7, are extremely common 'cycle of fifths' sequences. This is a parlour sequence. The pattern is broken in bar four of these rows and after that, especially in rows 2, 4 and 7, the chords suggest strongly the influence of keyboard or fretboard in the descending sequence which they adopt. This is similar to the ascending chord sequence of *Lady Madonna*¹¹. Aurally, too, the contrast is quite obvious - this is strong evidence of the two influences on the Beatles.

She Loves You is a typical folk song pattern with verse and chorus. There is something of the ironic in this since it was the Beatles' first very big hit. This structure, and even some of the harmonic relations within it, would have been recognised by medieval bards.

I'll Be Back is a deceptively complex piece in its structure, but as with *Things We Said Today*, the device of shifting from major to minor chords (enharmonic shifts) is not unusual and presents itself as a possibility to composers working from their instruments and this to some extent supports Mellers. That is clearly the way the Beatles worked but the point is that they were by no means first to work in that way and hence to realise the possibilities of working from chord structures outwards rather than conceiving a piece of music and then giving it harmonies. Unusual sequence lengths, such as here, are again not uncommon in popular music. A hit of the 1920s, *I'll Get By* and one of the 1940s, *A Nightingale Sang in Berkeley Square* both use unusual sequence lengths as do many others.

¹⁰ This pattern was not unique. The New Vaudeville Band's *Winchester Cathedral* (1966), a deliberately precious attempt to combine the kitsch of 1920s revival and standard pop, uses the same technique of truncating the 32-bar structure at the end of the first appearance of the 'middle eight'.

¹¹ This type of sequence is not at all common in rock and roll which I have been promoting as a major influence on the Beatles. However, in its guise as 'parallel chords' it is found very commonly in jazz and boogie-woogie playing, the influence of which is quite clear in the Beatles' music. Here it emerges as a fifth played in the 'walking bass', regardless of the chord being played. Thus, in a twelve-bar blues played in C major, the bass would suggest a chord of E major when playing the root note E, disregarding the harmony on the chord of C major.

Things We Said Today, mentioned especially by Mellers for its alternating minor and major chords, can be seen in chart form to have a simple structure. The tune moves between three keys - A minor, C major and A major. A minor is the relative minor of C major, and shares the same key signature. The important change, then, is between A minor and A major. However, this is such an obvious device as to be very common. Some early Duke Ellington compositions (such as *The Mooche*, first recorded in October 1928), employ similar devices of moving from minor to major and back again. It is common to find tunes written in the minor to finish on a major chord.

Revolution is, ironically, one of the more adventurous of the Beatles' compositions. Ironically, because the words are at odds with both the title and the music. Lennon's chord structure for the verse is, indeed, revolutionary in terms of popular music. But the words insist that revolution as being urged on him, presumably, in the late 1960s, is unnecessary because 'it's gonna be all right'. This phrase ushers in the chorus, giving the triumph of banal 1960s pop over the adventurous verse structure. A glance at the chord chart for the chorus will show clear similarities between that and *Lady Madonna*. This reinforces the link created through the archaic boogie bass. Lennon shows in this piece what he showed in his life. He was able to conceive things as being other, but had neither the will nor the guts to take a positive step to change things. What this revolution truly overthrows is the attempt to write alternative rock music.

She's Leaving Home when set out in its chord structure shows how much it depends for effect on the string quartet arranged by George Martin. It is a simple waltz with few surprises. The G natural at the end of rows 1 and 3 in the verse and row 2 in the chorus is slightly unusual. Since, however, in the chorus the explicit nature of the chord is established by a legato run by the strings it is unclear whether this was a Beatles or George Martin feature. The chorus appears to contain an extra bar, but the final D minor bar is better conceived of as a brief bridge passage for the return to the verse.

Long Tall Sally and *Lucille*, mentioned in this Chapter, are not shown in chart form since they are twelve-bar blues. There are small variations to the basic pattern, involving

extensions to the first four bars (similar to *The Ballad of John and Yoko* above) but the chord charts are orthodox blues in the main.

The analysis of these Beatles tunes using the method of inspecting their chord charts demonstrates clearly that the influences on them mentioned in the text - the parlour tradition of 'standards', the very stuff of British popular music until the 1950s, the New Orleans jazz, skiffle and folk music of the 1950s and the rock and roll of the mid-1950s. There is no good evidence for implying, as Mellers implies, that this music has some particular 'Edenic' quality - it is a product of its time and place. Other features of the Beatles' career can be better explained in terms of socio-economic theories of capitalism.

Chapter 7: Mythologies of Jazz

The New Orleans Myth

Romance ... A fictitious narrative in prose of which the scene and incidents are very remote from those of ordinary life:

Romantic ... Of the nature of or having the qualities of romance in respect of form or content (Shorter Oxford Dictionary, 1986).

There is a theory about the origins of jazz which is largely romantic in character, even though it may contain a kernel of truth. It is that in New Orleans in Louisiana on the Gulf of Mexico, a city often described as more Latin than American, a unique cultural event took place in the years around the turn of the twentieth century:

Something came along there where the Mississippi Delta washes its muddy foot in the blue Gulf, something that bullies us, enchants us, pursues us out of the black throats of a thousand thousand music boxes. This something was jazz, which took shape in New Orleans around 1900 and within a generation was beating upon the hearts of most of the cities of the world...Maybe nothing quite like this has ever happened before. Maybe no music, no fresh emanation of the spirit of man ever spread to so many people in so short a time. Jazz, in this sense, is one of the marvels of the century marvel that has spawned a monster entertainment industry, feeding upon jazz, growing gigantic and developing a score of interlocking colossal bodies whose million orifices pour out each week the stuff of our battered dreams (Lomax 1956: xiv-xv).

Lomax infers that the ‘cultural flowering’ of jazz could be seen to stand for other, less accessible events

...New Orleans, in its own small, subtropical way, was a sort of Athens for the popular music of the world.

Why did the streets of Athens during one century throng with the brightest collection of souls the world has ever seen? This must always be a matter for speculation for Athens is lost to us in time. But New Orleans and its time of creativity is close at hand. Some of the old men who watched the first awkward and charming steps of the infant jazz are still

alive. In their recollections, in their story of the hot music of New Orleans we may come close to the magic and mystery of cultural flowering (ibid., xvi).

With his father John, Alan Lomax championed a form of ethnography as a way of understanding United States folk culture and in the course of this research came across Jelly Roll Morton in Washington DC in 1938. This led to some research in the field in New Orleans in the 1940s, and to the publication of *Mr Jelly Roll* in 1950.

As we can see from the above quotes, the romantic urge dominated Lomax's thoughts at that time. He makes too much of jazz as a cultural event, likening New Orleans *mutatis mutandis* to classical Athens. Nevertheless, he has a point - jazz was a unique synthesis which brought about the vast culture-defining popular music industry which is so powerful today.

For another writer, jazz stands as an example for all non-written music:

The truth is that although jazz is in some ways a wholly new music, in other and very important ways it is not a new music at all. There has been no music exactly like it known to scholars. But at the same time part of its importance is that it charts for us an entire blank area of the past of music history ... Thanks to its appearing in an age of the phonograph record, it is the first "unwritten" music that can be studied and known...it gives us insight into the entire growth and history of the art of music (Finkelstein, 1988:12-13).

In a work unambiguously musicological in focus and in philosophy (and which does not have a space for the word 'culture' in its index), Gunther Schuller is also tempted by the eternal referents of jazz, albeit briefly:

Jazz [during the second decade of this century] ... was ... not the product of a handful of stylistic innovators, but a relatively unsophisticated quasi-folk music - more sociological manifestation than music - which had just recently coalesced from half a dozen tributary sources into a still largely anonymous, but nevertheless distinct, idiom ... African native music and American jazz both originate in a total vision of life, in which music, unlike the "art music" of Europe, is not a separate, autonomous social domain (Schuller 1968:4-5).

In a comparatively early account, Blesh wrote:

Jazz, that seemed suddenly to appear on the American scene, actually is a music of remote origins and gradual development. Two hundred and fifty years of negro slave music, the work song brought over from Africa, as well as music developed here the spiritual, the ballad, and, finally, the blues preceded this instrumental music. The crowning musical achievement of the dark race needs to be seen as part of a continuous process that led from the Gold Coast of West Africa through the vocal and percussive music of the American South, to blossom shortly after Emancipation in the romantic city of the lower Mississippi Delta, New Orleans.

In no other city of the South did African customs remain as pure and strong and survive until so recently. Nor has any other American city the wealth of different kinds of music, as well the strong institution of the brass band which combined with hot exciting African spirit to give jazz its lusty vitality and its pungent richness (Blesh, 1946:9).

Or, in another account:

Storyville was its spawning ground, the streets of New Orleans its first home. There can be no precise date for the birth of jazz, for it came into being by a slow process of accumulation - the gradual fusion of many different strains and the impact of many different personalities. But by the turn of the century, and largely in the city of New Orleans, the music now called jazz ... was taking recognizable shape.

In the background lay the tribal rhythms of African ancestors; the work songs of Southern field hands; the spirituals and gospel music that were the Negro's own interpretation of the white man's religion; the rich and plaintive sound of the blues; the stomps, probably derived from folk dances; the pulsating syncopation of ragtime ...

In 1897, [vice] was confined by law to a mere thirty-eight blocks in the French Quarter, in which prostitution, though not exactly legal, was openly tolerated. This was Storyville, known also as The District. Here flourished the brothels and the gambling joints, saloons, dives and cabarets that clustered round them. It was here that the newly emerging music flourished, too, furnishing a keynote for all this high and low life.

It is easy to overdo the jazz-and-vice connection, however. Much more than just a honky-tonk music, jazz was an integral part of New Orleans Negro life. It meant street parades ... It meant bands riding through town on trucks to advertise a dance ... It meant

the funeral processions ... In a large sense, though, it was all one music. For the men who paraded by day were, for the most part, those who worked in the joints of The District at night (Keepnews and Grauer 1968:3).

Explanations of the origins of jazz, just as romantic as these, can be found in virtually every book devoted to the subject. They express one of the myths of jazz. There is a common theme to this myth, although different authors give varying weight to the components of the myth. The main components of the creation myth are:

- 1 *Jazz is a mixture of African and European influences.*
- 2 *African culture predominates and it is this which gives jazz its unique flavour, marking it off especially from European musical forms.*
- 3 *Because the African component of jazz was imported into the USA by slaves who came from social and cultural traditions which were closer to nature than the European and which were oral rather than literate, jazz itself is likewise 'closer to nature' than European 'art music'.*
- 4 *Jazz shares, however, some common musical forms with other folk music in the world, including European.*
- 5 *It is the musical voice of a repressed and tortured minority and because of this is a pure and authentic expression of a people (and hence, by extension all repressed people) rather than the product of one brain.*
- 6 *Special circumstances prevailing only in New Orleans allowed the music to develop into a form acceptable to society as a whole, and not just the minority from which it sprang.*
- 7 *It has links with urban 'low life', especially of a sexual nature. This serves to reinforce its 'primitive' image.*

As with any myth, there is an underlying essence which the myth is expressing. The phenomenal being of the myth becomes not a sign, but a signifier:

But myth is a peculiar system, in that it is constructed from a semiological chain which existed before it: it is a second-order semiological system. That which is a sign (namely the associative total a concept and an image) in the first system, becomes a mere signifier in the second. We must recall here that the materials of mythical speech (the language itself, photography, painting, posters, rituals, objects, etc.), however different at the start, are reduced to a pure signifying function as soon as they are caught by myth. Myth sees in them only the same raw material; their unity is that they all come down to the status of a mere language (Barthes, 1976:114)

Barthes identifies the modes of representation (language, pictures, music etc.) as the language object. This is the 'surface' level of signification. The deeper level, at which the myth is working he terms the metalanguage, 'because it is a second language, in which one speaks about the first' (Barthes, 1976:115). As an example, Barthes refers to a photograph in which a 'young Negro in a French uniform is saluting, with his eyes uplifted, probably fixed on a fold of the tricolour':

All this is the meaning of the picture. But, whether naively or not, I see very well what it signifies to me: that France is a great Empire, that all her sons, without any colour discrimination, faithfully serve under her flag, and that there is no better answer to the detractors of an alleged colonialism than the zeal shown by this Negro in serving his so-called oppressors (Barthes, 1976:116).

In the first order system, the photograph itself was the signifier and its signified was:

a black soldier is giving the French salute.

In the second order myth system, however, this first order signified becomes the signifier itself and its signified is:

a 'purposeful mixture of Frenchness and militariness' (Barthes 1976:116).

In the case of jazz, writers on its origins give what amounts to their versions of a more-or-less historical account. This is their signified. In the myth system this historical version, including the role of New Orleans, becomes the signifier itself. What makes the myth so complicated is that there is some truth in it. It is indeed unlikely that jazz could have developed elsewhere other than New Orleans, but that is simply an accident of history. In the myth system, it has more of a causal signification. In other words, New Orleans becomes a driving force. We are being spoon-fed a tautology; jazz happened in New Orleans because it had to happen there. The reality is rather more prosaic and certainly less romantic it so happened that at that time and in that place, a number of elements came together which allowed of the development of a cultural form¹.

The word form is interesting in this connection because it is crucial for an understanding of music and also because Barthes uses it to refer to the signifier in the myth system (Barthes 1976:117). Thus, the first order signified: *jazz used to be played in brothels in New Orleans* becomes the form for the second order signified: *jazz is implicitly connected to urban low life, especially of a sexual nature*. This is particularly interesting because musical form operates in an analogous way it points to something, possibly a history, other than the musical sign itself.

In the particular concern here, an interesting complication is introduced because the texts under discussion are themselves second-order constructs for they are writing about a meaning system which can, in any case, speak for itself. Schuller, interestingly, gives a musicological account of jazz in which it is discussed in terms of European music, including notated examples. Clearly, in Barthes' terms, Schuller is describing the meaning, or the first-order signifier of jazz itself, but is using another semiological system to do so. Any text, including this one, which attempts such a translation is clearly introducing multiple layers of complexity².

¹ This observation parallels that by Weber that the cultural form 'capitalism' is the result, not of historical necessity, but of the combination of a number of other causal elements which happened to come together at a certain time. Capitalism, he argues, rests on rational conduct which has its origins in religion:

One of the fundamental elements of the spirit of modern capitalism, and not only of that but of all modern culture: rational conduct on the basis of the idea of the calling, was born that is what this discussion has sought to demonstrate from the spirit of Christian asceticism...The Puritan wanted to work in a calling; we are forced to (Weber, 1974:180-181).

² The same principle also applies to Barthes' description of the black soldier, but in this case both linguistic and pictorial text share a phenomenal referent. In the case of music no such sharing occurs. This

The myth of New Orleans jazz, then, is deep, powerful and has been successful. What makes it so is that in its elements it is true; it is the interpretation of those elements that has allowed the development of the myth. What is more, the 'deep' particles of the myth, the sexual link, the 'pure' expression of a people (or, often a 'race'), the closeness to human 'being', have all managed to attach themselves more or less unchanged to the music and to its developments.

The Jazz Age Myth

The myth of New Orleans jazz has not been confined to New Orleans. It has been extended to other cities in the USA, especially Chicago. The 1920s, indeed, is known as the 'jazz age':

jazz age ... Social, sexual and cultural values were permanently altered by the social and material changes of this first period of mass-consumption, which made available silent movies, radios, cars, and other consumer goods. The flamboyant and economic confidence of the period is portrayed particularly well by Scott Fitzgerald, notably in *The Jazz Age [when the term was coined -HC]*, *The Diamond as Big as the Ritz* and *The Great Gatsby*. The jazz age was also, however, an age of hysteria over 'bolshevism' ... gangster economics ... a prohibition of alcohol which was everywhere defied (with pervasive attendant crime) (Bullock and Stallybrass, 1977:326).

The jazz age is defined as the period 'between the end of World War I and the Great Crash (1929)' (Bullock and Stallybrass 1977:326). This, of course, is the first order signified. The second order signified is expressed at least partly in the quote above. Gangsters, prohibition, speakeasies, Al Capone, the FBI, corruption and graft, etc., all are elements of the jazz age myth system. And the unifying binding energy for the jazz age was its eponymous title jazz, especially New Orleans jazz.

At this stage the myth has more of the quality of an epic story, heroic in character and often ironically so. Storyville (it runs), having had a noticeably deleterious effect on the

makes music an interesting semiological topic. If we take a written musical text to be the signifier of the first order, then it is the sounds themselves which are signified. These sounds then become the signifier in the second (myth) order - but what is signified? In the case of jazz the matter is even more complex because jazz rests on improvisation and phonograph recordings. In these cases, the signifier is the performance itself which is, of course, the signified of the first order.

health of US Navy seamen in the port of New Orleans, was closed down in November 1917. Jazz musicians, having been thus deprived of employment at a stroke, moved to Chicago:

Since some of these subsequently famous New Orleans musicians also performed on the Streckfus Line's Mississippi River paddle wheelers, jazz is also said to have "come up the river from New Orleans". But the closing of the official vice districts in cities like New Orleans merely dispersed their activities into the surrounding neighbourhoods. Both bordello and dance hall continued to flourish, as the official closing of Chicago's "Levee" district in 1912 amply proved. Moreover, as Richard Wang has pointed out, jazz legend ignores North American geography: the Mississippi River doesn't flow through or even very near Chicago (Kenney 1993:1).

The fact is that New Orleans musicians were part of the diaspora from the Deep South, and highly influential figures like Jelly Roll Morton and Tony Jackson (the writer of *Pretty Baby*) had been in Chicago (and indeed New York, Kansas City and Los Angeles amongst other US cities) long before Storyville was closed down:

That he [Morton] really covered ground the old master of Harlem piano, James P Johnson, testifies ... "First time I saw Jelly was in 1911. He came through New York playing that Jelly Roll Blues of his. He was, well, he was what you might call pimping at the time, had that diamond in his tooth and a couple of dogs (prostitutes) along (Lomax 1956:143-144fn).

The Great Migration saw about 500,000 blacks arrive in Northern cities between 1916 and 1919, with a further million during the 1920s (Kenney 1993:11).

The arrival in Chicago of over 65,000 blacks from Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Arkansas and Texas between 1910 and 1920 triggered Chicago's Jazz Age for it expanded the city's market for racially oriented black musical entertainment and also intensified white Chicago's awareness of a growing black population. In the process, it created a broader market for black entertainment aimed at white audiences. During World War I, immigration from Europe slowed drastically, and many European immigrants moved back to their homelands. Northern industries like Chicago's Illinois Central Railroad, International Harvester, the steel mills, and the Swift and Armour stockyards and slaughtering houses actively recruited nonunionized black laborers to take their places. By

1920, over 100,000 African-Americans lived in Chicago, an increase of 148 percent in ten years.

Most of the city's South Side jazz performers arrived between 1917 and 1921 at the height of this migration. Of the fifty-five black musicians, vocalists and orchestra leaders closely associated with jazz in Chicago during the 1920s about whom information is available, nearly half arrived during or just after World War I. About the same percentage came from New Orleans (Kenney 1993:11-12).

This is an important issue. What was central to and indicative of the jazz age (at least as far as jazz is concerned) was not the things of myth, gangsters, hooch, the Charleston etc. but labourers in stockyards. Kenney quotes an 'anonymous prospective emigrant from the South: "I suppose the worst place there is better than the best place here" ' (Kenney 1993:13). Black immigrants were exploited, but the exploitation was not institutionalized as it was in the South; they were at least formally free. On Chicago's South Side a black ghetto began to emerge during the first decade of the twentieth century. Part of its overall culture was the proliferation of cabarets, the first of which, the Pekin Inn, opened in 1904. From the start these had the same kind of ambience as the cafes and sporting houses had in New Orleans, partly for reasons of survival:

An influential pre-World War I report on the South Side black community indicated that black business succeeded financially only when two-thirds of the customers were white. A close observer of South Side cabarets insisted, "there is no reason to draw any color line when colored people have to struggle to make a living ". The Pekin Inn and places like it therefore traditionally served the "sporting fraternity ", an informal brotherhood of pleasure-seeking bachelors of both races (Kenney, 1993:6).

So jazz in Chicago was associated with the sex industry not because of any inherent affiliation between the two, but because it was played in cabarets which, in order to survive, had to support the sporting set. And jazz was popular in Chicago not because it was frenetic, primitive and wild and therefore well suited to the gangster culture, but because its Southern audience had moved there. When bands did not have residencies in the cabarets, they toured as had black minstrels from the early years of the previous century.

Yet jazz *was* popular among gangsters, including Al Capone. This is almost certainly a function of its association with Italian immigrants, especially Sicilian. Yet alongside this prosaic explanation there is probably a working through of two other myths invoked above (pages 62-3). First, the barbarian threat myth might be seen as being consistent with the self image of those constituted as deviant by mainstream society. Such 'deviants' might very well conceive of a cultural form having the same connections as being well suited to them. At the same time, notions of pre-modern ascribed 'honour' (issues explored by Chaney (1995)) among people of Italian descent might be consistent with the noble savage myth. Here, after all, was music which was spawned in the cultural mix of New Orleans where black and poor white immigrants mixed. Those who had come to Chicago, and especially the famous musicians - Morton, Oliver, Armstrong and Johnny Dodds *inter alia* - had, like the gangsters, risen above their origins in urban poverty and had, again like them become famous and (at least relatively) wealthy in a deviant occupation. In being true to themselves they had both transcended their inheritance and had retained an authentic voice of humanity which could be understood by many. Nevertheless, the honour held by jazzmen was tainted - Jelly Roll Morton was a well known small-time gangster, pimp and pool hall hustler as well as being a pianist and composer of fine quality. Freddie Keppard and King Oliver were both notorious alcoholics and, of course, *all* jazzmen played in cabarets in which the sex industry was not far beneath the surface. This ambiguity, however, is only a problem at the level of the first-order signified. At the level of myth there is every good reason to suppose that a barbarian can also be noble and it is through the coming together of these myths that, even now, we are quite able to accept that Morton must have been in many ways an unsavoury man and acknowledge that he played some of the most beautiful and expressive jazz on record. Similarly, the development of jazz itself in urban low-life - a matter of historical fact - invokes metaphors of manure and fine flowers. Myth, then, not only explains the music for us but has the power to give its history a purpose and a meaning which all but obscures the truth. Indeed, it soon becomes the truth and it is only by a return to the texts that we might be able redress some of the conceptual drift.

This notion of authenticity as reflexively constitutive of honour is explored in Chaney (1995:162). This paper affords another perspective on the contradiction between public honour and private dishonour:

In a social order where status is ascribed, honour is both intensely personal and simultaneously abstract. Through the ceremonialization of recognition the honoured individual is transposed on to an impersonal plane. The frailty of the flesh-and-blood person remains, but they acquire a further identity as a public figure - as the one who is to be honoured. In this respect the assumption of honour can be seen to be like putting on a mask (Chaney 1995:150).

Also, referring to the 'cultural space' of a 'community of honour and its codes of conduct' among feudal nobility, Chaney writes:

This cultural space was the world of public selves, a moral sphere constituted by the expectations of self as one of a community of others. This helps to clarify the paradox that: 'Men of honour could (and did) lie, cheat, deceive, plot treason, seduce, and commit adultery without incurring dishonour' (James, 1986:339). These were clearly immoral acts for which individuals might feel remorse or guilt, etc., but as long as they were not visibly committed by the public self they involved no threat to their honour (Chaney 1995:151)

If we reconstitute the 'public sphere' as blackness, as the 'noble savage', rather than 'physically violent conflict' as in Chaney's paper, there is a further insight into the complexity of issues of authenticity and honour surrounding jazz in the 1920s and 1930s. For, providing that those ascribed with honourable 'noble savage' status maintained that public *persona* there would be no question of public dishonour tainting them. After all, one does not *achieve* the role of noble savage; it must always be ascribed. Instead of honour being achieved by individuals - the form used by 'the dramas of new forms of public life' (Chaney 1995:156) - it was ascribed to a collectivity in post-world war 1 USA. That collectivity was the urban black population of northern cities.

White Chicago and Jazz

As Kenney (1993) amongst others cogently argues, the Chicago jazz age is particularly significant for the exposure of (and attitude of) white audiences to jazz. Not only were gangsters drawn to the music and the cabarets, it became fashionable amongst white middle classes. Here, in particular, myth operates in such a way as to obscure the truth. The legend abounds that in the cabarets of Chicago's South Side, white youths would sit in awe of their black mentors:

These Chicago high-school kids hung around the bandstands of the South Side, soaking it in, then went and tried the jazz idea out for themselves, as the white New Orleans Dixielanders had done a few years earlier. They did well; not only were they talented, they were the right colour. Within a few years Bix Beiderbecke, Benny Goodman, Gene Krupa, Eddie Condon and their followers would have the money and the fame while old Doctor Jazz [i.e., King Oliver HC] died hard in Atlanta and his boys were still scuffling in the honky-tonks (Lomax 1956:179).

Again, the myth has a kernel of truth. But what actually happened was at a deeper level, and far more important. First, it is materially germane to this argument to dispel one intellectual sleight of hand performed by Lomax. White New Orleans Dixielanders did not 'try out the jazz idea', at least, not in any important sense. What they did was to bowdlerise it, and then emphasise the comic 'minstrelsy' aspects (in the way that, for different reasons, Louis Armstrong would in the future). The Original Dixieland Jazz Band, a white band from New Orleans, is often presented as the first jazz band to record (in 1917, for the Victor Talking Machine Company). It was a jazz band in name only. The essence of jazz - improvisation was, from the evidence of the records at least, absent. Kenney, borrowing from Neil Leonard, calls the type of entertainment offered by this and similar bands "nut jazz". This is an unpleasant phrase but captures well the novelty, frantic and vaudeville nature of this music. An exponent in New York at this time was Jimmy "Schnozzle" Durante³.

³ The tradition in which nut "jazz" stands includes Minstrel and Medicine shows and Vaudeville. Its precursors and the tradition it spawned are clearly not part of the jazz taxonomy. In the USA these developments reached a peak of activity in the 1940s and 50s (especially with Spike Jones). In the UK, while the line clearly derived something from Music Hall Acts like the Crazy Gang and the Nitwits, the musical impact of the New Orleans revival (1940s-1950s) was required for its full development. Some acts are still working today and are, interestingly, more in demand in Continental Europe than in the UK. This tendency

Chicago saw the first attempt by white America to take black folk art seriously. The ragtime craze of the first few years of the century had been inspired by authentic black ragtime, it is true; but ragtime was closely related to marches, a preceding and contemporary fad. Although its melodies were heavily syncopated, it was stylised and based on mainstream European bar divisions. Moreover, being a piano music, it was not possible for exponents to 'bend' the tones and true 'blue notes', central to jazz, were not available to it. Thus, in form as well as style, it was not at all outlandish to white audiences. Its origins, however, were. Like jazz, it came out of the red light districts of medium-sized cities, notably St Louis and Sedalia. The first great ragtime hit was Scott Joplin's *Maple Leaf Rag*, published in 1899. There is nothing on the original cover to suggest that Scott Joplin was black (although a subsequent alternative cover does show his portrait (Lawrence 1972)). His publisher was white. It is also relevant that this piano music was sold either in the form of sheet music or as rolls for the pre-phonograph pianola and player piano markets. In other words, its appeal was based on the home-production of music rather than the elevation of certain players to 'star' status. This, indeed, was a barrier to its publication: 'He had also written *Maple Leaf Rag* which he had been unable to sell because it was difficult to play' (Gammond, 1993:305).

Ragtime was mainly of indeterminate racial origin although many would have recognised unmistakable black elements (notably syncopation). These would not have been new to white audiences for black music in the form of minstrelsy and spirituals had been popular in some parts of the USA before the Civil War, and widely popular after it. The *Fisk Jubilee Singers*, formed in 1871, gained an international reputation singing 'Spirituals and other slave songs' (Shaw, 1986:3)⁴. There was certainly nothing in ragtime to suggest that its early exponents (including Scott Joplin, who was to die of syphilis) were whore-house players or that the *Maple Leaf* was a red-light saloon.

has been mocked by comedian Alexis Sayle as 'Bands that go down well in Sweden'.

⁴ The history of the Jubilee Singers is particularly interesting in that it shows how, from the early years of black popular music in the USA, social and educational advancement was tied to musical ability and success since the choir (mainly composed of emancipated slaves) was originally formed to raise money for Fisk University, founded for the education of ex-slaves in 1865 (Shaw, 1986:1). Lil Hardin, an important pianist of the Chicago jazz age, was a Fisk alumna.

Whites in Chicago, however, were under no such illusions. Indeed, from the early years of this century, white members of the 'sporting fraternity' mixed with blacks in the cabarets of Chicago where the music, either ragtime or proto-jazz, was under black leadership and was played by blacks (Kenney, 1993:6). Although these whites were a special case, their existence in the black cabarets went some way to smoothing the path of subsequent white patrons.

Kenney argues that the cabarets were covers neither for brothels nor gangsters, although prostitutes used them, prohibited liquor was sold, illegal gambling was supported and gangsters even owned them. South Side cabarets emerged to satisfy the needs of the black population who were '...excluded from most commercial entertainments skating rinks, dance halls, [night clubs], and amusement parks' (Kenney, 1993:16). An influential newspaper, the Chicago Defender was aimed at the black population, and championed the cause of the South Side, even though it had an ambivalent attitude both to jazz and to the cabarets:

To attract black tourists, Robert S Abbott's Chicago Defender issued both a city and a national edition...Both editions touted the Stroll [on South State Street] as a "Mecca for Pleasure", and likened South Side Chicago to Rome, Athens and Jerusalem, a centre of cultural attraction for African-Americans, where no one need fear "racial embarrassment" (Kenney, 1993:15).

It is interesting that, as with Lomax, the flowering of popular culture is equated with ancient cities. Moreover, in a society which lacked a sizeable elite status group doctors, lawyers and other professionals, entertainers took on this function in the South Side ghetto.

Many of the black owned cabarets were 'black-and-tans', where white customers could enjoy the African-American entertainment. Two points are relevant here. First, the reverse did not apply - blacks could not go to white areas of the city and enjoy clubs and cabarets. Second, whites were not necessarily welcomed, but tolerated. Indeed, the cabarets needed white money to survive but some of the expectations and attitudes which white customers brought with them were unwelcome. The Lincoln Gardens, where King

Oliver was employed for several years, had paid chaperones on the dance floor (Kenney, 1993:20). Inter-racial prostitution did occur in the cabarets, but less than was expected by the administration run by the prohibitionist Mayor Dever (elected in 1923). Indeed, during the Dever interregnum between Republican Big Bill Thompson's administrations, surprisingly few changes happened to Chicago's night life. The function of the cabarets in black South Side society was an integrating one and only marginally criminal.

Kenney gives a reason for white 'racial tourism' to the South Side which goes beyond fearful curiosity and sex:

Black-and-tan cabarets sold not vice but suggestive African-American musical entertainment which helped customers create an atmosphere of inter-racial "sensuality".

In part, the market for this entertainment ritual grew from the perception among late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century middle- and upper-middle class whites that the nervous pressures of modern urban life required release and relaxation from moral and intellectual strenuousness. White "antimodernists", as described by T J Jackson Lears, hoped to learn from " 'Oriental people, the inhabitants of the tropics and colored people generally' " (Kenney, 1993:24-25).

Here is a direct link with the New Orleans myth. Black Americans, for white Chicago, embodied a state of nature in their music which, if experienced, would free the whites from the pressures of modern life. This therapeutic and even cathartic function was quickly exploited by black cabaret owners and musicians. In New York at the Cotton Club, where a similar process was in action, Duke Ellington staged 'jungle evenings' at the Cotton Club, featuring numbers such as *Jungle Nights in Harlem*. In Chicago, Jelly Roll Morton wrote and recorded *Jungle Blues*, while Louis Armstrong's *King of the Zulus* referred to the 'jungle' metaphor, to minstrelsy and the New Orleans *mardi gras* tradition simultaneously. As Kenney remarks:

Musicians and musical entrepreneurs quickly learned how to earn money by staging elements of the popular night-life fantasies cherished by white customers (Kenney, 1993:25)

There is little doubt that many black performers were seen as exotic creatures. This was true on both sides of the Atlantic and led to considerable popularity for performers such as Leslie Hutchinson (“Hutch” - who had worked with the blues singer Mamie Smith), Paul Robeson, Elizabeth Welch, Alberta Hunter and Adelaide Hall in the UK and Josephine Baker in France. But this must be seen as distinct from the music itself. There is a temptation to extend the myth surrounding the social milieu from which jazz sprang on to the music itself. As we shall see, this was quite clearly the case in the 1920s, and as we have seen through textual analysis it is insupportable at the level of texts themselves; nevertheless, in a work published in 1986, Mellers was able to write:

In any case ‘barbaric’ Negro jazz swept the ‘civilized world because it reminded bloodless anti-physical twentieth-century man of what he had lost. It was no accident that the rediscoveries of primitivism by Stravinsky and Bartók, Picasso and Modigliani, were contemporary with the first jazz explosion in the United States (Mellers 1986:4)

Putting ‘scare quotes’ around dubious words is not enough to deflect the reader from interpreting these sentiments as Mellers’ own, but in unacceptable language. It is partly Mellers’ refusal to accord popular music the same conceptual status as classical music which leads him to maintain and justify myths surrounding it.

For the white clientele of 1920s Chicago, polyphonic jazz both expressed ‘disorder and moral confusion’ of urban life while at the same time allaying fear and tension in its familiar harmonies and rhythms (Kenney 1993:25).

This, indeed, is one of the most important functions of early jazz and it is essentially deconstructive in character. While working within an apparently familiar structure of form and harmony, it denies the listener the same kind of melodic recognition. There was no guarantee that a band, even one which worked regularly together over long periods (such as King Oliver’s) would play any number the same way twice (this is clear from the evidence of recordings). While this may have challenged the perceptions of older Chicago residents, a number of younger citizens clearly found this exciting.

Three groups of white cabaret clientele clearly emerge. First, there is the ‘sporting’ set, the group which clustered in the red light districts of many American cities from the years before the turn of the century. Second, a group of bourgeois customers, at once fascinated and fearful of black urban America. It is among this group that the myth of closeness to nature, of the ‘primitive’ black man was fostered. While in Britain this had a negative connotation, in America during the 1920s it signified therapy for the ills of modern living⁵. Third was a group of young Chicagoans, often called the Austin High School Gang (although few attended that institution and fewer graduated from it). These young men, in their teens during the early twenties, were indeed captivated by New Orleans music as it was played in the cabarets in its own right (some are named on page 7 above). Nevertheless, the myth has touched even this. The impression has developed that Chicago was seething with jam sessions at which white and black players freely mixed and that the ‘high school kids’ in short trousers would ‘hang around’ the bandstand at the Lincoln Gardens, ‘soaking up’ the music of King Oliver and, on second cornet, Louis Armstrong. Bix Beiderbecke, the most original and talented of these mid-West jazz players, is supposed to have gone to listen to Armstrong play and to be an admirer. But Beiderbecke was rarely in Chicago when Armstrong was there and when Armstrong had moved to New York, Beiderbecke was in Paul Whiteman’s Orchestra, usually touring. It occasionally happened that white players ‘sat in’ with black bands (and, certainly, never the reverse), but it was a rarity. Throughout the 1920s there are only a handful of recordings with mixed bands. For example, Jelly Roll Morton recorded with the (white) New Orleans Rhythm Kings in 1923 and with Voltaire de Faut in 1925⁶. Not until the 1930s did genuine mixed bands appear (for example, Wingy Manone and his Orchestra,

⁵ It is interesting to compare British and American attitudes at this point. In the Spring of 1926 a painting by Soutar called ‘Breakdown’ was hung at the Royal Academy. It featured a black saxophonist in evening wear, seated on a fallen classical statue, and a white female nude, apparently dancing. The editor of the Melody Maker, Edgar Jackson, demanded that the painting be burned:

There are doubtless many who, while admiring the technique of this year’s problem picture, by John B Soutar, will affect to be able to interpret his pictorial metaphor as a further slap in the face for modern dancing and its particular form of music.

...We jazz musicians are not thin-skinned, fortunately, for we are subjected, by those who know nothing about us, to the most bitter and illogical criticisms of this generation, but this picture bears such possible alternative interpretations as to be positively indecent.

...It is not our intention to labour the point, so as to give this picture a publicity disproportionate to its value, but we state emphatically that we protest against, and repudiate the juxtaposition of an undraped white girl with a black man. Such a study is straining beyond breaking point the normal clean inferences of allegory. We demand also that the habit of associating our music with the primitive and barbarous negro derivation shall cease forthwith, in justice to the obvious fact that we have outgrown such comparisons (Godbolt 1986:27-28)

recorded in New York on 15th August 1934, which included Morton and John Kirby with Artie Shaw and Bud Freeman (Wright, 1980:83)).

In any case, as had been noted, whites were tolerated rather than welcomed in many black cabarets, including the black-and-tans. Kenney makes much of the attitude of black doormen:

The young whites were kept waiting by the doorman until a series of signals indicated that they might enter. On their way in, the doorman often commented upon their reasons for coming. Bud Freeman adopted a strong southern black stage accent when remembering an extremely heavy doorman who always remarked: "Ah hears you-all's here to get your music lesson tonight"

...Eddie Condon wrote insightfully that the young whites "had good reason to feel slightly uncomfortable until they had pushed their way close to the bandstand and been recognized by Oliver. A nod or a wave of his hand was all that was necessary; then the customers knew that the kids were all right (Kenney, 1993:103).

This is far from the myth, perpetuated in 'jazz age' and other films as well as in accounts such as Mezz Mezzrow's *Really the Blues*. Kenney correctly interprets the experience of these white youths as liminal:

The actual physical movement from the sidewalk into the black dance hall crossing a threshold that separated two distinct areas, was, as Victor Turner puts it, a rite of passage for the young whites. The black doorman's opening of the door for these whites, their subsequent crossing of a racial frontier, separated the young initiates, in their own minds, from everyday life and took them into a pulsating new realm of intense non-verbal experience that was beyond everyday routines (Kenney, 1993:103)

There is also the imagery of birth:

Edmond Souchon recalled passing through a dark winding hallway, feeling his excitement mount as he approached the wildly animated dance hall of the Royal Gardens Cafe. Once they had emerged into the brightly lit dance hall inside, the young jazzmen felt they had

⁶ Morton, a Creole from New Orleans, had to stay overnight in Richmond Indiana when recording with the New Orleans Rhythm Kings. He was described as 'Cuban' to avoid racial misunderstanding .

never before experienced such explosive excitement...the whites, according to one black observer, often “literally muscled their way through the throngs of black dancers to get near the bandstands”...But at least one black observer claimed that the whites benefited from a Jim Crow seating policy (Kenney, 1993:103).

The final remark about seating policies neatly reminds us that, although the myth is better served by the analogy of birth labour, an apt metaphor might, in reality, be Caesarean section, in the sense that jazz did not pass ‘naturally’ from black to white worlds. Instead, it was forced from the womb of Chicago cabarets by midwives whose knowledge of the foetus was as a set of interesting and exciting possibilities rather than as social and cultural process.

Nevertheless, these white jazz players, unlike many, including the Original Dixieland Jazz Band who preceded them, genuinely sought to understand and to play black jazz:

The music of King Oliver, Louis Armstrong, Jelly Roll Morton, Bix Beiderbecke and Frank Teschemacher expressed and stimulated non-verbal patterns of emotional excitement which Chicago stirred in its youth (Kenny, 1993:169).

The picture painted by Kenney is essentially one of youth using jazz as a metaphor for their own emotional experience in Chicago. In 1919 Chicago suffered a race riot which, following Victor Turner, Kenney describes as a “social drama” (Kenney, 1993:169). After such a conflict, redressive action must occur:

The process of reintegration of society, never complete, usually involves an invitation of members of the different parties to a major ritual which will affirm the other side of their conflictual relations - *communitas* - nonrational (but...not necessarily “irrational”) bonds uniting people over and above any formal social associations which may unite them. An intuitive, “liminal” communion, labelled “liminoid” when Turner writes of its night club variant, emerged through drinking illegal alcoholic beverages, dancing, and listening to jazz in Chicago’s cabarets. Such liminoid rituals sometimes produced an emotional catharsis...marking an exchange of qualities between the groups in conflict, and causing, in some instances, genuine transformations of character and social relationships. Relationships between members of formerly conflicting racial groups, Louis Armstrong and Wild Bill Davidson or Mezz Mezzrow, for example, became antistructural, egalitarian,

direct, nonrational, existential ones rooted in the shared experiences of music, movement, nomadism, and transience of the jazz musician's life.

Liminoid experiences, such as those produced by jazz in twenties Chicago, were often interpreted as sacred by those who experienced them, forming a bedrock change in sensibilities (Kenney, 1993:169-170).

Kenney has here been caught up in the myth itself. As we have seen, one of the gods of liminal Chicago, King Oliver, was allowed to die in penury in Atlanta in 1936 (Armstrong knew that he was there - it is likely that white jazzmen also knew that fact). There was no 'bedrock change in sensibilities'. Jazz remained highly segregated and developed in that way. Benny Goodman, Gene Krupa, Jess Stacey and other white Chicagoans were later to form successful orchestras which were white (although for his trios and quartets Goodman employed black players). In what sense the relationship between Armstrong and some white players was 'antistructural, egalitarian, direct, nonrational' also remains unexplicated. Armstrong went on to become a stock black stereotype, at least in some ways. In Chicago in the 1920s he was the most famous jazz player of all.

It is not certain that Kenney and others (cf. Martin, 1981) who develop Turner's concept of liminality do so in a valid manner. Rites of passage are, for Turner, liminal experiences, when, for a brief, controlled and predictable period, 'normal' social barriers are broken down. Thus, various thresholds (limen, Lat.) can be crossed. It is not certain that Turner would seek to apply the notion to large-scale uncontrolled social change, whether in 1920s Chicago or in 1960s Britain, since it is his stated intention:

... to consider some of the sociocultural properties of the "liminal period" in that class of rituals which Arnold van Gennep has definitively characterized as "rites du passage". If our basic model of society is that of a "structure of positions", we must regard the period of margin or "liminality" as an interstructural situation (Turner, 1982:93).

Kenney has also largely overlooked the huge cultural baggage brought to Chicago by the music itself. It had a pre-Chicago (and even pre-New Orleans) history, which is mainly ignored by Kenney. And, although he writes insightfully about the record industry, which

was central to the development of jazz in Chicago (both black and white), he ignores the power of other aspects of the music industry, notably music publishers. In this connection, the Melrose music publishing house and its activities in denying black composers copyright royalties should rate a mention beyond the fact that they were publishers and acted as go-betweens between black bands and record companies. Black musicians were systematically exploited, even in liminal Chicago and this aspect is severely underplayed. Despite some shortcomings in his analysis, Kenney has performed a service for cultural studies in highlighting this critical period in the development of the modern popular music scene. As he clearly shows, for the first time youth was instrumental in defining and justifying popular music styles. The white Chicagoans became world figures during the 1920s; chief amongst them was Bix Beiderbecke who was only 28 when he died, of pneumonia, probably associated with alcoholism, in 1931 (Keepnews and Grauer 1968:101). White Chicagoans, including Adrian Rollini, Chelsea Quealey and Fud Livingstone were employed in Fred Elizalde's band at the Savoy Hotel in London in the late 1920s and greatly influenced the 1930s dance band fashion. During the 1930s, one of the most popular dance band leaders at the Mayfair Hotel, Bert Ambrose, made a fortune of over a million pounds (Godbolt, 1976:68). The popular music business came, during this period, to be defined in terms of 'stars', invariably young. Arguably, this is a direct result of the Chicago jazz phenomenon.

Conclusion

Myths surrounding jazz music are especially powerful because the music, directly and indirectly, has had a massive impact on popular culture. They arise out of the cultural capacity that we possess of turning first order signifieds into second order signifiers. Where music is concerned, the long association with the divine (or at least the transcendental) has left it uniquely vulnerable to the development of romantic myths. This is very common and underpins such events as the appropriation of Wagner by the Nazis, the dramatic use of music in films and advertisements and the expression of group identity through the use of musical forms (e.g., rastas, mods and rockers). The process of myth-making is so powerful as to render ineffective appeals to the music itself and its origins. The music, once appropriated by the myth is locked into the myth system so much so that it takes extraordinary efforts to release it and then it happens only partially.

We have seen that in Chicago, jazz served (at least) three purposes. First, there was the purpose for which it was originally imported to provide entertainment for displaced workers from the South. Second, for the bourgeoisie 'slumming' on the South Side, it allowed contact with 'primitive' impulses which had a therapeutic effect in countering the stress of urban twentieth century life. Finally, for young jazzmen, it was an expression of their authentic being into which they were, symbolically, reborn and through which conventional social structures were brought down. In only the first of these functions providing entertainment for the black community did the music express itself clearly. Since jazz is an oral music (in that its main transmission is not in notation), the first order signifier was performance, whether on phonograph records or live in the cabarets. The signified in this case was a non-mythical expression of social cohesion and belonging. In the two other purposes of the music in Chicago, the signified of the first order black society became the signifier with all that was entailed in the signified, in both cases some kind of primal 'truth'. The deconstructive character of early jazz served mainly to sharpen the focus of the apperceiver on those elements which were non-standard, i.e., not overlaid by centuries of European "art".

Jazz, particularly New Orleans style jazz, has still not shaken off the idea that, in some sense, it is proclaiming an elemental truth. Across the world there are societies dedicated to its preservation. For these societies, New Orleans is a Mecca, despite the fact that in the century or so since jazz developed there, the city has changed and shares modern social problems with other major cities. But the myth transcends such mundane realities. There is even a version of the myth which claims that those citizens of New Orleans who were (and, presumably, are) exponents of the style were self-conscious artists who gave of themselves. As Kenney, following Ogren, remarks:

... professional entertainment networks for black musicians and entertainers in minstrelsy, circuses, tent shows, and medicine shows had begun to take shape on both the national and regional levels before World War I; it would be a mistake ... to interpret black musical entertainment around the turn of the century as “noncommercial folk” music (Kenney, 1993:36).

Again, despite all the evidence to the contrary statements by performers such as Jelly Roll Morton (who was a businessman and musical entrepreneur as well as an artistic innovator); despite the fact that Johnny Dodds owned profitable real estate in Chicago (and did not die young and in poverty as the myth would have it); despite the fact that King Oliver turned down a residency at the Cotton Club in New York on the grounds that he could command a higher fee elsewhere despite all these and other facts attesting to the business behaviour of New Orleans jazzmen, champions of the myth believe passionately that New Orleans jazz was and is a folk music unsullied by commerce.

This is not to say that the fact that artists made a living out of playing robs the music of artistic status. As with any art form, the artists must live and the money has to come from somewhere. The problem is whether earning money from the art somehow compromises its purity. The whole point about the Chicago jazz experience is that musicians were able, within an infinitely flexible structure, to make concessions to the segment of the audience which controlled the money (in the form of ‘jungle’ music, skiffle and so on) while at the same time providing ‘pure’ jazz and blues (as well as gospel and spirituals) to the black audience in the form of ‘Race Records’. By 1929 all the major recording companies had a ‘Race’ catalogue, in addition to the numerous specialist labels. In a sense, then, Chicago

has bequeathed us a unique legacy - a corpus of 'pure' jazz covering a crucial point in its development as well as social implications spreading beyond the music itself.

Beyond the specific instance of jazz in Chicago lies a broader, general issue. In the twentieth century when social elites recognise the existence of sophisticated art forms emerging from subordinate classes, they intellectualise them and their appeal by claiming that, in some way, the art forms are more authentic, more genuine expressions of the human spirit. It is as if centuries of de-humanizing civilization are sloughed off allowing true human emotion and ideals to show through. This was the point of Mellers' work on the Beatles and it was the position taken by white Chicago in the 1920.

Conclusion

Popular music in this century has been prominent and highly influential. It is also big business. In the academic sphere, careers have been made out of discussing it. Yet, as we have seen, there has been a general refusal to address the texts themselves. This has not only derived from an ignorance of music itself, but out of a tradition in the sociology of music which has, at the same time, scorned direct reference to texts and derided popular music as being 'less than' serious music and hence unworthy of attention except insofar as it indicates the working of capitalist hegemony.

This thesis has shown that it is not only possible to address popular music on equal terms with serious music, but that it is highly instructive so to do. A method has been outlined which allows direct reference to popular music texts while, at the same time, preserving a sense of their essentially contingent and improvisatory nature. This allows comparison at a deeper level of abstraction than printing the conventional notation or producing an audio tape of the pieces (although both these would be useful as complementary evidence). It is possible, using this method, to show, for example, similarities between Cole Porter and Kurt Weill and to advance suggestions to account for these similarities. Or, again, early jazz can be shown to have direct connections with European popular music of the mid-nineteenth century, despite apparent surface differences. Once again, the similarities exposed by diagrammatic representation can be addressed by tentative explanation.

By removing layers of assumption and guesswork it has been possible to reveal a rich soil of myth which grounds most writing on popular music. Even when historical events are addressed (for example, the pre- and post-World War I migration from the southern to the northern United States), myth subtly infiltrates so that we have Mississippi riverboats entering Chicago and musicians, apparently, leaving their cotton rows. Despite evidence showing that Liverpool in the 1940s and 50s was a declining but still highly industrialised port with higher than average unemployment, we are offered a rich, organic Liverpoolian working-class post-World War II where the Beatles (mainly) 'absorbed' 'Edenic' folk culture and relayed it to the rest of the world in an acceptable form. These myths have

served as the 'meaning' of popular music, and they exist unchecked until the texts themselves are addressed. For to argue against them without objective evidence is to supplant one myth with another. As Barthes shows, the unchecked existence of myth in the popular sphere is fraught with danger for democracy since the myth can be expropriated by a power elite and used to bolster its position. For it is 'safe' to offer a version of jazz and other popular music as little more than a 'mixture' of African and European folk music. This removes its history, and indeed it is common to find in books on jazz especially that we know little of its history pre-1900 and are never likely to know. Yet jazz contains within it traces of all European music as well as African influence. This, of course, is potentially subversive, since we are dealing with a music which has resisted tendencies towards standardisation forced on other music. It is an art form which, although autochthonic in character (and hence, apparently, spontaneously folk) is at the same time in the same tradition as Mozart, Elgar and Britten. This gives it an ambiguous nature which is hard to handle; its very grounds in improvisation stand as a metaphor for uncertainty.

On the other hand, another far more obvious descendant of European music, the 'standards' of Cole Porter, Irving Berlin and even the Beatles amongst many others, offer a far more certain base. Indeed, it is this which allows them to be drawn into the service of capitalism far more readily than jazz and other improvisatory texts. This is the kind of music which accompanies advertisements, for example, along with other texts appropriated and successfully labelled in certain ways. Vivaldi's *Autumn* from the *Four Seasons*, for example, is staple fare if there is a shot of a country house, despite the fact the music may pre-date the building by several centuries.

For the key to understanding responses to music is to look not at the music itself - that may uncover some facts - but at the myths which have been successfully attached to the music. Of course, Adorno realised this with Bach many years ago; but he insisted on perpetuating myths attached to popular music, and it is popular music which above all has been appropriated during this century. For the reason that a past, at once uncertain in detail and clear in general, has been attached to jazz is mirrored in the mythologies in *High Society*; the music is rendered trivial and at the same time rather honourable, in its

own way. Mellers would have been at home in the company of Cole Porter and the Hollywood moguls.

And yet there *is* a prehistory to jazz. Nobody really knows what the early New Orleans bands sounded like and considerable guesswork has been expended over it. But we have recorded documentation from the early 1920s on and we have the music itself, much being published from the 1900s. This is where we must look for factual evidence, not to myth and supposition. And if this demonstrates that the myth is fanciful, we should be more inclined to accept that finding than the myth. The same sort of myths are attached to popular music throughout this century, especially versions of the noble savage, of ‘authenticity’. Attention to the texts again shows rather prosaic links to ongoing traditions and schools of performance, as with the Beatles; their ‘Edenic’, ordinary nature is simply not upheld at the level of the music.

Of course, this is far less romantic than allowing the myth to survive, and there are many who would prefer the myth on the grounds that there will always be uncertainty in any endeavour to locate music in society and that therefore they may as well accept a romantic than a prosaic explanation. But there are dangers in this. As we have seen, *High Society* promotes an inherent and insidious racism which is justified, at least partly, by the musical texts. The Beatles, by being so patronisingly treated by Mellers, are confirmed as interesting playthings of the establishment, to be feted one day and ignored the next. Their music may be interesting and clever, is the implication; but it is primitive and naive, not at all the same thing as ‘serious’ music. Similarly, jazz is tamed by explaining it as essentially a mixture of folk texts, again demonstrating primitive and, beneath the surface, charming features. If it is demonstrated to be an intricate and complicated evolution arising as much from the European tradition as any other, its less orthodox features, especially, perhaps, its syncopation and the refusal of horn players (like King Oliver) to be bound by the diatonic scale, take on a more sinister aspect.

I had not expected to find the rich layer of myth in popular music when I began this research. I had in mind, rather, various ‘theories’ of popular music and the interesting periods of change it has gone through this century (the development of jazz at the turn of

the century, the 1920s Jazz Age, the rise of rock and roll in the mid-1950s and the changes associated with the Beatles in the 1960s). I should, of course, have known better; Levi Strauss had claimed that myth and music are highly similar in their social effects and German sociology had long elevated music to a central role in comprehending society. But I had certainly not expected to find the myth of 'authenticity' running through the literature on popular music like a Bach ritornello. Yet it does, and this itself gives the lie to the notion that there have been large changes in popular music this century. There have been some features which have been less durable than others - it is not common today to find popular music using the multi-thematic structure adopted by Jelly Roll Morton, for example - but numerous other devices, such as verse and chorus are still with us, as are the many other features linking popular music throughout this century, such as vocal 'tumbling', blue notes and a tendency to write in multiples of two bars. Whether the singer is accompanied by electric guitar or piano, and whether the piece was recorded in 1928 or 1995 is less significant than the structure of the music.

Observing these features clearly requires two conditions. First, the desire to take popular music seriously and on its own terms, not as an interesting but hardly serious form. This entails the second condition, the development of a methodology to allow us both to take the music seriously and at the same time preserve its differences from 'serious' music. This has been outlined in this thesis. It is not proposed that what has been advanced here should be seen as the last word on the subject, or that the homologies advanced are 'true'; but what is claimed is that the homologies are advanced on the grounds of textual analysis, and not as the result of guesswork, supposition or prejudice. The evidence for homology is presented here in a form which can be supported or attacked. I propose this as a small step towards the development of a sociology of popular music based on known phenomena rather than enthusiasm and more or less informed supposition. It may well be that we all need myth in some way to make sense of music, for it has, after all, no external referent; yet open musical texts still speak to us of the social settings from which they arise and it is this to which sociology should turn its attention.

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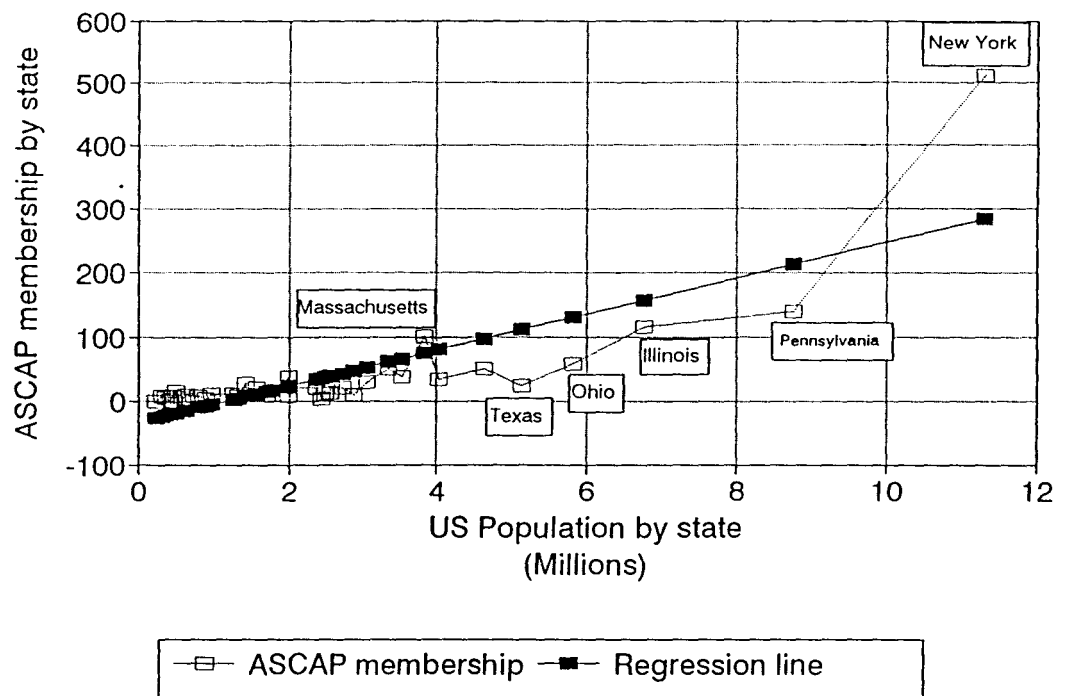
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US Popn. and ASCAP membership, 1910-1914, excluding 1914

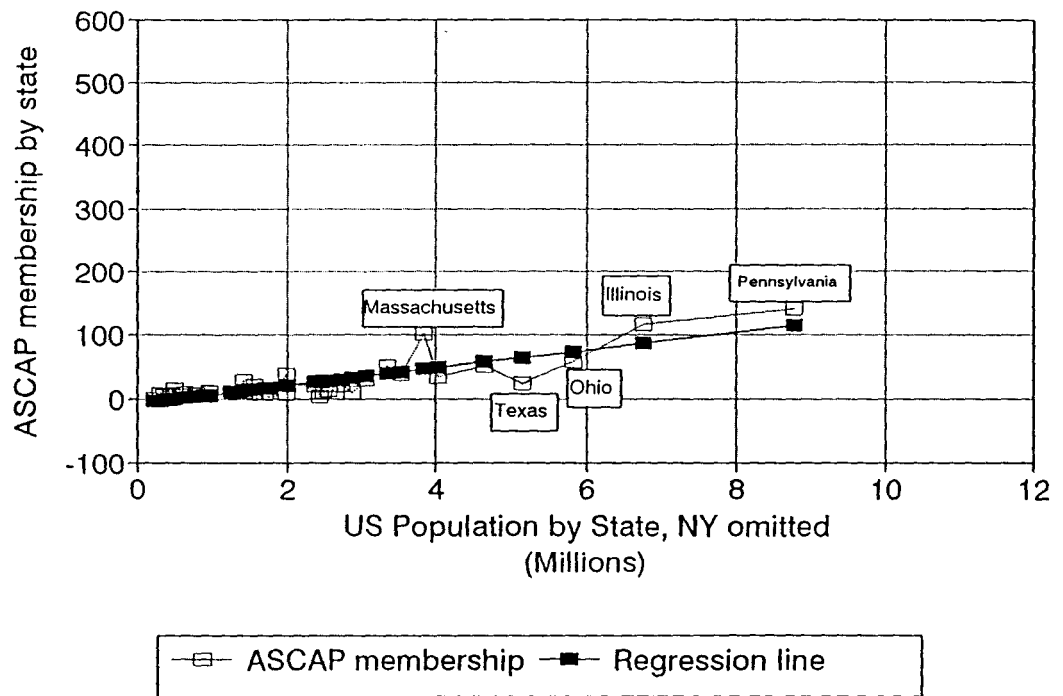


US Population by state, average 1910-1940 (excluding 1914)
 To show correlation between ASCAP membership and total population

State	ASCAP mem bers by state	US Population by state
Delaware	1	234500
Hawaii	8	306500
Vermont	5	357500
Idaho	1	425000
New Mexico	2	429000
New Hampshire	5	461500
Utah	8	461500
Montana	1	467500
DC	15	497000
North Dakota	2	609500
South Dakota	5	613500
Rhode island	9	627500
Maine	7	794500
Oregon	4	881500
Colorado	11	961000
Nebraska	12	1254000
Florida	8	1325000
Connecticut	28	1411500
Washington	11	1439000
Maryland	21	1558000
West Virginia	7	1561500
South Carolina	7	1707500
Kansas	14	1746000
Arkansas	9	1761500
Mississippi	37	1990500
Oklahoma	7	1996500
Louisiana	20	2010000
Virginia	20	2370000
Iowa	20	2381500
Minnesota	4	2434000
Alabama	11	2485500
Tennessee	13	2550500
Kentucky	21	2568000
Wisconsin	20	2735000
Georgia	9	2866000
Indiana	31	3064500
New Jersey	51	3348500
Missouri	37	3539000
Massachusetts	102	3841500
Michigan	33	4033000
California	50	4642500
Texas	25	5156000
Ohio	59	5837500
Illinois	116	6768000
Pennsylvania	140	8782500
New York	511	11305000
Totals	1538	108597000

Regression Output:	
Constant	-32.32926208
Std Err of Y Est	45.932657591
R Squared	0.6590399291
No. of Observations	46
Degrees of Freedom	44
X Coefficient(s)	2.785663E-05
Std Err of Coef.	3.020634E-06

US Popn. and ASCAP membership, 1910-1940, excluding 1914, NY omitted



US Population by state, average 1910-1940 (excluding 1914)

(New York omitted)

To show correlation between ASCAP membership and total population

State	ASCAP members by state	US Population by state
Delaware	1	234500
Hawaii	8	306500
Vermont	5	357500
Idaho	1	425000
New Mexico	2	429000
New Hampshire	5	461500
Utah	8	461500
Montana	1	467500
DC	15	497000
North Dakota	2	609500
South Dakota	5	613500
Rhode island	9	627500
Maine	7	794500
Oregon	4	881500
Colorado	11	961000
Nebraska	12	1254000
Florida	8	1325000
Connecticut	28	1411500
Washington	11	1439000
Maryland	21	1558000
West Virginia	7	1561500
South Carolina	7	1707500
Kansas	14	1746000
Arkansas	9	1761500
Mississippi	37	1990500
Oklahoma	7	1996500
Louisiana	20	2010000
Virginia	20	2370000
Iowa	20	2381500
Minnesota	4	2434000
Alabama	11	2485500
Tennessee	13	2550500
Kentucky	21	2568000
Wisconsin	20	2735000
Georgia	9	2866000
Indiana	31	3064500
New Jersey	51	3348500
Missouri	37	3539000
Massachusetts	102	3841500
Michigan	33	4033000
California	50	4642500
Texas	25	5156000
Ohio	59	5837500
Illinois	116	6768000
Pennsylvania	140	8782500
Totals	1027	97292000

Regression Output:	
Constant	-7.194692357
Std Err of Y Est	15.492340459
R Squared	0.7362402893
No. of Observations	45
Degrees of Freedom	43
X Coefficient(s)	0.0000138836
Std Err of Coef.	0.0000012672

High Society: Chord Charts for the songs

High Society Calypso

Verse

F	C ⁷	%	F	F ⁷	B ^b /B ^o	F	C ⁷ /F
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Chorus

F	F/G ^o	^{D^b} / _F C ⁷	F	F	F/G ^o	^{D^b} / _F C ⁷	F
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Interlude

F ⁷	B ^b	B ^b m	F	F ⁷	B ^b	F	C ⁷ /F
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Little One

B ^b	F ⁺	F ^{m6}	G ⁷	C ⁷	F ⁷	B ^b /B ^{bo}	F ⁷ /F ⁺
B ^b	F ⁺	F ^{m6}	G ⁷	C ⁷	F ⁷	B ^b /F ⁷	B ^b
E ^b	F ⁷	B ^b	B ^{b7}	E ^b	F ⁷	B ^b /C ⁷	F ⁷ /F ⁺
B ^b	F ⁺	F ^{m6}	G ⁷	C ⁷	F ⁷	B ^b /E ^b	F ⁷ /B ^b

Who Wants to be a Millionaire?

C	%	%	%	C	%	G ⁷	%
G ⁷	%	%	%	G ⁷	%	C/C ^{#o}	G ⁷
C	%	%	%	E ⁷	%	A ^m	C ⁷
F	%	C	A ⁷	D ⁷	G ⁷	C	%

True Love

verse

F	C ⁷	F	C ^o /C ⁷	F ⁷	B ^b /B ^b m	F/G ⁷	C ⁷
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chorus

F	B ^b	B ^o	F	C ⁷	%	F	%
F	B ^b	B ^o	F	C ⁷	%	F	%
D ^b	%	A ^b	%	B ^b m	%	A ^{b7}	C ⁷
F	B ^b	B ^o	F	C ⁷	%	F	%
C ⁷	%	F	%				

You're Sensational

F ^{m7}	B ^{b7}	F ^{m7}	B ^{b7}	E ^b	%	%	%
F ^{m7}	B ^{b7}	F ^{m7}	B ^{b7}	E ^{b7}	%	%	%
A ^b	C ⁹	F ^{m7}	B ^{b7}	E ^b	B ^{b7}	A ⁷	C ⁷
F ^{m7}	B ^{b7}	F ^{m7}	B ^{b7}	B ^{b6}	%	C ⁷	%
F ^{m7}	%	B ^{b7}	%	C ^m	A ^b /B ^{b7}	E ^b	%

Samantha

B ⁷	%	D ^m	%	B ⁷	%	D ^m	%
A ⁷	%	D ^m	F ^m	C	G ⁷	C	%
B ⁷	%	D ^m	%	B ⁷	%	D ^m	%
A ⁷	%	D ^m	F ^m	C	G ⁷	C	%
E ⁷	%	A ^m	%	G	D ⁷	G ⁷	%
C ⁷	%	F ^m	%	C	G ⁷	C	%

Now You Has Jazz

Verse

C	%	A ⁷	%	D ^m /G ⁹	C	D ⁷	G ⁷
C	%	C ^m	%	_G B ⁷ /E ^m	_D G ^{b7} /B ^m	D ⁷	G ⁷

Chorus

C	%	C ⁷	%	F	%	C	%
G	%	F ⁷	%	E ^{b7}	%	G ⁷	%
C	%	C ⁷	%	F	%	C	%
G	%	F ⁷	%	C	F	C	%

Well Did You Evah?

F	G ⁷	C ⁷	F	F/F ⁷	B ^b /B ^b _m	F/G ⁷	C ⁷
F	G ⁷	C ⁷	F	F/F ⁷	B ^b /B ^b _m	F/C ⁷	F
D ^b	A ^{b7}	A ^{b9}	D ^b	D ^b /B ^b _m	F ^m	G ⁷	C ⁷
F	G ⁷	C ⁷	F	F/F ⁷	B ^b /B ^b _m	F/C ⁷	G ^m /C ⁷
F [♯] _o /G ^m	C ⁷	F	%				

Mind if I Make Love to You

A ^b	%	B ^b m7	%	B ^b m7	%	A ^b	%
A ^b 7	A ^b 7/A ^b M7	B ^b m7	%	E ^b 7	E ^b 7-9	A ^b	%
A ^b	%	B ^b m7	%	B ^b m7	%	A ^b	%
A ^b 7	A ^b 7/A ^b M7	B ^b m7	%	E ^b 7	E ^b 7-9	A ^b	%
B ^b m	D ^b m	A ^b	%	B ^b 7	%	E ^b 7	%
A ^b	A ^b 7	D ^b	D ^b m	A ^b	E ^b 7	A ^b	%

Black Beauty, first strain (for comparison with Little One).

B ^b	F ⁺	F ^m 6	G ⁷	C ⁷	F ⁷	B ^b	F ⁷
B ^b	F ⁺	F ^m 6	G ⁷	C ⁷	F ⁷	B ^b	F ⁷
D ⁷	%	G ^m /G ^m 7	C ⁷	F/D ⁷	G ^m /C ⁷	F	F ⁺
B ^b	F ⁺	F ^m 6	G ⁷	C ⁷	F ⁷	B ^b	F ⁷

Mack the Knife (transposed into A flat for comparison with the first two rows of *Mind if I Make Love to You*).

A ^b	%	E ^b 9	%	E ^b 9	%	A ^b	%
F ^m	%	B ^b m7	%	B ^b m7	%	A ^b	%

Note: in the case of *Mack the Knife* and *Mind if I Make Love to You*, the similarity is all the more marked because of a similarity in the phrasing and pitch of the melody.

Beatles tunes mentioned in the text

I Saw Her Standing There has already been shown in chart form in the Preface.

A Hard Day's Night

C/F	C	B ^{b6}	C	C/F	C	B ^{b6}	C
F	G ⁷	C/F ⁷	C				
C/F	C	B ^{b6}	C	C/F	C	B ^{b6}	C
F	G ⁷	C/F	C				
E ^m	A ^m	E ^m	%	C	A ^m	F ⁶	G ⁷
C/F	C	B ^{b6}	C	C/F	C	B ^{b6}	C
F	G ⁷	C/F	C				

Lady Madonna

A	D	A	D	A	D/A	F/G	A
A	D	A	D	A	D/A	F/G	A
D ⁷	%	G ⁷	%	C ⁷	%	A ^m	%
D ⁷	%	G ⁷	%	C	B ^m	E ^{7sus}	E ⁷
A	D	A	D	A	D/A	F/G	A

Strawberry Fields Forever

A	%	E ^{m7}	%	F ^{#7}	D/F [#]	D ^{maj7}	A
E/G [#]	E ⁷	F ^{#m} /F ^{#m7}	D	D/E ⁷	A/F ^{#m}	D/E	D/A
A	%	E ^{m7}	%	F ^{#7}	D/F [#]	D ^{maj7}	A

(note: There are irregular bars in *Strawberry Fields Forever*)

She Loves You

Introduction

C ^m	%	F ⁷	%	A ^b	%	E ^b	%
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Verse

E ^b	C ^m	G ^m	B ^{b7}	E ^b	C ^m	G ^m	B ^{b7}
E ^b	%	C ^m	%	A ^{b m}	%	B ^{b7}	%

Chorus

C ^m	%	F ⁷	%	A ^{b m6}	B ^{b7} /B ^{b7}	E ^b	%
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The Ballad of John and Yoko

E	%	%	%	E ⁷	%	%	%
A	%	E	%	B ⁷	%	E	%
E	%	%	%	E ⁷	%	%	%
A	%	E	%	B ⁷	%	E	%
A	%	%	%	A	%	B ⁷	%
E	%	%	%	E ⁷	%	%	%
A	%	E	%	B ⁷	%	E	%

(Note: There is a single two-beat bar inserted at the end of the fifth line.)

Long Tall Sally and Lucille are not Beatles tunes, but were originally associated with Little Richard.

Penny Lane

B ^b /G ^m	C ^{m7} /F ⁷	B ^b /G ^m	B ^{b m7}	G ^{m7-5}	G ^b	F ⁷	%
B ^b /G ^m	C ^{m7} /F ⁷	B ^b /G ^m	B ^{b m7}	G ^{m7-5}	G ^b	F ⁷	E ^b
A ^b	C ^m	D ^b	%	A ^b	C ^m	D ^b	A ^o /F ⁷
B ^b /G ^m	C ^{m7} /F ⁷	B ^b /G ^m	B ^{b m7}	G ^{m7-5}	G ^b	F ⁷	E ^b
A ^b	C ^m	D ^b	%	A ^b	C ^m	D ^b	A ^o /F ⁷
B ^b /G ^m	C ^{m7} /F ⁷	B ^b /G ^m	B ^{b m7}	G ^{m7-5}	G ^b	F ⁷	%
B ^b /G ^m	C ^{m7} /F ⁷	B ^b /G ^m	B ^{b m7}	G ^{m7-5}	G ^b	F ⁷	E ^b
A ^b	C ^m	D ^b	%	A ^b	C ^m	D ^b	A ^o /F ⁷

coda:

B ^b	D ^m	E ^b	%	B ^b	D ^m	E ^b	%
B ^b	%						

Mother is a John Lennon rather than Beatles tune.

I'll be Back

Introduction

A	%
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Tune

A ^m	C/G	F	E ⁷	A	%		
A ^m	C/G	F	E ⁷	A	%		
F ^{#m7}	%	B ^m	%	E/D	E/D	² / ₄ E ⁷	
A ^m	C/G	F	E ⁷	A	%		
A ^m	C/G	F	E ⁷	A	%		
B ^m /D ⁺	B ^{m7}	C ^{#m}	%	F ^{#m7}	B ⁷	D	E/D
E/D	² / ₄ E ⁷						
A ^m	C/G	F	E ⁷	A	%		
A ^m	C/G	F	E ⁷	A	%		
F ^{#m7}	%	B ^m	%	E/D	E/D	² / ₄ E ⁷	
A ^m	C/G	F	E ⁷	A	%		

Coda (fade out)

A ⁷	A ^m	A ⁷	A ^m	A ⁷	A ^m	A ⁷	A ^m
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Things We Said Today

A ^m	%	%	%	A ^m	%	%	%
C	C ⁹	F	B ^b	A ^m	%	%	%
A ^m	%	%	%	A ^m	%	%	%
C	C ⁹	F	B ^b	A ^m	%	A	
A	D ⁷	B ⁷	E ⁷	A	D ⁷	B ⁷	E ⁷
A ^m	%	%	%	A ^m	%	%	%
C	C ⁹	F	B ^b	A ^m	%	A	
A	D ⁷	B ⁷	E ⁷	A	D ⁷	B ⁷	E ⁷
A ^m	%	%	%	A ^m	%	%	%
C	C ⁹	F	B ^b	A ^m	%	%	%

Revolution

Verse

A	%	$\frac{2}{4}$ %	$\frac{4}{4}$ D	%	A	%
A	%	$\frac{2}{4}$ %	$\frac{4}{4}$ D	%	E ⁷	%
B ^m	F ^{#7}	B ^m	$\frac{2}{4}$ G/A	F [#]	E ⁷	

Chorus

A	D	A	D	A	D	E ⁷	%
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She's Leaving Home

Verse

F	G ^m	D ^m	G ^m	D ^m	%	G	%
G ^{m7}	%	C ⁹	%	G ^{m7}	%	C ⁹	%
F	G ^m	D ^m	G ^m	D ^m	%	G	%
G ^{m7}	%	C ⁹	%	G ^{m7}	%	C ⁹	%

Chorus

F	%	%	%	F	%	%	%
F	%	C ^m	%	D ^m	%	G	%
D ^m	%	%					

Coda

D ^m	%	G	%	B ^b	%	F	%
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My Bonnie Lies Over the Ocean

Verse

C	F	C	%	C	D ⁷	G ⁷	%
C	F	C	%	D ⁷	G ⁷	C	%

Chorus

C	%	D ⁷	%	G ⁷	%	C	%
C	%	D ⁷	%	G ⁷	%	C	%

Bobbie Shafto

F	%	C ⁷	%	F	%	C ⁷	F
F	%	C ⁷	%	F	%	C ⁷	F

