

On the Ethics of Music Composition

by Richard Freeman-Toole

Foreword

1. Summary

This article is based on the premise that art has an humanitarian function in society, and that artists are bound ethically by the essential nature of their calling to attend to that social function. Based on this premise, the article attempts to define some ethical obligations and opportunities of composers; to assign, to those possessed of musical talent, social, moral, and religious responsibilities. This is done by drawing attention to certain abstract aspects of the creative process which bear directly on tangible social realities.

Many of this article's opening assumptions are drawn from conclusions previously presented at in an earlier companion piece, "On the Improv Mind State." That article proposes the "Theory of the Transcendent Experience in Music" concerning the relationship between intuition, the collective unconscious, and musical inspiration. It includes a step-by-step description of a mental process called the *intuitive response*; among other things, this description suggests how, at the moment of intuition, the subjective mind may enter a super-personal state of identification with the collective unconscious. It is possible that, if the assertions there set forth about the collective mind are true, then certain conclusions inevitably follow concerning ethical aspects of creativity, and, specifically, about a natural, coherent way of deciding what is right action, morally responsible action, in music composition.

We must stipulate at the outset who (or what) we mean by "composer" and/or "artist." By these terms we do not mean merely "one who composes

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music," or "one who makes art." We ascribe a distinctly *public* connotation to these terms, and wish to discuss them exclusively in terms of their social relevance. We acknowledge the right of a person to cultivate his own private world, a world which is admittedly nobody else's business; and we acknowledge his right to create works of art which are personal inner dialogues. However, as soon as an audience is introduced into the equation, social issues emerge which *are* somebody else's business and may not be ignored.

Hence the need for a method of determining the nature of right action. Every person is responsible for his actions in public; civilization is grounded on this principle. Therefore, when an artist presents a work to an audience, he must be aware of the social ramifications of his creative action in order to act responsibly.

In order to arrive at this awareness, the composer must first examine the character and the significance of the collective mind.

2. Tony Bastick's Theory of the Intuitive Response

The Theory of Transcendent Experience in Music is in turn based largely on the British psychologist Tony Bastick's Theory of the Intuitive response. In order to follow the arguments made here it is not necessary to have a detailed familiarity with the intuitive response theory, but a cursory look at it is certainly in order:

- (a) The intuitive response is a goal-oriented mental process motivated by a pre-conceived end-condition. During this goal-seeking, an event called *recentering* takes place at that moment when the mind, striving to find the path of least resistance to this pre-conceived end-condition, radically restructures the components of an emotional set; this restructuring creates new, anomalous relationships between members of the set. The changes in relationships constitute changes in meaning.
- (b) Various states of mind associated with recentering help initiate the intuitive response:
 - (1) One precondition for recentering is *redundancy*, the use

of familiar or repeated material. Redundant expressions create an effect called

- (2) *functional fixation*, or the absence of movement in the problem-solving process. This condition, in turn, sets the stage for the next mental state,
- (3) *psychological regression*. Psychological regression is a kind of mental reversion to a primitive mind state; during psychological regression there is a pronounced tendency for unconscious or so-called
- (4) *preconscious material* to come to the surface of literal consciousness. Indeed, it is the manipulation of preconscious material that is the most obvious literal manifestation of the operation of intuitive forces on mental material. This preconscious material tends to express itself in forms which are universally shared
- (5) *archetypes*—forms which, echoed and varied from culture to culture constitute the world's library of inherited artifacts—iconographic symbologies which are universally (innately) understood without literal explanation.

(c) Intuitive recentering is characteristically preceded by a characteristic *rhythmic acceleration* of the sequential presentation of conceptual material. When the flow of ideas speeds up to the extent that their identities become blurred or integrated into a synthetic gestalt—when their discrete areas of referential significance begin to merge into a composite referent—this is evidence that the literal mind has made contact with the collective mind; the consequence of this contact is the creation of material charged with super-personal resonance and significance.

(d) The Theory of Transcendent Experience in music proposes that the intuitive response is the mechanism by which human beings' personal ego-consciousnesses enter into a higher state of mind, a super-personal state of mind we call the *collective mind*. This

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mind state offers a *tangible*, maybe even *measurable*, access to a *supernatural world* in which the subjective reality of the individual is, metaphorically, a bubble in the consciousness of a cosmic mind which includes more and more such bubbles at ever higher hierarchic levels.¹ Hence, the intuitive response uses the subject's contact with the collective mind as a first step in a multi-stage progress toward a union, a shared sense of identity, with this cosmic mind.

But how does this method for discerning the appearance of super-personal mind states in music bear on ethical matters? In order to answer this question we must move one further step beyond discerning the presence of higher mental life: we must evaluate the significance of the existence of the collective unconscious. We must also ask at least the following questions:

- Does an admission of our connectedness to each other through collective musical experience have any social ramifications?
- Is there a natural ethical imperative associated with inspiration?
- Are there actually different kinds of music, or is all music the same music?
- Is there a socially responsible music?
- If so, by what or by whom is social responsibility determined?

¹ "By using the concepts of both a hierarchy of implicate orders and the hologram in describing the holomovement, we are presented with a paradox. While consciousness is sometimes thought of as occupying various levels, the entire range of implicate orders is present at every level. According to the Perennial Philosophy, all levels of consciousness not only are described by stages of development, but also are considered as perfectly interpenetrated." (Friedman, 1990, p. 72)

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Every composer grapples with these questions because there are so many choices he might make, so many kinds of music he might write, and so many different levels of professional remuneration he might enjoy. He might spend an afternoon on a jingle for the "Sta-Stiff Starch" corporation and make \$20,000, or he might spend a year working nights on a ballet for the Po-Dunque Community Dance and Patriotic Interpretive Company and lose \$200 paying performers out-of-pocket. Many composers have become rich overnight on the strength of a musical fluke, while just as many composers have sacrificed their lives in order to write a certain kind of music—music in which a small number of style adjustments might have paid for a little firewood and some clean water. Why do both artists and audiences cling to their chosen idiom with such fierce loyalty, and why do they believe this idiom embodies supreme virtue? What social statement is being made when people (artists and audiences) align themselves with a certain type of musical following?

The collective mind may be thought of as a mental environment which is created by a number (large or small) of human consciousnesses which have risen up beyond literal ego-consciousness to a shared higher mind state which resides on one horizontal plane of existence. Since human beings are always entering and leaving this mind state, the current population of the collective mind environment is constantly varying. Contact with the collective mind is accomplished when the subject's personal ego-consciousness merges with all other personal ego-consciousnesses which happen, at that moment, to be in a transcendent state. When the subject's attention reaches this higher state, registering its presence within the collective mind's field of jurisdiction, the resolution of literal ego-definition is degraded, to be replaced by an identification with the *composite* presence of the collective mind. After the subject's mind returns to normal consciousness, having once achieved this identification with the higher collective state, residual vestiges of the experience are recorded in literal memory and participate in the formation of the subject's attitudes.² It is the

² "Knowledge shapes our attitudes" is an ancient Latin adage. It emphasizes the fact that the facts one learns at any stage of life are less important than the process of learning, and that it is the process of acquiring knowledge that shapes our attitude toward that knowledge. The question has been asked, "Is the collective mind morally neutral?"

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task of this paper to show how these these residual vestiges translate into a sense of oneness with humanity and hence an affirmative, cooperative attitude toward social relationships—that this is the ethical effect of of art on humankind.

In other words, "Is the collective mind good or bad?" The answer is that, just as the process that is in operation during the acquisition of knowledge is indifferent to the knowledge itself, so is the collective mind indifferent to its moral effect on the material plane; the collective mind is supernatural, super-human, therefore super-moral. It is not that the collective mind is morally neutral, it is that the collective mind is not morally anything—it merely has an effect on the moral behavior or humankind because the truth of itself informs the ego-consciousness of those who enter the collective mind environment.

There is a sense in which an ethical effect is an effect on the subject's personal ego-definition. As we saw from our first mention of ego in the previous paper on improvisation, Freud defines the ego as, ". . . that part of the id which has been modified by the direct influence of the external world acting through the Pcpt-Cs: in a sense it is an extension of the surface-differentiation." (p. 215) Thus our ethical sense, as our way of relating to other people, is a subset of our more general perceived definition of ourselves in relation to the outer world. The individual who experiences the collective mind is changed by the experience in a good way, but the collective mind as a corporate consciousness has no will in this regard one way or the other. The changes effected in the subject by the collective mind are consequential of the lower mind's identification with a higher mental energy which coincidentally enlarges the subject's ego-definition, while going on its disinterested way.

I. Mind States

1. Choices

How do we know what is good and what is right? How do we choose between possible virtuous acts? How free are we to do what we want, right or wrong? These ethical questions bear on the whole notion of freedom of choice and its consequences in life. A discussion of the ethics of music composition, then, must concern itself with the choices composers make and the subsequent impact those choices have on the world.

It is freedom of choice that makes the composer a moral agent. Every time a composer puts pen to paper he chooses between various levels of freedom; the elements from which a composition is made all come from somewhere, and the composer's choice of materials, from the vast array of possible sources, is an expression of his attitude toward those materials, their sources, and himself. When a composer considers musical elements for possible inclusion in his composition, the act of contemplation causes him to duplicate, or copy, the elements' outer reality into his inner reality, thereby identifying with them; at the moment of identification the materials, along with their source, merge with him, become an extension of him. Thus, since the choosing results in identification, the choice of elements included in a composition defines the composer's composite identity at the moment of choosing.

The resultant artwork, as an expression of the composer's identity, affects the world and stands as a significant referent to all that has made him what he is (the Universe, Terra, his society, his institution, his cable station). The expression's first impact is on its source (the composer himself, and all that has made him what he is); concurrently, the art object, as perceived by the artist even at the very moment of creation, begins to make an impression on the collective mind. Later, as more people duplicate the experience of the expression, its place in the collective unconscious becomes established.

An idea which is present in the world of the collective unconscious is a kind of invitation to the rest of humanity. When an expression is absorbed into the collective, it becomes a voice with a universal resonance; it becomes

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connected and meaningful to all the minds who join together, unified in the collective mind. This is a good thing.

However, at least two conditions can prevent an expression from being absorbed into the collective mind:

- (1) an experience of the expression may simply not lead the participating minds of the audience into the collective unconscious state; or
- (2) an experience of the expression may well lead the mind to the collective state, but its availability is too limited. If too few people are having an inspired experience with an expression, it will not register its presence with sufficient magnitude to be sustained in the collective mind's catalogue of iconographic entities.

If either of these two conditions prevail, the piece will not affirm its presence in the collective unconscious; it will not be felt by enough personal minds to make a lasting impression on the collective mind, and it will not, therefore, live on as an identity.

It is important to emphasize this basic point:

The single most powerfully validating attribute an expression can have is the ability to invoke the collective mind in the subject, thereby giving him a super-personal experience of himself and, vice versa, the collective mind a super-personal experience of him (see p. 9 of "On the Improv Mind State"). Therefore, since entering a transcendent state, in this regard, becomes a social act, the degree to which an expression is absorbed into the collective mind is very much a measure of its ethical legitimacy.

The rightness or goodness of an expression is intimately linked with its presence as a universal identity. A basic proposition of this paper, supported by suggestions made in "On the Improv Mind State," is that humans are multi-dimensional beings. Human beings exist as foci of ego-consciousness graduated over a vertically aligned strata of planes of

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existence; a whole person does not live on one single plane at a time, but simultaneously on several, possibly an infinite number. A truthful expression of a multi-dimensional being *must*, therefore, initiate shifts in mind state, and *must* generate trans-dimensional energies; otherwise the living referent of the expression is only partially represented. Therefore an expression, if it refers to the multi-dimensional world of humanity, must have something to say to humanity, just as any vibration has something to say to a potentially sympathetic frequency. Contrariwise, if the elements of an expression are fixed in one dimension or another, then the expression cannot be parallel to humankind; since a human being cannot duplicate the experience of such a non-parallel expression with his whole being, complete contact cannot be made. Such a lapse is sufficient to invalidate the expression and to ensure its hasty demise.

Thus an expression may be said to be ethically invalid when it does not engage the *whole* multi-dimensional being in an intercourse of sympathetic resonance (or duplication). Because higher and the lower constitute a unified reality, the omission of any aspect of this unity makes for a false representation. This invalidation can occur in the material dimension

- (1) with expressions which slavishly repeat the literal identities of their referents without initiating a shift in mind state, or
- (2) with expressions whose referents are completely ideational, or abstract, with no material point of reference.

The choices a composer makes in building his composition may initiate psychological responses which lead the subject, step by step, toward an experience of his higher self; or they may not. Clustered around the act of choosing are several questions:

- How does a composer choose what he chooses?
- What, if anything, constrains his right to choose?
- What are the consequences of his choices?
- Must he conform to a code of conduct dictated by an authority outside himself?

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Must he take responsibility for his choices once the composition has left his hands?

Does his audience have any rights and/or obligations if he does? if he does not?

2. *Mind/Body Paradox*

In Act II of *The Rake's Progress* Nick Shadow (Satan) persuades Tom Rakewell (the dupe) to "ignore those twin tyrants of appetite and conscience." A man is not free until he is slave to neither carnal pleasure nor moral obligation. Thus, by impairing Tom's ability to discriminate between what he *likes* to do and what he *ought* to do, the devil prepares the way for Tom's ultimate moral breakdown and his induction into the howling legions of Hell. Tom's freedom buys him damnation, and rightly so; after all, how can he know Good if there is no code, no guidelines, no constraints whatever on his actions? How could Adam know he walked with God without the defining influence of the Forbidden Fruit? The "fallibility of the senses" has been a recurring theme in philosophic debate since Plato; and with the advent of Cartesian duality, it was recast into a problem which may be said to have inspired the whole of modern philosophy. Indeed, the ability to distinguish between what *feels* good and what we *know* to be good might be the ultimate moral distinction and constitute the ultimate constraint on freedom of action.

Man, constituted as a dichotomous mind/body paradox, constantly faces a choice between what is sensually ingratiating and what is intellectually validating. We have the clear impression that we ought to prefer the more durable intellectual material because its intransient nature promises truth of an ultimate character; yet our appetite for physical sensation urges us towards momentary gratifications which, though brief, feel so good while they last; these become a kind of truth too. Mind and body, then, are bound together into an indissoluble unity in the multi-dimensional human being, each demanding its say, each affirming the truth of itself. Striking a balance between the "must" of physical experience and the "ought" of intellectual experience is a defining activity of human life; the motivation to find the correct proportion is a first cause behind everything we do.

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Since humans exist simultaneously on more than one plane of being, expressions must resonate sympathetically with human intelligence trans-dimensionally. Only by resonating in tune with all levels of the personality's subjective experience can an expression be meaningful; only by inspiring the ego to experience itself in its vast array of articulated forms and inarticulate modalities, does an expression validate itself as truthful. Thus the challenge and the opportunity of art is to seduce consciousness out of its comfortable literal mode and direct it towards higher levels of its mental constitution.

However, this only works if these higher mental levels are grounded in the physical—without *body*, *mind* is cut off from all points of reference, and therefore the expression too has no referent. An expression with no referent is a hollow man, "headpiece filled with straw." We search for, impeccable truth in the expressions of our artists, and we expect to find it; the *whole truth* is what we are after here—as much of the whole as we can get.

Why must an expression initiate trans-dimensional activity? Why is an expression, whose referents are strictly limited to a single horizontal plane, insufficient as a valid human statement? Perhaps, by some definition, it *is* sufficient; indeed such an expression, consistent with its referential origin, must offer truth of a sort, but it is not a *living* truth. We know this because we know that *life* is a synergetic whole; any aspect of existence taken out of its dynamic context becomes a dead thing. The miracle of life happens when all these multi-dimensional realities communicate with each other in a dynamic, inarticulate process. The process is what makes it real: any child knows that when the bug stops moving it is dead. And so also with a thought—as long as it is in flux, somewhere in the vast array of vertical planes of existence, we know that it is alive, and that it expresses identity, reality, truth. Stuck in one dimension it becomes easily observed, just like any other dead thing.

3. Ethical Identity

What we do is significant not only for our own personal experience, but also for its impact on the group. The discernible presence of the collective unconscious in musical expressions powerfully indicates that we are connected to each other in fundamental ways, that our actions are not performed in a vacuum, and that what we do touches the rest of the world.

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Since what we do, especially what we do to each other, defines who we are, the mix of choices we make between transient and intransient experiences is a defining feature of our ethical identity.

Ethical identity? "Ethical," referring to what we do to (or for, or with) each other; "identity," referring to the static state of our anomalous whoness: is this an oxymoron? Are we what we do? Do we what we are? Is there a map of the precise corollation between action and identity? Clearly, it is the essential, higher mental identity of the subject that is most closely linked with the collective unconscious; but then how can activities in lower material dimensions contribute to the construction and/or apprehension of archetypes?

To answer this question we must recall the maxim, "As above, so below." That is,

- (1) all things are bound together in oneness, and
- (2) each manifestation of identity in one dimension is echoed in some form in every other dimension.

Now, our actions must admit of attitudes, and our attitudes must admit of ideas. Therefore, since the collective unconscious resides in the world of ideas, it must be that our *attitudes* affect the collective mind in the same way any other mental material impacts it. The acts we perform in our private material worlds, therefore, must affect the rest of the world horizontally (throughout the material dimension) and vertically (into higher dimensions) in ways we do not anticipate, nor necessarily intend.

In *Christianity and Evolution* (1971), Teilhard de Chardin describes the way the personal mind relates to the collective mind. Chardin says that a human mind generates a kind of magnetic force-field, and that all the minds of mankind, all those little force-fields, exert an attraction on each other, creating a kind of merged consciousness (the Omega Point). The energy of all those individual minds creates (or, at some point in the distant past, created) a magnetic vortex which draws (drew) all similar minds into it. This vortex manifests itself as a kind of magnetic cloud that hovers over the world of man, a cloud into which an individual mind may reach to access information or to make personal contributions. Living beings thus

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constantly rebuild or modify the *corporate content* of this cloud, which is made manifest not only in individual consciousnesses but in an anomalous super-personal mind-space of its own.

The content of this cloud, is *truly corporate*, because in the collective mind environment the individual is subsumed into the group. The collective mind is an egalitarian environment, an average-seeking energy; no one person is more important than another, even though individuals may sometimes influence whole classes of materials. To borrow an expression from Fritjof Capra's *The Tao of Physics* (1971), the collective mind may be thought of as "patterns of interconnection probabilities," (p. 68).

Interconnection is needed to link

(1) the vertical axis of existence through which a human being encounters his multi-dimensional self, and

(2) the horizontal axis, through which he encounters the rest of humanity.

The horizontal axis may be imagined as being constituted of "parallel realities." Therefore, every discrete human ego-definition may be seen as parallel, in that dimension, to every other human ego-definition. It is our personal absorption into the collective mind that allows us to experience our interconnectedness with all our other parallel egos—the rest of humanity. In this state of interconnectedness we experience the blurring of personal identity with corporate identity. Although that experience is less sharply defined than the experience of normal ego-consciousness, its scope is much wider; hence, we associate with it a condition of mind-expansion.

Central to interconnectedness is the understanding that the higher and lower aspects of the self exist simultaneously and that only as a unity do they represent the whole truth. The ethical identity of the subject, therefore, requires of the personal presence of the subject as a player in both the politics of material reality and in the higher politics of the collective mind.

Anything more incomplete than everything is false.

We seek ultimate truth, because only the whole truth is alive.

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If the personal jurisdiction of a human entity does indeed extend upward through an indefinite number of higher and higher dimensions, then the appreciation of ultimate truth is an impossibility, a totality that the mind cannot frame. In this case, all efforts to tell the whole truth are in vain, and all art is pretty lies. Still, the ability of art to reach upward to higher planes is our best hope for a unified understanding.

The cosmology of this paper describes only three levels of being: the purely physical, the literal consciousness, and the collective consciousness. Even these three levels are not perfectly discrete; there are gradations within each level, like electrons that admit of subtle variation in orbital speed but which require an extra burst of energy to reach escape velocity and leap up to the next quantum level. Our aspirations to truth must be satisfied with that found in these three dimensions, with life as defined by the limitations of these three dimensions, and our discussion of ethics must be likewise limited.

Furthermore, the *ethical identity* of a person, his sense of self in relation to the rest of humanity, is defined differently in each plane of existence:

- (1) in the material plane, by his worldly ethical history, that is, the record of his moral choices made over time; and
- (2) in the collective plane, by the actual force of his presence in the collective mind environment, at the moment of now.

These two values will be different, or similar depending on the degree of fluidity with which the subject changes mind states. On the one hand, a person who never dreams, never imagines, is never moved by music, will have little constructive impact on the development of the collective mind; on the other hand, a person who deals habitually with creativity will spend a lot of time in a super-normal mind state and will therefore have a significant influence on the ideational contents of the collective mind. An artist, then, who presumably spends more time in the collective state than most people, will have a greater-than-normal impact on the contents of that mind state. This enhanced power of persuasion gives the artist a disproportionate role in articulating the corporate truth. Therefore the artist shoulders the weighty

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responsibility of telling the absolute truth of existence to those parallel aspects of himself who want to know.

It is appealing to think that there are dimensions of existence that are beyond the collective and so far above the physical that we cannot make the stretch to connect them with our own lower being, or whose connection with our lower being is too subtle for us to notice. Such higher levels might set a boundary on art's epistemology: there may be no art at all on higher planes. Still, it is the the effort to tell all, to reveal the whole truth, that distinguishes serious art from hack work; for now, if a composition puts our literal consciousness in contact with at least one level of higher mind, it is truthful enough. That is, we wish it were truthful enough. Somehow we are never satisfied, we always want more; maybe that is why we have all those dimensions to climb through.

4. Art as Action

Certainly the making of art entails acts of will, choices. As such, it invokes the domain of morality since each action (or artistic decision) implies to some degree a "must" or an "ought" and thereby weaves itself into a self-defining hierarchy of evolving personal and super-personal consciousness states. Why, then, does Man make art? He makes it because each act (or artistic choice) affirms the identity of the *actor (chooser)* in all planes of existence simultaneously, vertically and horizontally.

The *subjective effect* of the transcendent experience of a piece of music is the subject's sense that he himself has been identified with and *expressed by* the collective mind, through all the possible graduated levels of vertical being. There are as many ways to experience the subjective effect of music as there are human beings and/or dimensions of being.

However, the *ethical effect* of music is measured by the influence it registers on horizontal planes. Just as each particular mix of mind/body content resonates sympathetically at a different vertical level, so different horizontal planes are affected by composite expressions to different degrees. Just as an individual rises and falls through varying states of consciousness, so do we all, in varying degrees, live simultaneously in these graduated states, sharing more in some, less in others.

Because individuals in higher dimensions are defined in a more general way, they are included in a more extensive group of constituents.

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Questions of ethics arise because each horizontal plane is shared by numerous individuals; sympathy is required of the inhabitants of a horizontal plane because the entities found there are all neighbors, by accident or choice. Their continued presence on their shared dimension, therefore, requires harmonious interaction between members; the source of a disturbance is considered obnoxious and expelled from the plane; each vibratory frequency seeks its own level of sympathetic reinforcement. Nature is fairly uncomplicated on this point—you either contribute where you are, or you go elsewhere. A choice is ethical, then, when it is made with the intention of harmonizing with the entities on a discrete horizontal plane of existence. Hence, the degree of social impact of an expression is measured by how many are touched and at what level.

Music touches people at any number of different levels of existence. The typical amateur slogan, "I don't know much about art, but I know what I like!" affirms the idea that if the artwork registers a response anywhere at all in the subject's field of recognition, it must be, at least, likeable. We have seen that this is a pretty sure bet, that just about anything will elicit a response on some level. But we have also seen that in order to aspire to the whole truth, to life, an expression must attempt a synthesis with as many available vertical planes as possible. In short, it is possible to *like* a lifeless representation of something that was once alive, but in order for the expression to actually *be* alive, to manifest collective intelligence in a fluid mental context, it must always have both horizontal (ethical) and vertical (subjective) attributes. The ethical requires sympathy with others, while the subjective only requires vertical, trans-dimensional stimulation. The intersection of the horizontal and vertical values is the condition initiates dynamic activity, and results in the registration of a personal presence.

What bearing does the ethical identity of an expression have on the question of the mind/matter dichotomy? Perhaps art is the evidence of man's success at finding the balance in the mind/body paradox. Perhaps in the identity of a work of art is embodied all the best choices that were available at a given time.

The given time is important because the substance of material life is in a constant state of flux, restlessly changing its form from moment to moment. An artwork's identity depends on the state of material affairs at the

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anomalous *now* of its creation. An artwork, therefore, always attempts to fix in time the moment of its creation by capturing the then-current state of affairs in an articulate, conventionalized expression. However, the identity thus defined cannot remain fixed if it depends upon unstable, transient, material attributes; since the materials of mind fade from collective memory much slower than the materials of the flesh, an expression which includes some intransient ideational content will remain invested with the power to communicate its identity for a longer time than that required for its material attributes to fade out of fashion.

Remember that the collective mind is not a fixed entity; it is an organizational force which acts on materials supplied it by the literal minds of humanity. Consequently, the contents of the collective mind are always changing; ideas come, they help express the human identity, and then they disappear after a few days or a few thousand years. Everything eventually must die; but artists nevertheless attempt to transcend death by sending tokens of their identities across gulfs of time. The artwork, like the ethical actions of its creator, combines a mix of material and intellectual components designed to work together to protect the moment from the ravages of time's decay. As the artist moulders in the grave, his crystallization of a moment lives on in a dynamic equilibrium, fixed somewhere between the tick-tock of fashion and the eternal mind.

The tension between the recognizable surface attributes of form and the unframable focusing power of idea is what gives an artwork its spiritual resonance, its power to raise a subject's state of mind from its literal ego-definition to higher super-personal states. This effect is achieved through the following process:

- (a) The form grounds the artwork in a specific place and time, providing a context and a point of reference without which there can be no coherent communication.
- (b) The idea mobilizes potential energies inherent in the material, creating a state of flux which diffuses the iconic definition of the forms.
- (c) The movement of mental energy through the material context initiates a process of recentering which leads the appreciative mind to fresh conclusions from old material.

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- (d) Since the appreciative mind is always internally duplicating the material of an expression and identifying with it, any dynamic transformation which affects the terms of an expression must also affect the mind of the subject who perceives it. Thus, *the movement of mental energy through the material context of an expression, causing thereby a restructuring of the expression's forms, also causes the subject himself to experience a restructuring of his very ego-definition*, as that ego-definition is manipulated through its identification with formal expressive elements in flux.
- (e) As the subject's ego-definition becomes decentralized, he tends to identify with the terms of the expression; these terms have two aspects which are unlike a normal self-image:
- (1) they are in a state of flux, and
 - (2) they have a non-specific, generalized character.
- The terms of an expression must have a non-specific character because they depend on the stability of conventional forms for their communicative point of reference. Thus, when the subject identifies with the terms of the expression, he is identifying with a form which represents an averaging of identities by virtue of the convention's heritage.
- (f) The subject's identification with a conventional form leads him to an experience of a super-personal aspect of himself. He has not lost his sense of self because he is still identifying with the form, but he has become somehow more than himself; when he identifies with the convention, he is identifying with the many past personal identities who participated in the creation of the form up to its present state.
- (g) As the subject identifies with the archetypal forms of the expression, he becomes conscious of himself as a part of the vast, age-old, human collective. This insight results in an union of the mind of the subject with the mind of the creator of the artwork. Such an union can only take place in a super-personal mind state because for one mind to meet another, they must transcend the limits of personal mind and merge with the collective mind. When the composer created his music he must

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have done this—lost himself in the collective mind—since, as the transmutation of one form into another took place via the action of his mental energy, he must have been conscious of the collective identification. Thus, in experiencing the music, the decentralized self of the subject, raised to a higher plane of existence meets the composer's higher self on that same plane. This experience is of a type referred to as "ecstatic" or "transcendent." The ecstatic experience is ego-transforming. It puts us in touch with primal forces of nature. It feels really good, and it can promote in the subject a passion for repeating the action, whatever it was, that brought about the transcendent experience.

5. *Art as Truth*

It is difficult to make art lie. Whenever a creator enters a psychologically regressed state, the collective mind exerts its restructuring influence on the material at hand. In essence:

the truth of an expression comes from the reality of the presence of the collective mind as it pours its energy, its identity, back into the personal mind of the creator, causing the creator to discover anomalous recentering solutions and, in the process, a higher aspect of himself.

These flashes of intuitive insight result in the creation, within the expression, of formal relationships whose identities transcend the referential signification associated with the expression's collective components; hence, the truth of itself is revealed, the energy of its presence is felt.

Somehow truth and identity are the same thing.

Now, of course, the referents of any language may be placed in nonsensical arrangements which are designed purposely to create a lie; but the only way that a composer can unintentionally cause his music to lie is to keep himself from regressing, to keep himself in the literal mind state during the compositional process. This is not easy, since the use of redundant

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materials tends automatically to drive us into a regressed state; but if we purposely fix our points of reference, especially those for our emotional responses, we can generate a never-ending chain of dead, used- up, collective materials without regressing. If we do this, the expressions' literal dimensions will never be touched by the accelerating, restructuring influence of the collective mind; thus, the only ultimate signification the expressions can have is that which was attached to their original literal referents—referents which are long gone. Art *can* lie, therefore, if the literal mind rules the process and freezes the mind state at one level.

The truth of an artistic expression is not determined by the character or the pedigree of the material being used, but is purely a matter of the degree of fixity in the state of mind of the artist at the moment of creation; a composer with a fluid ego-identity will be able to vacillate between mind states no matter what kind of material he is working with, and his expressions will tell the truth because the collective mind's presence will be felt.

This point deserves emphasis because it forms the basis for suggestions I will make later about the use of inherited musical material. As we shall see, musical idiom is the most readily discernible and the most often misinterpreted attribute of musical expression. Because of this, idiom has been awarded an undeserved place in the hierarchy of musical values; the significance of the idiom associated with a music is constantly overrated in assessing the music's social validity or, so to speak, its viability. Many people hastily assume that the idiom of a piece (its horizontal resonance) is what that piece is about, who the piece is, simply because the idiom is the piece's most obvious aspect. In contrast, it is reasonable to suggest that idiom is merely a starting point for musical expression; it is, rather, the shift of mind states dictated by the piece's subjective (vertical) resonance that validates or invalidates the piece. It follows that anything which inhibits the flow of vertical trans-dimensional energy diminishes the piece's range of motion (or interconnectedness), thereby degrading the significance of the expressive content.

It may be surprising that an art which lies also tells the truth (sort of). When a composition stacks up to be a pile of empty literal expressions, the

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work proclaims the *absence* of collective intelligence almost as loudly as a truthful work proclaims its presence. A composer who avoids the collective mind state will tend to create structures out of rational elements, each possessed of intrinsic coherence, but which turn into a collapsing house of cards when subjected to the *truth* test. Structures that *only* make sense are lacking in a crucial dimension of existence, the dimension of higher, irrational, inarticulate reality. The rational coherence of a piece is nothing more than a veil between the composer and his higher self. It is a necessary component of an expression because the masking of the ego-definition with archetypal symbols is necessary to ground the expression in terms of a common language. Yet this common language is merely a collection of inanimate forms left over from some previous time; it is *not* the collective mind.

The collective mind is not an entity, it is an event—an event that leaves a single trace on material reality: the sequence and tempo of the succession of literal referents in the expression. It may be that such a trace is sometimes extremely subtle and difficult to discern; yet discrete musical expressions which the collective mind has fused together into a unity may not be torn asunder without destroying the whole. Playwright Peter Shaffer comments on this point (through the voice of Salieri) in discussing the intuitive unity of a piece of music by Mozart:

. . . He had simply written down music already finished in his head; page after page of it, as if he were just taking dictation. And music, finished as no music is finished. Displace one note and there would be diminishment, displace one phrase and the structure would fall. It was clear to me that sound I had heard in the archbishop's palace had been no accident. Here, again, was the very voice of God.

In contrast to Mozart's music, language bits pieced together by the paltry power of three-dimensional logic may be transposed, shifted, or omitted without significantly changing the subject's response to the expression. Thus, it is not that art cannot lie, but rather that an artist who tries to lie fails even to deceive.

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When a work depends not on the underlying system but on the external referents we have incoherence—a sad comedy at best, and an antisocial wellspring of negativity at worst. In his science fiction novel, *Solaris*, Stanislaw Lem describes the efforts of an intelligent but inhuman planet to communicate with man, in this astronomical report:

I could see its face, and it was a very young child. Besides, its proportions corresponded exactly to the proportions of a child's body. . . It rose and fell with the waves; but apart from its general motion, it was making other movement, and it was horrible! . . . It was more like a doll in a museum, only a living doll. It opened and closed its mouth, it made various gestures, horrible gestures. . . Its eyes sparkled and you really would have thought it was a living child, if it hadn't been for the movements, the gestures, as though someone was trying . . . It was as though someone else was responsible for the gestures. I'm talking of an impression, more of an intuition. I didn't analyze it, but I knew those gestures weren't natural. . . . these movements had no meaning. Each of our movements mean something, more or less, serve some purpose. . . The movements I saw were . . . er . . . yes, that's it, they were methodical movements. They were performed one after another, like a series of exercises; as though someone had wanted to make a study of what this child was capable of doing with its hands, its torso, its mouth. The face was more horrifying than the rest, because the human face has an expression and this face . . . I don't know how to describe it. It was alive, yes, but it wasn't human. Or rather, the features as a whole, the eyes, the complexion, were, but the expression, the movements of the face, were certainly not. . . . I've watched an epileptic fit. . . it was something quite different. Epilepsy provokes spasms, convulsions. The movement I'm talking about were fluid, continuous, graceful . . . melodious, if one could say that of a movement. It's the nearest definition I can think of. But this face . . . a face can't divide itself into two--one half gay, the other sad, one half scowling, and the other half amiable, one half frightened and the other triumphant. But that's how it was with this child's face. In addition to that, all these movements and changes of expression succeeded one another with unbelievable rapidity. (pp. 91-92)

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The grotesque failure of Lem's planet to communicate with humans results not from lack of vocabulary, but from lacking a point of reference. The planet is inhuman, so it cannot use human language bits to make sense. The planet seems to be in touch with the collective mind, because it is subjecting the available materials to structural transformations; however, that missing literal referent makes all the difference, and the planet's efforts to communicate turn to noise.

If a composer begins with a point of reference that comes from within himself, from an experience of himself as human, then the restructuring influence of the collective mind on the referential elements will always result in integral and understandable recentering solutions. If, however, the composer cuts himself off from some aspect of his multi-dimensional self, he undercuts the foundation for on which reentering rests, so that what results is an expression without a referent. If he purposely rejects the mind state in which significant restructuring occurs there is no possibility that he will create a living artwork.

6. *Language*

Thus we find that language alone cannot convey truth. Language bears into consciousness certain more-or-less unspoken assumptions which are based on learned experience, assumptions which vitiate the power of the language to express the unique particularity a single moment in time by declaring the referent of the expression one of a category rather than a singularity. Thus, although common speech enables us all to think we know *approximately* what we mean, none of us actually knows *precisely* what we mean. If we wish to communicate to an audience something about a very deeply felt personal experience, the use of a language which is capable of conveying only approximate meanings will cause the effort to fall short of the mark. Where the motivating experience was intense, real, and singular, the expression in common language reduces it to a bloodless, artificial generality which fails to create a sense of the most intimate, truthful sympathy; and the expression which had hoped to recreate reality merely reproduces, at best, a vaguely translucent ghost of itself.

An expression can be understood in the fullness of its meaning only if it captures the multi-dimensional here and now of its creator. Because

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remembered, articulate material can never be new, an expression automatically condemns itself to at least partial misunderstanding if it is rendered using a vocabulary of common speech. The Biblical injunction to "sing unto the Lord a new song" is merely the most practical advice anybody could give to an artist—an even better phrasing might be, "sing unto the Lord a *now* song"—for without the truth of *now*, no appreciation of the eternal truth may be approached. The eternal truth of selfhood leads to the eternal truth of man: the eternal truth of the composer leads to the eternal truth of his audience. Thus, efforts to address the nature of *now* are always welcome; the lying mirror of composers who imitate the past (distant or recent) only offers audiences the chance to flatter themselves with comfortable platitudes, even as they secretly crave the expressions of someone who will speak the truth, teach the truth.

The most serious impediment to addressing the *now* use of language is a preoccupation with the horizontal aspects of idiom. Composers may become entangled not only with the inherited literal meaning of an expression but also with the social signification historically associated with the expression. This can lead to an obsessive focus on the current *social status* of the expression, instead of its potential emotional charge in a sequence of images leading to intuitive restructuring. If a composer has come to inflexible, conscious conclusions about his materials before he ever starts putting them together, he will always put them together wrong; if a creator's perception of the work is obscured by self-conscious verbalizations about himself, the work will inevitably speak the lies, the approximations of language and not the living reality of his own unique humanity.

Any allegiance to an established idiom as a valid conveyor of truth is a false loyalty; the use of an idiom without shifts of mind state offers no opportunity to graduate up the vertical ladder of being.

Perhaps the significance of an expression's expressive content is simply *the level of inherent sympathy*; if there is *sympathy* there is *identity* because in order to experience sympathy there must be *duplication*. If the expression in its fixed form can vibrate sympathetically with the subject, the subject's literal mind, recognizing similarities, parallels, will seek it out and

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transform it by means of the kinetic energy of recentering, attended by the intuitive response's typical shifts in mind state. The moment of sympathetic vibration is the moment of truth; the moment of trans-dimensional sympathetic vibration is the moment of transcendent truth.

7. *What is Bad Music?*

But if it is so difficult to make music lie, why is it generally asserted that some music is "bad"? What is a "bad" piece? How discernible is the impact of spiritual energies on the materials of the artwork, and how important is this in grasping the artist's pre-conceived end-condition?

Perhaps there is no *bad* music; perhaps all music can simply be placed along a uniform gradient of quality, just as each consciousness can be situated in a complex hierarchy of levels. However, such a view misrepresents the way energies work; in quantum physics for example, although an electron in orbit may vary in speed, sufficient acceleration causes it jump abruptly into the next higher orbit, and sufficient deceleration causes it to drop into the next lower one. More generally,

- (1) nature readily arranges itself into radiant polarities of compressed and rarefied components, and
- (2) organization into groups of like members is a very basic feature of material reality.

By analogy, then, although there are indeed different levels of musical quality, there is also a tremendous gulf in quality, in resonance, in truthfulness, between expressions which incorporate untuitive recentering and those which do not. Expressions which have been shaped through the influence of the collective mind are in a very practical sense on a higher quantum level than those which have not. It is, after all, the presence of the collective mind in the expression that validates it as complete, as true, as living. There may be higher levels, but they are not subject to discussion here. For present purposes it suffices to claim that music falls into at least two discrete classes—music that tells the truth and music that does not—good music and bad music. Once the *possibility* of bad music is admitted, we must further confess that there is quite a lot of it.

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Perhaps there is so much bad music because it is actually more difficult than we have supposed to regress to a preconscious mind state; or maybe psychological regression takes place over such a wide range of degrees that its effect, within a population, is not as obvious, or as measurable, as we had hoped. We have already refuted this argument by pointing out that

- (1) natural systems like to arrange themselves into discrete levels of structure, thereby affirming that there is a vibratory threshold for each consciousness state, and that
- (2) the acceleration of psychic events in recentering is quite like the acceleration of an electron achieving escape velocity.

Perhaps some people are simply locked into three-dimensional reality and are incapable of shifting consciousness states. Or perhaps, although capable of a fluid ego-definition, they experience no crosstalk between levels; hence, the lower mind receives no iconic tokens of the experience, and no record of it is left in literal memory.

Perhaps the act of learning the craft of composition skews the composer's attitude to his work, especially to his language, and causes him to compose completely out of dissociated literal materials. This is the path that leads to fixation on one level of consciousness: although psychological regression, caused by the functional fixation of redundancy, is a very natural psychological event which initiates a sequential acceleration of psychic material, it is possible for a composer to resist this natural acceleration of sequential change by fixing his attention on the materials and not on the flow of events. Such resistance requires a complete control of literal consciousness, of the ego, and the composer pays for this control by killing his piece.

It is not surprising, then, that so many young composers seem to hit the mark in early pieces, and then become hackneyed and uninspired later on; newly discovered techniques may excite them at first, but familiarity may soon breed contempt. Indeed, a composer's work may become less sincere and truthful in direct proportion to the level of "skill" he has acquired, because crystallized literal formations resist the form-permuting

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action of the collective mind. It is difficult to exert the effort necessary to acquire a skill and, at the same time, to remember that the skill is not the main reason for the effort. The ancient Latin adage advises us that "knowledge shapes our attitudes"; for more important than the specific skills acquired, compositional technique is *a disciplined way of looking at music*—no more.

Mastery of compositional technique is not the mastery of a language, it is the mastery of an attitude which promotes fluid personal ego states.

The intensely competitive atmosphere that currently reigns in present-day culture is a further distraction which makes the composer more-than-helpfully critical of his own work. Because there are so many standards of excellence his work must satisfy, his mind is constantly redirected to all the different allegiances the work must simultaneously pledge. These standards of excellence are false standards, mere literally-defined surface attributes that have no deep significance; they really are (or really ought to be) nothing more than details of social formality, not measures of an artwork's worth. However, attempts to conform to these artificial standards of excellence can cause a composer—even one wishing to improve his work—to over-exert his critical faculties and fixate himself in the literal mind state.

The ego fixation necessary to grasp a thought, by holding transitional potentials in check, can keep the thought from realizing its higher potential. It is for this reason, in part, that a well-educated, well-intentioned composer can produce a terrible piece while a compositional amateur can stumble onto an illuminated musical moment; these very different results occur merely because the former held his multi-dimensional ego in check while the latter did not.

It is like the widow's mite: the rich man who piles money into the collection box at the synagogue is not really giving anything because he has lots more where that came from; but the poor widow who throws her pitiful dime into the box gives infinitely more because she gives all she has. Professionals in all sectors of the music business must guard against losing the "child-like" mind set; a child gives everything in innocence, but a sharply defined adult ego-definition holds back. The self-conscious pride

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which accompanies the acquisition of a compositional technique may cause the professional composer to think, "*I* am writing the music, so I'm damned if I'll let anyone else into the act." The professional hesitates to sacrifice the sharp resolution of his ego-definition, his articulate sense of self, while the humble, wide-eyed amateur, with no ego-definition (musically speaking) to lose, is simply grateful when the collective mind carries him away and puts expressions into his open mouth. The ego must become decentralized for recentering to take place; and if the composer's ego resists losing its literal-minded grip on the compositional process, there will never be any regression-in-service-of-the-ego.

Tony Bastick, author of *Intuition* (1982) supports this conclusion with a report from the psychological literature:

Although mild emotion has an integrating effect on perception, extreme emotions—e.g. due to ego threat—can produce the disorganization of emotional blocking, giving inaccurate perception. In an experiment on the effect of "Psychological stress and intuitive problem solving" Daniels. U.P. (1973) used Westcott's (1968) Problem Scale to measure intuitive thinking and he increased stress by increasing the rate of presentation cues. . . . He concludes that increased stress inhibits intuitive problem solving.

If one is too highly motivated accuracy of perception decreases. . . . "Emotional blocking can interfere with reflection by producing a deficiency in perception" (Bigge, M.L. and Hunt, M.P., 1965, p. 497). This emotional blocking may be the result of emotional and personality disturbance which adversely affects accuracy of perception. . . .

Emotional involvement also adversely interferes with accuracy of perception when the subject is under threat, e.g. ego threat, threat to the integrity of the personality. In these circumstances the subject's perception and experience of his environment is distorted, by rejecting parts of this experience: ". . . experience which if assimilated, would involve a change in the organization of self, tends to be resisted through denial or distortion of symbolization" (Rogers, C.R., 1951, p. 390). (p. 91)

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Psychology, then, affirms that the subject may not respond to the *whole truth* of his environment if the artificially imposed stress of egocentric hyper-motivation is allowed to introduce distortion or rejection into any part of his experience. Furthermore, *emotional blocking creates disorganization of perception*, to such an extent that even the subject's initial experience of himself may be inaccurate and false.

Jesus Christ taught that we must enter the kingdom of God as a child. Perhaps He meant that we must experience dramatic regression-in-service-of-the-ego in order to connect with our primal, unsocialized, cosmic identities. Bastick comments on "child-like thinking":

The existence of "child-like" thinking of regressed ego stages in which adult intuition and reverie occur, supports the interpretation of the adult ability of empathic projection, essential to intuition, as developed, controlled egocentricity. . . . Beres, D. and Arlow, J. A. (1974) describe this experience: "As self and object are one in their fantasy" (p. 35). Imagery, particularly kinaesthetic imagery as occurs in reverie, is a prominent modality for intuitive thought. . . .(p. 344)

The sharply resolved ego-definition associated with training can become a stifling barrier to creativity—creativity which requires the ego to slip in and out of focus during recentering. The "controlled egocentricity" which Bastick describes enables a subject to maintain a sense of self even during states of consciousness transition: the ego finds a way to ride out the wave of trans-dimensional energy and to cherish and identify with each of the different phases of itself.

The mind closed to the possibilities of change cannot shake off the constraints of literal thinking and will never touch the collective mind; hence, it will never tell the whole truth. Music written by the over-trained is often compromised precisely because of its hyper-resolution of idiomatic definitions—definitions which inhibit fluid ego-definition. Such music is untruthful because it accidentally loses sight of the transcendent end-condition in a tangle of grounded ego states; this is the consequence of miscalculation and insensitivity.

Another type of professionally created music is not just accidentally flawed, but purposely dishonest. If an artist never imagines an ecstatic end-condition, the materials he uses will never register the empathic tension necessary to motivate his mind toward recentering—thus no collective restructuring will take place. Indeed, by disavowing an ecstatic end-condition, a composer in effect wills the composition of music which is intentionally literal, which deliberately scorns the possibility of transcendence. If a composer *intends* his piece to be bad, it certainly will be. If he *intends* his piece to lie merely to satisfy an artificially delimited demographic, he makes the mistake of thinking that people in general are less capable of information recognition than he is. And, indeed, many are taken in by such chicanery; many feed their heads with nutritionless food; but this sad fact is countered by the good news that art rooted in insincerity is rewarded, at most, by a hasty demise.

II. Taste

1. *The Public*

It may be that musical fads have such a visible but brief lifespan not because the public is fickle and shallow, always demanding novel sensations, but rather because the public is not any of these things. Perhaps the quick turnover of material in the world of popular culture occurs because

the audience is starved for transcendent experience. The public wears out new popular material so fast because it is dissatisfied; it restlessly moves on to new distractions, seeking, somewhere, something special that can be cherished for more than a few weeks. The public soul is starved by music salesmen who think that all the popular audience wants to hear is some notes.

The commercial music salesman has determined that the public deserves the garbage it gets because it does not know what it wants. He maintains that the public would not pay him for garbage if they did not want garbage. It is certainly true that some people do not want transcendent experiences in their lives; for some, shifts in consciousness are attended by feelings of panic and disorientation so intense that they categorically shun such shifts. For these few, corrupted compositions will suffice. However, many who accept by default the low quality offered to them do so because they trust the music industry to supply their needs as completely as possible; little do they realize that this trust is betrayed, daily, by the use of arrogant, dehumanizing marketing strategies. Perhaps the public's only moral failing in this situation is that it lacks the education to *tell* the establishment what it wants.

It seems that neither the commercial art world nor the serious art world has much respect for people. The commercial art world merely attempts to satisfy "Debbie's" appetite for the familiar, reduced to ridiculous levels of naked formula, and the art world refuses to stoop to Debbie's level. Frank Zappa tells us about Debbie (*italics and boldface are Zappa's*):

Debbie is *incredibly stupid*. She has been raised to respect the values and traditions which her parents hold sacred. Sometimes she dreams about being kissed by a lifeguard.

When the people in *The Secret Office Where They Run Everything From* found out about Debbie, they were thrilled. She was **perfect**. She was **hopeless**. She was *their kind of girl*.

She was immediately chosen to become the *Archetypal Imaginary Pop Music Consumer & Ultimate Arbiter of Musical Taste for the Entire Nation*—from that moment on, everything musical in this country would have to be modified to conform to what *they* computed to be *her needs and desires*.

Debbie's 'taste' determined the size, shape and color of *all music broadcast and sold in the United States during the latter part of the twentieth century*. Eventually she grew up to be just like her Dad. She has somehow managed to reproduce herself. The people in *The Secret Office* have their eye on her daughter at this very moment.

We all know Debbie; Debbie is an asshole, *but* Debbie is also a human being with all the inherent personality potentials of any other human being. Debbie has a soul. Debbie can be reached and transformed by a transcendent aesthetic experience. It is both arrogant and lazy of composers to purposefully deny Debbie's humanity—to deny Debbie the chance to become more than herself through the experience of a piece of music. Debbie's only problem is that she never learned Latin. Why not make the effort to teach her a little Latin? Are we composers so far beyond her, so wrapped up in our abstractions that we are unwilling (or worse, not skilled enough) to explain to Debbie a few Latin phrases, maybe spend a moment translating? Those composers who say no, it is not worth it, Debbie is not worth it, indirectly indict themselves: they are, after all, ultimately one with Debbie, part of the same human family. Their blind arrogance, constitutes an offense that is equivalent to an act of war on humankind.

The public and the collective are not identical, but they have at least two features in common:

- (1) both the public and the collective are a kind of average of everybody there is, and
- (2) the symbolic language for both is comprised of a vocabulary of idiomatic expressions.

It follows that the referential vocabulary used by the public *could* be very like the language of the collective mind; of course the syntax would be very different, but the elements might be the same. And from this it follows that the appeal of higher collective experience to the public might be fairly immediate. The public, as a social entity, might wholeheartedly express appreciation of a piece with which is associated a powerful transcendent experience because, it must be acknowledged, the need for

transcendent experience is keenly felt through every social stratum of humanity.

Wagner assesses the *need for art as a need for the conscious fulfillment of a natural human necessity*.³ Human beings seem to *need* art—not convention, nor style, nor any transient form, especially not some form dictated by a political establishment, but art grounded in a true image of the genuine man. The archetypal form of the common man looms like a spectral challenge demanding from the artist both what is best and worst in him: the best because his powers as a craftsman are tested to the utmost in devising a perfect representation of his universal self; the worst because all his efforts have been wasted if they are, in the end, inaccessible to his brothers, be they his salt or his scum-of-the-earth brothers.

But, if the "common man" constitutes the most ethically appropriate audience (assuming a "common man" can indeed be found, perhaps somewhere in New Jersey), what is to be done about his alleged inability to appreciate the finer qualities of art? Kant gives us a hint in his comments on the subject of *taste*:

In the case of an object whose form (not the matter of its representation or sensation), in the mere reflection upon it (without reference to any concept to be obtained of it), is judged as the ground of a pleasure in the representation of such an object, this pleasure is judged bound up with the representation necessarily and consequently, not only for the subject which apprehends the form, but for every judging being in general. The object is then called beautiful, and the faculty of judging by means of such a pleasure (and, consequently, with universal validity) is called taste. . .

Taste, then, as subjective judgment, contains a principle of subsumption, not of intuition under concepts, but of the *faculty* of the concepts (i.e. the understanding), so far as the former *in its freedom* harmonizes with the latter *in its conformity to law*. Kant: *Critik der Urteilschaft* (1790, pp.26-27) (Lippman, 128)

³ *The Art-Work of the Future*, Wagner, from Lippman, 147.

The concept of law in Kant is very complex indeed: he regards all human capacities, each interacting with all other capacities, as obedient to natural laws, and he argues that the way in which these capacities interact leads ultimately to an implication of human (moral) laws. It follows that from an examination of these intrinsic relationships he can deduce rational principles for assessing the aesthetic response. From this one might infer that if an intuitive leap can be harmoniously expressed in a form which conforms to universal laws, newly *created* forms which spring from the intuitive subsumption of collective forms are also obedient to social laws.

In the following passage Kant's describes the three faculties of the soul which participate in the process of aesthetic apprehension and judgment (italics are Kant's):

For all of the soul's powers or capacities, can be reduced to three that cannot be derived further from a common basis: the *cognitive power*, the *feeling of pleasure and displeasure*, and the *power of desire*. The understanding alone legislates for the cognitive power when this power is referred to nature, namely, as a power of *theoretical cognition*, (as indeed it must be when it is considered by itself, without being confused with the power of desire); for only with respect to nature (as appearance) is it possible for us to give laws by means of a priori concepts of nature, which are actually pure concepts of the understanding. For the power of desire, considered as a higher power governed by the concept of freedom, only reason (which alone contains that concept) legislates a priori. Now between the cognitive power and the power of desire lies the feeling of pleasure, just as judgment lies between understanding and reason. Hence we must suppose, at least provisionally, that judgment also contains an a priori principle of its own, and also suppose that since the power of desire is necessarily connected with pleasure or displeasure (whether this precedes the principle of this power, in the case of the lower power of desire, or, as in the case of the higher one, only follows from the determination of this power by the moral law), judgment will bring about a transition from the pure cognitive power, i.e., from the domain of the concepts of nature, to the domain of the

concept of freedom, just as in its logical use it makes possible the transition from understanding to reason. (p.17-18)

The passage speaks of three faculties which are conveniently analogous to the discrete planes of existence we have been discussing:

- (1) the feeling of pleasure is analogous to the physical or sensual state,
- (2) the faculty of knowledge is analogous to the literal mind state, and
- (3) the faculty of desire is analogous to the collective mind state.

In Kant's system, pleasure (the physical faculty) mediates between knowledge and desire, understanding and reason; however, the three mind states are generally arranged in a hierarchy from the physical (sensual) up through the lower mental (literal) to the higher mental (collective). Nevertheless, the differences between the two arrangements do not constitute a significant contradiction; rather, they make evident the extent to which reality is not a literally describable hierarchy, discretely arranged in neat packages, but an integral gestalt in which the interplay of consciousness polarities is in a constant state of dynamic flux.

The passage further discusses the interrelationship of these three faculties in flux. Of particular interest is the place in lines 11-14 where he shows how rational knowledge (understanding) is transmuted by the reason in desire to *a priori* laws. More importantly, the entire passage describes, in effect, the course of a thought as it might pass through several different mind states (faculties), recreating itself in every new dimension in terms of that new dimension.

The notion of God (or Nature) constantly creating Himself (Itself) goes back to Descartes, although the expression, "*natura naturans*," is more specific to Spinoza. Continuous recreation is at the very heart of the dynamic relationship of the collective mind to the collective materials, of the ego to its self-created forms. Not only can ego produce the external world, but the external world can produce the ego. An artist can identify personally with the collective artifacts in the collective mind to produce an expression which is both collective in origin and personal in its finished form. For this reason,

the modern artist's fear that his ego will be absorbed by the force of collective associations is unfounded; on the contrary, there is every indication that the ego will survive and flourish in the context of the collective mind state. If the mind must produce what it intuits, and being is identical with knowledge, or essences with concepts, then identifying with collective material poses no threat to ego, it simply transposes ego to a new form—a form which not incidentally possesses popular communication value.

The relationship of the composer to his audience is complex; music has a variety of effects on a variety of demographic populations. Nevertheless, it is possible to justify the preeminence of one overriding conclusion: the transcendent musical experience is the most ethically valid of the many possible levels of experience available because it promotes unity of human consciousness. It remains to be seen how this experience can be worked into the fabric of the common culture without reducing all endeavors to the literacy level of the lowest cultural common denominator.

2. Positive Residual Effects of the Transcendent State

There are many indisputably positive consequences of the transcendent experience—consequences which inspire behaviors which are plainly visible in the material dimension. This occurs not only because the experience itself is real in its own right and makes its own impression on the shifting face of the collective reality, but also because the altruism implicit in the collective mind state filters down into attitudes capable of development in literal consciousness. When we touch each other in the collective mind, the experience of relationship there enhances our sense of trans-dimensional personal identity and at the same time clarify our sense of place in the cosmos. The experience of oneness in the collective mind encourages us to seek a similar human unity in the lower dimensions; it encourages us to solve our problems cooperatively, to be tolerant of each other, and to love each other. This is the ethical service that music offers mankind:

The world of music provides people with an array of opportunities to experience a supernatural state of consciousness, the transcendent state. The transcendent state has a positive impact on the subject's ethical identity by

- (1) raising his consciousness to participate in the collective mind, and*
- (2) affecting his attitudes and behaviors in three-dimensional reality, thereby*
- (3) inspiring an adherence to collective values rather than egocentric ones.*

In the spirit of the Enlightenment claim all men have certain inalienable rights, it is reasonable to assert that it is the duty of artists to use their talent to touch humanity so that humanity may touch itself, know itself. All who are capable of an inspired experience with music should be offered the opportunity; they should not be purposely excluded by the surreptitious use of a language which is either completely foreign or does not say anything. Some members of any audience—possibly many members—will not have a transcendent experience no matter what the artist does; there is no magic formula or money-back guarantee that insures an artwork's success in all cases. However, many more people are capable of experiencing a transcendent state through music than either commercial or academic composers think.

These many people have been abandoned by the system:

On the one hand, the academic establishment has somewhat vengefully slammed the door in the common man's face, in effect, just because somebody snickered at a Schoenberg string quartet in 1922. But by doing this, by refusing the child-like mind state, the academic composer tends to get hung up on himself; he gets stuck admiring his cute little mental inventions, forgetting to put in any 3rd-dimensional references which might create a dynamic connection between his ideas and mankind.

On the other hand, the commercial establishment, which claims to speak the vernacular, refuses to give the common man credit for any intelligence or sensitivity whatever, instead producing for mass consumption

hackneyed, substandard quality work. Because commercial composers are interested primarily in the profits made possible by using the common language, they tend to get stuck in the sensual domain of the expression, wandering aimlessly from literal cliché to cliché, discovering no new ideas or interrelationships between ideas. Commercial composers must close themselves to the possibility of psychological regression.

3. *The Politics of Quality*

Passion begets proselytizing. We want others to know what we have known; we want to share our peak experiences, and only rarely does it occur to us that others might not welcome our offerings. The *TRUTH*—known to us as a precious, private, inner light—becomes a fiery sword with which we raze our neighbors' temples in order to erect replicas of our own. This is the (nearly) irresistible temptation of any significant personal enthusiasm.

Music is a provider of peak experiences and therefore becomes a powerful example of the kind of personal *TRUTHS* which cause dissension and war. The sequence below might summarize a typical devotee's logical chain of thought:

- (a) I have my music.
- (b) It gives me intense pleasure.
- (c) It opens my eyes to my essential nature.
- (d) It stretches the boundaries of my petty ego, and makes me feel at one with humanity and the universe.
- (e) As I reach out into the world with expanded self-awareness, I wish to touch others, whom I recognize as aspects of myself, with the transforming magic of my music.
- (f) The formally articulated surface features of my music are the source of the transforming power; therefore I must campaign for the adoption of those forms as the defining features of *everybody's* music.
- (g) If my evangelical overtures are embraced with love by my pagan audiences, and the tokens of my music are adopted by them as the *TRUE* forms, we will be at peace with each other; if, however, the sentences of my catechism are not repeated

fervor batim, I will feel personally rejected and must therefore wreak Hell's fury on my scorers.

Such a transformation—from ecstasy to revenge—is the (nearly) irresistible temptation which attends any significant personal enthusiasm.

The collective mind experience puts us in touch with ourselves in a state of connection and identification with a super-personal intelligence. We like this state a lot; and when we leave it to return to a normal (lower) level of consciousness, we bring with us memories of the experience expressed in literal imagery. However, if we attribute the positive experience to the residual imagery, we confound cause and effect: mistakenly, we think that we can reclaim the experience of oneness by convincing our neighbors to consciously endorse the imagery that we associate with the feeling; perhaps we even think that this will reinvoke the transcendent experience in ourselves. We forget that the image is just the lifeless corpse of an identity that was, for a moment, a presence in the dynamic system of the collective environment but which is now no longer animated by a trans-dimensional flow of energy. We forget that each personal experience is unique, and that the associations one person has with a certain inherited vocabulary may require the use of a very different vocabulary for someone else.

The collective-aesthetic experience requires that the archetypal symbols of the expression work together to *express the subject*. There is, therefore, a strong tendency for the subject to project his identification with the collective mind onto the residual literal artifacts; a lot of ego becomes invested in these artifacts. People become intimate with *their own personal versions* of these symbols, while tending to grow allergic to other versions.

People become exclusive in their tastes for a variety of reasons:

- (a) *Lack of exposure* (probably the most common): people hate learning a foreign language; they do not mind it once learned, but new tricks come hard to the dog, young or old, who sees no immediate payoff for services rendered. Unwillingness to learn, coupled with the
- (b) *unavailability* of certain types of music in certain social contexts,

drastically limits the number of musical dialects from which a person may choose in order to arrive at his composite, customized musical language.

- (c) The *social affiliations* associated with music mark boundaries between classes who may view each other as adversaries. The ritual ceremonies which bind discrete groups of people together are universally invoked and punctuated by music. Music is therefore understood as a force capable of presenting, for the contemplation of an assembled folk, objects of collective significance. However, different folk have very different ideas about which social collective is owed their allegiance, and most do not like to divide their loyalties.
- (d) The *moral rectitude* invested in an art object is a measure of its value to society, of how well it is respected; thus, the ethical identity of an art object is also an aspect of its (and our) personal identity. A personal moral code is the summation of both common social agreements and personal preferences; although most people willingly conform to a culture's shared conventions, each individual tends to reserve one or two unique eccentricities which help define his uniqueness. Subtle variations on the mainstream theme occur somewhere in most of our belief systems, no matter how conventional we might be otherwise. Likewise, the art object, as a kind of cultural summation, resonates at both social and personal levels, displaying conventional patterns well known to its audience together with points of originality of more or less striking character. Thus, just as we define ourselves both as anonymous elements in a conventionalized collective, and as anomalous individuals with more or less eccentric characteristics, a piece of music may also be comprised of expressions of social *and* personal significance.

4. *The Ethical Justification for Art*

Now, what is the point of art? Why do we make it? What is it for? Why is it important which music a person chooses to include in his life? If an ultimate reason for art's existence can be proposed, then there should

follow ethical guidelines (catechisms, recipes) whose observance will reliably result in morally responsible art. If there is no ultimate purpose for art, then no such guidelines will obtain—and we will all go to Hell with Tom Rakewell.

(1) *Survival of the species* is a good candidate for a first cause.

Survival is clearly a powerful motivator of human activity. Institutions in general (governmental, social, military, religious, educational, medical) and more subtle forms of cultural establishment (local custom, dialect, etiquette, class hierarchies, and artistic expression) all have one aim: to keep the human race going. There is disagreement about how to accomplish this, and there is even more disagreement about the individual's importance to this outcome; but there is no doubt that most people want the human race to continue, even after they (as individuals) have passed on and have nothing more to do with life. Many feel that we live on in what we leave behind: our children, our institutions, our humanitarian acts, our ideas, our artworks. Thus, the identity cryogenetically frozen in an artwork is reborn every time its potential energy is allowed to resonate sympathetically with a living intelligence, especially an intelligence which is raised to a higher level of transcendent consciousness. It is through this rebirth that death is vanquished (for the time being). The survival of identity in expression works in the service of survival. The question is, "Who survives?" Is it the individual artist who articulated the expression? Is it the culture out of which the artist drew his particular materials? Is it the collective super-personal mind of Man which exists in a higher plane of existence than normal ego-defined consciousness? Is it possibly all of the above in some momentarily unique mix? In any case, if *something* survives in an artwork, the decay of death has been retarded, and perhaps something timeless is born.

(2) The *celebration of life* is an equally attractive justification for art which has nothing to do with death. To celebrate life is to dwell consciously on the whoness of a moment. During such

a celebration, questions of mortality are put aside and the eternal now becomes its own reason for being. When people are absorbed in a transcendent state their sense of time is diffused to nothing, and they experience themselves as an eternal presence within an Eternal Present. Art is capable of transporting the subject to a state of mind in which he may sense an eternal moment.

During his interview with Bill Moyers in *The Power of Myth*, Joseph Campbell has commented on the character of the "eternal moment" as it relates to and transforms the self, and with regard to the translation of the ego from its fixed three-dimensional form to a supernatural state:

MOYERS: Jesus did talk of bringing a sword, and I don't believe he meant to use it against your fellow. He meant it in terms of opening the ego—I come to cut you free from the binding ego of your own self.

CAMPBELL: This is what is known in Sanskrit as *viveka*, "discrimination." There is a very important Buddha figure who is shown holding a flaming sword over his head—and so what is that sword for? It is the sword of discrimination, separating the merely temporal from the eternal. It is the sword distinguishing that which is enduring from that which is merely passing. The tick-tick-tick of time shuts out eternity. We live in this field of time. But what is reflected in this field is an eternal principle made manifest.

MOYERS: The experience of the eternal.

CAMPBELL: The experience of what you are.

MOYERS: Yes, but whatever eternity is, it is here right now.

CAMPBELL: And nowhere else. Or everywhere else. If you don't experience it here and now, you're not going to get it in heaven. Heaven is not eternal, it's just everlasting.

MOYERS: I don't follow that.

CAMPBELL: Heaven and hell are described as forever. Heaven is of unending time. It is not eternal. Eternal is beyond time. The concept of time shuts out eternity. It is over the ground of that deep experience of eternity that all of these temporal pains and troubles come and go. (p. 279-280)

Survival and celebration, these two possible reasons for the existence of art, are together another example of the mind/body (or the ought/must) paradox. A moment of a person's life may be fixed in time, for the purpose of communal contemplation, and also endowed with the potential for transdimensional movement, only when the expression of that moment has both "ought" and "must" attributes:

- (1) art's ability to prolong the survival of cultural essences
(ideas, symbols, presences) is the reason it "ought" to exist;
and
- (2) art's capacity to celebrate the joy of the eternal moment is
the reason it "must" exist.

Together, these two motivations constitute the ethical justification for art.

Taste is the means by which a subject chooses from the many different possible proportional relationships of "ought" to "must." As long as both are present in the mix, there is the possibility of an alchemical event which will put the literal mind in contact with the collective mind. And when this happens, whatever the proportions, whatever the literal vocabulary, the expression will tell the truth.

III. Universals

1. Social Impact/Artistic Choices

To summarize much of the argument thus far: The transcendent mind state, accessible through the experience of a truthful work of art, has a positive impact on the social sense of the subject. This experience can entail the use of *any* established linguistic vocabulary, so long as the mind calls on the recentering energy of the intuitive response in order to arrive at its pre-conceived end-condition. However, the positive impact that follows such an experience is made possible, in part, by the appearance of vestiges of the transcendent experience in literal memory. Are there any such vestiges (archetypes) which are more ethically transforming than any others? Does

the literal subject matter of the work have any influence on the quality of the ecstatic experience? If so, why?

Are the literal referents of the inherited symbology are more significant than might be supposed? Does the use of resonant material instead direct the collective mind towards commens on that material, introducing variant meanings? Perhaps the transforming action of the collective mind offers supernatural commentaries on the literal referents upon which it acts, creating a vital link between the physical referent and its spiritual identity (as above, so below). If this is so, then the effect of the collective mind on the attitudes of the subject can be traced precisely to the way in which the vestiges of the ecstatic experience have transformed the subject's literal associations of his vocabulary. *It may be that the spark of supernatural energy is locked inside the very linguistic structure of archetypal symbols, and this is why it is so easily mobilized by recentering.*

The possibility that the collective mind causes the literal mind of the subject to reinterpret familiar material *in the literal mind state* offers an additional explanation for the frequent with which an enthusiasm for the transcendent experience can trigger antisocial, exclusive loyalties, limiting particular types of expressions to fragments of the general audience:

- (1) Some composers actively cater to a fragment from this audience, to the devotees of a particular idiom, by mechanically supplying them with mere vestiges of whatever particularizing energy it was that established the fragment to begin with. Seldom do these vestiges *identically duplicate* the energy of the original, but composers can certainly arrive at a new mix of components that is *equal to* the energy of the original, if the components of the expression work in the service of recentering.
- (2) A composer may wish to educate an audience in his personal language first, and afterwards try out the piece on them; it is this impulse which resulted in the vogue of playing pieces twice at new music concerts (a welcome return to the encore convention of Mozart and Beethoven). This technique would certainly work if art were generally regarded as a science. However, rather than a science, art is generally imagined to be

an entertainment; an entertainment whose first obligation is to *come to the audience*. This is not to say that art is not a science—professional musicians certainly acknowledge the importance of systematic creative methods, and recognize that very predictable musical results follow the application of standard principles. Nevertheless, a composer who demands that the audience learn to speak his own private language before hearing his piece is asking too much; he asks the audience to identify too closely with his literally articulated ego and not with the collective identity of his higher self (*our* self).

Either way, the composer must answer certain questions: "Where do I start? At what level of familiarity may I begin the process of seducing the audience's consciousness up into the collective state? And since, in society, there is such a sharp division of loyalties to idiomatic dialects, whom shall I entice and whom alienate first?"

The modern artist, possibly more than ever before, will have no truck with hand-me-down expressions—he wants every single phoneme of his language to come *exclusively* from his own personal genius. It would be so terribly ego-gratifying if this were possible; yet who but alienated schizophrenics speak a totally private language? It is either a logical blunder or gross hypocrisy that drives an artist to declare himself a complete original. Moreover, many such artists not only dismiss historical precedent with a superior toss of the head, but also eagerly embrace every subtle linguistic innovation coined by his in-bred associates, as legitimate, powerful, and meaningful. Such a composer never wonders what the difference is between an expression that was inherited five minutes ago and an expression that was inherited five hundred years ago. He somehow thinks that, because an expression's literal form exists outside the mainstream, it is protected from the literal associations which degrade the spontaneous significations of all language, ancient or recently evolved. This same attitude leads him to conclude that a familiar form can never breathe the life of an anomalous now. And yet, because the artistic resonance originates in the archetypal symbols,

it may be that the discussion of universals, more than any other subject, demands the use of inherited language.

2. *The New Temple*

The transcendent experience has a moral influence on musicians which sensitizes them to an internal awareness of spiritual realms, and enables them to use literal expressions to suggest these realms to the imagination of an audience, if they choose to do so. Art communicates on more than one level at once, regardless of vocabulary, but if the chosen vocabulary has any religious connotations, the self-conscious references to the transcendent state *within the transcendent state* will generate residual archetypes whose referents *are* the intransient, or spiritual, verities of the collective mind. If composers choose this vocabulary, the public will benefit ethically from the experience, some more than others.

Spirituality is manifested on many levels at once, no one better than another; yet spirituality manifested at the conscious level empowers the individual with resources by means of which the material plane may encounter supernatural realities which otherwise would remain hidden. As the parables of Jesus revealed veiled truths to the public and distinct truth to the disciples, so may a piece of music convey different truths on different levels. Practical ethical questions are reduced, in effect, to questions of percentage:

- (1) how much collective material can a composer bear to use without feeling artistically compromised, and
- (2) how many people can a composer exclude from his audience before he feels himself to be socially irresponsible, or worse, historically invisible?

The role of music in ritual contexts is time-honored. Indeed, the need for religious experience and the value of music as a vehicle by which spiritual realities can be transmitted into the material plane has never been more recognized. As a ubiquitous, universally understood language, music has been one of the most powerful forces shaping the creation of a contemporary global identity; as such, it has offered humanity an attractive substitute for traditional religious iconographies. Music is clearly and universally felt to possess super-personal attributes; and yet, in its present

popular form, it need not be identified with old-fashioned, off-putting, cultural values which fade into the past with each new international business deal. It is, in fact, quite reasonable to speak of music as the new global religion, the concert hall the new temple, the Karaoke machine the new confessional.

Music is now such an inclusive universal language because the consensus in the collective mind has never before been so complete, so global; much more collective material is now universally known than ever before. Early in the century, Jung noticed that subtle differences were to be found in the collective symbols of various cultures, differences which defined the cultures in question, but which undermined the globally shared character of most collective vocabulary; he cautioned Western man to avoid embracing religious icons of the East because they are not native to his preconscious, symbolic vocabulary. Nowadays, however, this caution is being rendered obsolete, by the material, technological world which is installing in the library of collective material new artifacts which are familiar to and resonant with nearly every person in the world.

Composers thus have an opportunity to make an impression on the collective mind that might register in the literal consciousnesses of an unprecedented number of people. If all these people could be influenced by the moral resonance of a truthful music, the scope of a single composer's positive impact is staggering. Not only might a huge number of people experience the collective mind, *simultaneously*, but the residual effect of such a mass experience might result in profoundly significant transformations in the literal resonance of inherited iconographic material.

Thus, finding artistic expressions that possess communication value for the common man seems like an occupation which has fairly obvious humanitarian significance; if coming together promotes mutual understanding, makes us happier and more peaceful, and if a common music helps us come together, how can there be any doubt about where the composer's responsibilities lie? Yet most so-called "serious" artists still balk at the idea of compromising their chosen, exclusive idiom with a vocabulary that is comprehensible to the common man. Most such artists agree that their works should express high moral principles, or at least ought to contain a high concentration of cultural information; without such a concentration the work would have no identity, would express or preserve nothing. The

preservation of culture in relatively nondegradable expressions is generally acknowledged to be one of the highest callings of the artist. It is only natural, therefore, that the common man's reluctance to take in *anything* that contains a high concentration of anything should constitute a source of frustration for the artist who desires to create works whose durability depends on a kind of density that makes them invisible to the mass audience.

Such present-day artists are not the first to confront the obtuseness the common man displays when encountering art that is at all complex or multi-faceted. That the finer details of a great work of art must remain inaccessible to a popular audience has for a long time been an axiom of the philosophy of aesthetics; but that the *essence* of a work should not be understood by any human being whomever, and that the artist should not even try to reveal that essence to the common man—this idea never occurred to anybody until the twentieth century.

A composer who purposely denies a huge potential audience access to his music thereby consciously denies the *humanity* of that potential audience; he does so by denying the spiritual connection between himself and all men. By refusing to accept all men as his brothers, he cuts himself off from a part of himself; thus, even when speaks to the small audience to whom he does grant access to his music, he is speaking to less-than-a-human-being, *as* less-than-a-human-being.

Identity is the key to universal statements. The communication value of an artwork reduces, ultimately, to *who the artwork is*. If the artwork expresses one discrete ego-definition, that one person will be the only source of potential sympathetic vibration. The more the artwork addresses the generality, the more capable it is of embracing the cosmic man. The communication value of an expression after all, depends not just on the moment of transcendence, but on the progression of events as they approach the moment of recentering, and also on to the character of the transformations that obtain with regard to residual archetypal symbols. Indeed, it is the latter which probably contains the most communication value of all, because the feeling of newness associated with reinterpreted symbol contains the most literal information--information transported from outside the subject to inside the subject. Thus, the ethical validity of a work and its communication value are intimately linked.

In our present world much of what happens is beyond our control. There is no protective ivory tower anymore, if there ever was one. We all live here, eat the same food, see the same traffic lights, hear the same muzak. These things are part of us whether we like it or not. Being part of us, they should not be ignored in our efforts to express ourselves to ourselves. By editing our experiences and denying the reality of our common experiences we express some non-existent less-than-a-man. Who can relate to, much less love, the work of less-than-a-man? When a man cuts himself off from himself, his experience of himself and his communications to others must be shallow, fragmentary, bloodless, and insincere.

There remains the problem of resolving the mind/body paradox. What is the balance between these two points of orientation? In C.S. Lewis' *Till We Have Faces*, a temple is described in which are situated two statues, representations of a lower and a higher goddess:

"Has Ungit comforted you, child" I asked.

"Oh yes, Queen" said the woman, her face almost brightening, "Oh yes. Ungit has given me great comfort. There's no goddess like Ungit."

"Do you always pray to *that* Ungit," said I (nodding toward the shapeless stone), "and not to *that*?" Here I nodded towards our new image, standing tall and straight in her robes and (whatever the Fox might say of it) the loveliest thing our land has ever seen.

"Oh, always this, Queen," said she. "That other, the Greek Ungit, she wouldn't understand my speech. She's only for nobles and learned men. There's no comfort in her." (p. 272)

The representations in this temple are very different faces of a single goddess, different phases of a single identity. Although the outer form of these representations are quite unlike each other, they both tend toward the same spiritual essence. Likewise, an artist has materials at his disposal which are of a contrasting character but which offer a similar opportunity to create synthetic works which integrate the various articulate voices of man into one great symphonic chorus.

The temple of art, usually thought to be inhabited by an exclusive brotherhood of high priests with nothing to say to the lowly men of earth, might become a popular emporium of enlightenment if composers could find a way to speak to the common man's higher mind by way of his lower referential vantage point. But why should they? Why might not the common man create his own music out of his own common materials? Is this possible? Does an association with a language automatically enable one to create discourses in that language? In *Man and his Myths*, Joseph Campbell makes the following insightful comment:

There's an old romantic idea, in German, *das Volk dichtet*, which says that the poetry of the traditional cultures, and the ideas, come out of the folk. They do not. They come out of an elite experience, the experience of people particularly gifted, whose ears are open to the song of the universe. These people speak to the folk, and there is an answer from the folk which is then received as an interaction. But the first impulse in the shaping of a folk tradition comes from above, not from below. (p. 107)

This passage indicates that, traditionally, the task of creating art for the folk has been willingly shouldered by a trained elite; the passage implies that no matter how much the folk need to have their basic spiritual identities expressed, they cannot do it themselves—they need the help of experts. It is therefore incumbent upon the most gifted of our generation to speak to the people of their ultimate identification with super-personal reality. Those with the gift of articulation naturally feel responsible for their brothers and sisters who cry out in their dreams for someone to help them understand who they are, for someone to give them a jingle, a catch-phrase, a hook by the door to hang their identities on for awhile, to assuage their deep ontological insecurities. It's a dirty job, but somebody has to do it.

3. *Good Examples*

From all this it follows that:

- (1) in order for music to be ethically responsible, it should speak to mankind as a unity through the literal focus of a language;
- (2) furthermore, since the specific language is not the critical

element, more than one language, integrated into a synthetic amalgamation of idiomatic references, might be even more effective in conveying information across cultural demarcations.

At this point a few examples will be helpful—musical works which make no artistic compromise but which clearly involve interpolations of high and low culture for the sake of an integral effect.

There is the story of Stravinsky and the organ grinder: Winding its way through the circus music at the beginning of *Petrouchka* is a little folk-like theme that helps capture the festive atmosphere of the scene. It turns out that, while Stravinsky was composing his ballet, an organ grinder had been cranking out this tune, hour after hour, right outside the composer's hotel. Stravinsky did not consciously know he was quoting anything until the manufacturer of the organ roll sued him for infringement of copyright. In this case, Stravinsky had thought he was making up something that would set the stage (create a context) for his drama; and only later did he learn that he had been stealing somebody else's material. Indeed, just about anything in a culture can show up in an artwork; a composer is not divorced from the world when he walks into the privacy of his studio—the world comes with him.

Hindemith's *Gebrauchsmusik* exemplifies collective reference on another level. It cannot be said that Hindemith sought to copy popular tunes into his music, but he did seek to write music that people could play; and his effort entailed assumptions about language that are at a far remove from those of composer who seek to protect their individuality by denying a popular audience access to his music. Hindemith's desire to share common material with the performer was, indeed, ethically valid, since the front row in the audience is always occupied by the performer.

The Three Penny Opera is a remarkable work in its ability to communicate tension and angst through the use of the simplest popular melodies. Of course, Weill was eternally indebted to the incredible words of Brecht; it is diverting to imagine what those words would sound like set by a composer who tried to *reveal* rather than *conceal* their meaning. The collective expressions used in Weill's setting tend to act as camouflage, a translucent curtain placed between the literal content of the music and the

listener. The tension thus created enhances the effect of the understated literal expressions and raises their archetypal resonance a full octave. Thus, far from creating obvious statements, as one might suppose, the use of familiar material, in this context, creates a most subtle, most ephemeral effect. The language bits are radically redefined (jolly tunes become ironic, sentimental clichés become intensely passionate or tormented), and it is the collective mind which must be credited with the rewrite.

Quotations always bring with them their literal associations, but they also alter the ego-definition of the composer in unpredictable and miraculous ways. In listening to Ives it is easy to acknowledge the patriotic fervor expressed by 57 versions of "Columbia the Gem of the Ocean," but it is much more difficult to describe the distance that "Columbia the Gem of the Ocean" puts between the listener and Ives himself. Yet this distance must be constantly recalled if the true significance of quoted material in serious music is not to be misrepresented.

Prokofiev's *Classical Symphony* and Stravinsky's *The Rake's Progress* both illustrate composers' willingness to redefine themselves in an anachronistic framework. Because the framework is displaced in time, there is an exaggerated disparity between the idiomatic identities of these works and the mainstream; but both motivate the same quality of psychic action that takes place whenever a composer willingly, consciously, adopts the manner of someone outside his immediate sphere. The tension of understatement, like that in Weill, is an attribute to which many composers are insensitive because they are so involved with idiom, with the technical surface features of their craft.

In the twentieth century, the groundbreaking work that *should* have made popular idiomatic reference respectable is *Rhapsody in Blue*. How could anyone doubt that this was a great piece? And how could anyone not see that its greatness depends on the tensions between the symphonic and the popular idioms presented side by side, interactive, synthetic, equally legitimate? It is ironic (and somewhat annoying) that when famous composers like Ives, Stravinsky, or Schoenberg (as in, say his arrangements of German folk songs, or his arrangement of the Handel *Concerto Grosso*) make use of an archaic vernacular, other less famous composers accept the result because the authority of those composers' reputations provides a context for understanding. However, when an unknown, or, worse yet, a

commercial composer offers similar recentering solutions, only the derivative, old-fashioned, uninformed clichés are heard, not the transformation of convention into transcendence.

One such commercial composer who is just beginning to be recognized as a great master of high art is Frank Zappa. Since *Lumpy Gravy* appeared in 1968, Zappa has been hailed as an iconoclastic hero, but not as a talent that has achieved its fullest realization. With *The Yellow Shark*, however, Zappa's art was raised to an ecstatic pinnacle of synthetic perfection; in this work every imaginable idiomatic reference is employed to inspire a macrocosmic vision of life, especially social life. Zappa stands as a paragon whom twentieth-century composers might emulate to the universal benefit of popular and new-music audiences alike. Even as early as *Lumpy Gravy*, Zappa created musical works which presented a broad gamut of styles (jazz-rock, Varese, Monty Python, Stravinsky, Chuck Berry, and Stockhausen) in happy combinations which energized each other while maintaining a narrative thrust which, though abstract (poetic) was still able to communicate universal truth to an uneducated audience.

Recent works of the Canadian Electroacoustic Community display a similar unabashed willingness to reach out and touch the *folk* through the integration of real-life sounds and high-tech mysteries. Advances in recording technology (and home and car audio equipment) since the middle 60's have made it possible for people—whether they listen to Bonny Raitt, R.E.M., Garth Brooks, Green Day, or Pink Floyd—to hear and appreciate complexities in sound design which are unparalleled in history. In fact, it has even been suggested that, if the world continues to become smaller and smaller, so that we stop leaving our homes for art (to go to concert halls, theaters, etc.) and instead start listening to music exclusively through speakers, it may be that electronic music, by virtue of the ease with which disparate elements are juxtaposed, may become the natural medium for the emergence of a new universal world music idiom.

In any case, it is certainly necessary to consider the possibility that audiences may be changing the way they hear music. If so, then they can only be reached if an appropriate adjustment in subject matter is made. If electronic music can connect the diverse sound worlds of the planet into a synthetic whole capable of conveying transcendent musical truth to the world, so be it. If the audience does not have to meet together in a concert

hall to touch each other in the collective state, but can do so over the internet, so much the better; the seats in most halls, after all, are both physically and metaphorically uncomfortable.

IV. Conclusion

1. Editorial

It has occurred to me, as I write this this, that I remind myself of a character in the 1980 Paddy Chayefsky movie, *Altered States*: a kind of lunatic fringe bio-physicist who uses a sensory deprivation tank to regress to altered states of being; trying at get at the core of existence so he can understand it and measure it. I myself am regularly transported by music to a condition I describe as an altered state, a state which I truly enjoy and which I think many others would enjoy if they had the chance. But somehow I, like that lunatic bio-physicist, want to measure in literal terms the intensity of an experience which transports the mind to a state where three-dimensional measurement has no meaning. Why do I want to do this? Why do I want to make a science out of a supremely personal experience?

Maybe I just want to make the experience seem easy to realize, with a recipe in hand and predictable results. Maybe I don't really care as much about the science as I do about drawing composers' attention to issues that are traditionally considered to be difficult to talk about. I believe that there is a point to talking about the transcendent experience available through music. I believe that talking about it is an important preliminary to having it, and that knowing that you are having it makes you remember it better, so you can repeat it. The fact is, I don't really want to measure it; but I also don't want people to think I'm crazy if I decide to try. I don't even wish to claim to have special insights into the transcendent experience; on the contrary, I am hoping that my methods and approaches can help make people aware that everybody has this experience all the time.

The experience of the collective mind is a transforming experience. For me it has fundamentally changed my views on spirituality, psychology, philosophy, and cosmology; it has enhanced my social sense and given me the confidence to embrace a more and more fluid ego-definition. I have learned to appreciate these transcendent moments and magnify them, through the power of concentration, so that they become a kind of magnet for my soul, drawing me up and into wider terrains of myself, one with but distinguishable from so many other souls. I am clearly a better person and a better citizen because of the transformations that the experience of the collective mind has wrought in me. I think that the way I am changed would be a good way for lots of people to change; if enough people changed, the world would be a better place.

I can think of no more compelling reason to write music than to make the world better. The collective identification is an identification through sympathy; it shows us how we are all one. Since we are all one, the responsible act is to promote sympathy, to find the common denominator of existence and share in it. Such experiences are wholesome and have a beneficial effect on the moral sense.

The artist is given a gift which is not given to many: the gift of expression. With every action, an artist deals with the artifacts of culture; his expressions retard the decay of the culture because their existence and their referents' existence are powerfully reaffirmed at the moment of their rebirth in the collective mind. Thus culture is identified personally and crystallized in a code whose life expectancy may be in the thousands of years, and which provides coherence, intransience, and continuity to our view of life.

2. *Codetta*

Music philosophy is only potent when its consequence is *music*; all the rest is sound and fury signifying nothing. Just as the highest form of philosophy is moral philosophy (the study of knowledge which inspires right action and engenders what is best in life), so must a philosophy of music make it possible for us to enjoy and benefit from what is best in music. Rationalist pictures of the world (already overturned in science by quantum physics) rely on ideas making sense and sense being good; empirical pictures of the world rely on expectations of what will happen, expectations which are less and less reliable. Only when the world of the abstract meets the world of the physical in a transcendent unity will the larger nature of reality be revealed to humankind. If better music can help man meet himself face to face, then good.

Here are two lovely excerpts from William Byrd which respectively extoll the virtues of singing, and the virtues of familiarity and accessibility in composition:

2. The exercise of singing is delightful to Nature & good to preserve the health of Man. . . .
8. The better the voyce is, the meeter it is to honour and serve God therewith: and the voyce of man is chiefly to be employed to that ende.

omnis spiritus laudet Dominum
 Since singing is so good a thing,
 I wish all men would learne to sing.
Psalmes, Songs, and Sonnets, 1588
 (Morgenstern, p.7)

Besides a song that is well and artificially made cannot be well perceived nor understood at the first hearing, but the oftener you shall hear it, the better cause of liking you will discover: and commonly that Song is best esteemed with which our ears are most acquainted. As I have done my best endeavour to give you content, so I beseech you satisfie my desire in hearing them well expressed, and then I doubt not, for Art and Ayre both of skillfull and ignorant they will deserve liking.

Preface to *Psalmes, Songs, and Sonnets*, 1611
 (Morgenstern, p.7-8)

I like this quote because it is so open-hearted and child-like in its language and its enthusiasm. And here is another quote, from the movie, *Bill and Ted's Excellent Adventure*. In the last scene, Rufus prophesies the utopian consequences of Bill and Ted's rock band, Wyld Stallyns:

Wyld Stallyns' music has become the foundation of our whole society. . . . Eventually, your music will help put an end to war and poverty. It will align the planets and bring them into universal harmony, allowing meaningful contact with all forms of life, from extra-terrestrial beings to common household pets—and, it's excellent for dancing. (last scene)

I make no claims for the transcendent collective experience; the fact of the intuitive response does not *prove* the existence of the collective mind. However, the theory presented in these two articles strongly suggests that, if there is a process of universal, multi-dimensional harmonization going on, music is a part of it.

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