Reification and the Aesthetics of Music

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Reification and the Aesthetics of Music

Jonathan Lewis

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"In this lucidly written and blistering critical work, Lewis demonstrates how, on the one hand, the metaphysical assumptions of analytic aesthetics reify artworks into objects forever independent from the communities and histories in which they have their life; while, conversely, postmodernism's relativism empties aesthetic experiences of their claims to truth and meaning as forms of world disclosure. In steering a clear path between musical objectivism and musical subjectivism, Lewis adds a potent chapter to the resurgent debates in the aesthetics of music. A more than welcome addition to contemporary aesthetics."

—*Jay M. Bernstein, New School for Social Research, USA*

"With this engaging, provocative, and timely book Jonathan Lewis takes his place as one of a group of scholars in philosophical aesthetics that are both richly aware of developments in the other areas of philosophy and so see aesthetics in that larger philosophical frame of reference, and at the same time are fully trained in music as well as philosophy, so that the discussion, as it extends into music from philosophy and back is grounded in the world of actual artistic practices. With the ability to move with equal expertise from philosophy into the musicological debates of recent decades, this informed study shows that what Lewis discusses as the reification of the musical work has supported a project in ontology, asking what special or distinctive kind of thing a work of music is—where "a work of music" is understood as being a pure entity that transcends its performance contexts and the actual sound-making history and circumstances of its multiple performances. Lewis' approach sees this as a kind of pseudo-problem—one emergent from a false presupposition concerning what must be the case independent of the embodied realities of performance. And rather than arguing abstractly against abstraction, his musical background allows him to reach variously into the Wagner debates, into the conceptual battles concerning "noise music" of recent decades, and into numerous further examples displaying a cultivated awareness of the kind of real musical detail that the field needs. A lively, interesting, clarifying, and stimulating contribution to our understanding of what art is and why it matters."

—*Garry L. Hagberg, Bard College, New York*

This innovative study re-evaluates the philosophical significance of aesthetics in the context of contemporary debates on the nature of philosophy. Lewis's main argument is that contemporary conceptions of meaning and truth have been reified, and that aesthetics is able to articulate why this is the case, with important consequences for understanding the horizons and nature of philosophical inquiry. *Reification and the Aesthetics of Music* challenges the most emphatic and problematic conceptions of meaning and truth in both analytic philosophy and postmodern thought by acknowledging the ontological and logical primacy of our concrete, practice-based experiences with aesthetic phenomena. By engaging with a variety of aesthetic practices, including Beethoven's symphonies and string quartets, Wagner's music dramas, Richard Strauss's *Elektra*, the twentieth-century avant-garde, Jamaican soundsystem culture, and punk and contemporary noise, this book demonstrates the aesthetic relevance of reification as well as the concept's applicability to contemporary debates within philosophy.

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For Andy, Jadzia, Paula and Tony

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Although enigmatic fragments can be traced back to thoughts arising in Michael Fend and John Deathridge's respective seminars on Adorno and music history at King's College, London in 2008, the basic ideas that constitute this study emerged during my time at Royal Holloway, University of London. I am enormously grateful to Royal Holloway as a whole, but especially the staff of the School of Modern Languages, Literatures and Cultures and colleagues in Philosophy, Politics and International Relations. I cannot adequately convey how grateful I am for the conversations, moral support and advice during my time there. I am, indeed, privileged to have been a member of that community.

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it has to be said—have tended to reject out of hand. Others have seemingly been cut from the same perspectival cloth, as it were, bringing with them their own expertise and experiences so as to affirm yet extend my critical engagement with parts of the philosophical and musical canon. I owe all of these individuals a debt. Without our (sometimes frequent, but often long-overdue) chats, the scope of this study would be severely diminished. In the same vein, there have been no finer exchanges over the past couple of years than those with Matthew Pritchard. Our frequent trips to The Maypole in Cambridge, and the support I received from him there, have forced me to ask some tough questions of myself, yet, always for the better, to believe in, and remain committed to, this project and to be true to myself and those I care about.

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Introduction
Reification, Music and Aesthetics

> In the German Middle Ages, ever growing crowds, under the same Dio-
> nysian impulse, whirled themselves, singing and dancing . . . There are
> those people who, from lack of experience or stupidity, turn away, either
> mocking or regretful, from such phenomena as from "folk-diseases" as
> a result of a sense of their own healthiness. These poor fools do not see
> how much is excluded by their corpselike and spooky "healthiness"
> when the growing life of the Dionysians swarms around them
>
> (Nietzsche 1988, 29)

This study aims to show how the relationship between reification and music
discloses problems in contemporary philosophy.[1] Although philosophical
engagement with music is nothing new, some may find my use of reification
obscure. The issue, to a certain extent, is that the term 'reification' is inti-
mately entwined with Western Marxism and its focus on emancipatory class
politics and social ontology. In order to accept the relevance of reification
for current debates within philosophy, we must, to a certain degree, free the
term from its place in Marxist theory in order to show why music should be
linked at all with the notion. This process of emancipation is helped by the
fact that even within what can broadly be defined as the Western Marxist
tradition, which emerged with the rise of the New Left and included Georg
Lukács, some of the members of the Institute of Social Research in Frank-
furt (otherwise known as the Frankfurt School of Critical Theory) and such
theorists as Joseph Gabel, Lucien Goldmann and Karel Kosik, there also
exists a problematic relationship between reification and aesthetics.

But what do I mean by reification? Although the term might crudely
refer to both the process by which a non-thing becomes a thing as well as
the result of that process, it has different senses depending on the contexts
in which it is employed–a particularity and heterogeneity that, ironically,
reifying thought tries to suppress. In the context of music, the twentieth and
twenty-first centuries have seen the emergence and development of methods
of musical enquiry that attempt to philosophically demystify the 'nature'
of music: its being, its meaning and its value. The rise of analytic aesthetics

in Anglo-American philosophy, which, when it comes to music, seems to have followed in the footsteps of nineteenth-century formalist aesthetics and related projects that have affirmed the primacy of musical autonomy and the work concept, has been accompanied by efforts to theoretically characterize musical works. The typical issues that have concerned analytic aestheticians have included the nature of music, the location and character of musical meaning, the nature of the relationship between music and emotion and the being of the work. Such questions have resulted in the production of philosophical theories that attempt to account for the nature, meaning and value of artworks. But what have been shouldered out in attempts to definitively characterize works of art are the specific questions of why art matters to us, that is, why art is considered to be meaningful. In other words, in attempting to explain the 'nature' of aesthetic experience or the 'nature' of art *itself*, what remains unarticulated by analytic aestheticians are the qualities of our specific aesthetic experiences—those concrete and particular experiences which happen when we are engaged with artistic practices. Ultimately, analytic aesthetics is a form of artistic engagement that is concerned with prizing theory production over and above attempts to explain aesthetic praxis in terms of its everyday meaningfulness. Indeed, it is largely on the basis that much of what is understood about art in analytic aesthetics is, as Theodor W. Adorno states in his unpublished lectures on aesthetics, 'abstractly' and 'mechanically' derived from 'pre-given philosophical theories' that 'theoretical aesthetics' has 'fallen'.[2] Of course, such a fall can only be understood as such when compared with the constitution of aesthetics as a philosophical subject in the second half of the eighteenth century. F. W. J. Schelling, J. C. F. von Schiller, F. D. E. Schleiermacher and K. W. F. von Schlegel, for example, demonstrated that the critical and hermeneutic dimensions of post-Kantian German Romanticism arise from what is seen to be art's ability to articulate and express our relations to ourselves and the world in ways that do not and, moreover, cannot conform to the rules as laid out in some philosophical theory. As I shall demonstrate in this study, attempts to theoretically characterize aesthetic practices, by failing to take account of the meaningfulness of our specific aesthetic experiences, are forms of reification.

How I use the term 'reification' bears little resemblance to those class redemptive projects that once were sustained by and, simultaneously, renewed the Marxist conceptual apparatus of reification. But although the fading of the New Left has been accompanied by the demise of reification as a tool for radical political and social critique, my account of the term, as a means of coming to terms with the nature of philosophy, cannot be entirely divorced from the orthodox Marxist movements from which it emerged.[3] Indeed, my account begins with Adorno's characterization of reification as 'identity-thinking', which is also one of the starting points for Axel Honneth's recent book on the topic.[4] However, the applicability of Honneth's account to aesthetics is problematic due to its ties to philosophically inspired social criticism as informed by Lukács' study of social ontology

in *Geschichte und Klassenbewusstsein* [*History and Class Consciousness*] (1923).[5] Adorno's account of reification, which is intimately entwined with his critique of the nature of philosophy, suffers from no such problem. As well as using the term as the basis for his engagement with the nature of metaphysics, it also surfaces in his studies on aesthetics, epistemology, ethics and moral philosophy. As shall be observed, if we are to view the concept of reification as aesthetically significant, that is, as something that art both protests against yet, to a degree, relies upon, then we must try and make sense of the term as deployed in the respective metaphilosophical works of both Adorno and, perhaps surprisingly, Martin Heidegger.

The tension between a non-reified engagement with artworks and the reification that suppresses the particular meanings of concrete practices can, it is thought, be observed today in the contrasting approaches to art that separate Anglo-American philosophy from more European traditions. Although it is doubtful whether we can make any genuine theoretical distinction between the two enterprises, they, it is argued, can be seen to diverge 'significantly on such basic matters as what is means to philosophize, which topics are philosophically important, and what counts as a legitimate reason or argument' (Braver 2012, 2).[6] Such general remarks, it has to be said, do little to support the existence of an analytic-Continental divide. Andrew Bowie, however, is more specific, suggesting that 'there might seem to be an unbridgeable distance between, on the one hand, analytical positions which seek answers to supposedly perennial questions about truth, meaning, and rationality and, on the other, positions deriving from Nietzsche and others in the European tradition which seek to show that rationality is a manifestation of the attempt to exercise power over the Other' (Bowie 2013, 4). Other commentators argue that analytic philosophy, rather than engaging with metaphysical questions of the nature of truth and meaning, is, in fact, preoccupied with and dominated by the principles of scientific realism and methodological naturalism. For Simon Critchley, methodological naturalism, based on the idea that the procedures of the natural sciences can and should provide a model for philosophical method and that the natural sciences provide our primary or most significant access to the world, 'fails to see the role that science and technology play in the alienation of human beings from the world through the latter's objectification into a causally determined realm of nature or, more egregiously, into a reified realm of commodities manipulated by an instrumental rationality' (Critchley 1998, 13). Consequently, Critchley suggests that European traditions, precisely because they question the idea of what it means to *do philosophy* in the first place, can be contrasted with analytic philosophy on the basis of the latter's preoccupation with methodological naturalism. He goes on to argue that 'it is this touchstone of practice that leads philosophy towards a critique of present conditions, as conditions not amenable to freedom, and to the Utopian demand that things be otherwise, the demand for a transformative practice of philosophy, art, poetry and thinking' (ibid., 12). The problem,

however, with drawing a distinction between analytic and European philosophy on the basis of the latter's critical engagement with philosophical practice is that it fails to take account of those important representatives of analytic philosophy who have adopted critical approaches to their own tradition. Indeed, whether we accept that the so-called divide between these two traditions exists as anything other than a norm of cultural and academic politics, there are now more and more individuals, such as Robert Brandom, Tim Crane, John McDowell, Robert Pippin, Huw Price, Charles Taylor and Albrecht Wellmer, who, having been trained largely in a single tradition, are demonstrating how the divide between analytic philosophy and Continental/European philosophy can be traversed and, indeed, called into question. Consequently, what I will demonstrate in this study is the fact that in some quarters of *both* contemporary Anglophone and European philosophy, a certain mode of rational or cognitive engagement with art, an engagement that attempts to theoretically characterize art and artworks according to some unified philosophical theory, brings about the reification of aesthetic practices. Indeed, it is precisely because certain thinkers are open to exploring ideas and practices generated within the tradition to which they do not readily belong that alternative spaces of possibility for a non-reified engagement with art and artworks can be disclosed.

Although philosophical theory construction need not be strictly metaphysical, we can begin to make sense of the meaning of the term 'reification' and its relevance to philosophical method through Adorno's reflections on the nature of metaphysics. For Adorno, a particular type of reifying thought can be attributed to metaphysics, which, 'to cut a long story short', he claimed, 'is actually reason translating itself absolutely into the other; that is to say, reason which regards its own use as the guarantee of truth, regardless of the materials it has to work on' (Adorno NS IV.4, 63). In other words, 'metaphysics is all knowledge that owes itself to mere speculation', that is, 'a knowledge that is actually acquired by pure reason' (ibid., 77–8).[7] More importantly, metaphysics, by reason alone, aims for an account of the ahistorical truths of the world that, in a way, function as the foundation on which the contingent world of everyday existence is based. Metaphysics, therefore, as Adorno observed, is concerned with a particular idea of truth, mainly that 'truth is always what remains when you have excluded the seemingly ephemeral, transitory and historical' (ibid., 67). Metaphysics brings about a theoretical context in which 'this terribly impoverished and deprived' conception of truth becomes 'the entire substance of philosophy'. As a result, philosophy assumes that its propositions 'do not relate to any changing contents, but instead make[s] the claim that they should apply absolutely and for all times' (ibid., 74).

According to Adorno, when the goal of philosophical enquiry is the discovery of non-contextual truths, metaphysical thought—resting on 'mere concepts' (Kant 1998, B xiv)—does not derive 'any substance or limit or *anything non-identical* from experience' [italics added] (Adorno NS IV.4, 78). Because it 'rigidly severs all ties between the concept and any possible

experience, any possible content' (ibid., 79), metaphysics assumes that a concept is identical to its object, that concept and reality are aligned, thus bringing 'all concepts in the world simultaneously to a standstill and fetishizing them' (Adorno NS IV.16, 42). Consequently, Adorno claimed that 'in philosophy we are obliged to talk both *with* concepts and *about* concepts; and this means that what we are concerned with in philosophy—namely the non-conceptual, that which concepts stand for—is excluded from philosophy from the outset' (ibid., 95). In other words, metaphysics 'is actually nothing but form that mistakes itself for content' (Adorno NS IV.4, 81). However, even though, according to Adorno, the separation of metaphysics and experience 'is taken to be self-evident', that is not to say that 'the contents of each and every concretely present and conceivable metaphysics' would be possible without matters of experience (ibid., 85). This is the 'truth' about metaphysics, which Adorno observes at the moment of its 'fall'.[8] Accordingly, 'if I were to rely on existing metaphysics in the way in which Kant thinks he can rely upon the natural sciences in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, we would discover that this bifurcation of experience and reason does not exist as a rigid dichotomy' (ibid.). Adorno claims that metaphysical delusion, that is, the idea that 'pure speculation' can be separated from experience, is a by-product of the philosopher's 'mania for foundations' [*Fundierungswahn*]—'the idea that no knowledge, so to speak, can be taken from the specific place in which I find it. I can only be satisfied with it once I have chased it to infinity, to the place where nothing further can happen' (ibid., 84). It is this 'mania for foundations' which, for Adorno, 'actually suggests that there is a correspondence between the knowing mind and the objects of possible knowledge that allows us to reduce every object of cognition to an absolute' (ibid.). Consequently, when the object of cognition is reduced to an absolute foundation, the philosophical theory has failed to account for the existence of 'non-conceptual' 'individuals', 'particulars' and 'heterogeneities' that are specific to concrete practices. Thus, concepts 'are no longer measured against what they contain, and that what they contain are no longer measured against concepts, but instead concepts are taken in isolation' (Adorno NS IV.16, 41–2). In other words, the mind 'absolutizes what it, itself, makes, thereby tearing it from its context and ceasing to think of it further' (ibid., 43).[9] This, for Adorno, is an act of identity-thinking, one that he called 'reification'. Nevertheless, as Adorno was also aware, because concepts are needed to bring things we encounter in the world into the inferential sphere of giving and asking for reasons, to communicate, to articulate meaning and purpose, to avoid falling into complete incomprehensibility, something like reification is also a necessary part of humanity 'not merely as condition from which liberation is possible but also positively, as the form in which, however brittle and inadequate it may be, subjective impulses are realized, but only by being objectified' (Adorno GS 10.1, 108).[10]

Peter Kivy, for example, demonstrates how reification, which reduces phenomena to absolute concepts, is vital when it comes to making sense of musical practices. For Kivy, his philosophy of music is founded on 'a system

of precepts and propositions, perhaps, on first reflection, vacuous truisms not worthy of being made explicit, but, on reflection, richly illuminating the practices they underlie' (Kivy 2002, 12). Aaron Ridley suggests that the philosophical analysis of concepts, which Kivy is proposing and which Ridley admits he used to subscribe to, entails separating music off 'as much as possible from everything else and to investigate it in what might be called its "pure state"' (Ridley 2004, 2). In other words, to attempt conceptual analysis of music-related concepts is to 'isolate music entirely, to try to leech or prise out of its context-laden character, and indeed the very nature of one's own context-laden engagement with it' (ibid., 3). Before I explore the reasons why analytic aesthetics—of which the philosophy of music is a specialized branch of study—has been attracted to this 'pure state' conception of music, it should be obvious, even at this point, that Kivy's 'reflection' on music-related concepts hinders his ability to make sense of the everyday meaningfulness of musical practices. Why did my father choose to play Bobby McFerrin's 'Don't Worry, Be Happy' at my grandfather's funeral? Why was the last movement of Beethoven's Symphony No. 9 and Samuel Barber's *Adagio for Strings* performed at the 'Last Night of the Proms' days after 11 September 2001? Why does spiritual status or divine intercession determine an individual's ability to perform art music in North India? As I will demonstrate throughout this study, such questions cannot be answered by analyzing music-related concepts such as 'meaning', 'expression', 'work' and 'value' with no regard for actual performances and the events surrounding them. This begs the question whether these concepts really do, as Kivy claims, illuminate the practice they underlie. Indeed, it is, at times, hard to see what is at stake in attempts to analyze music-related concepts.

Part of the problem, as Adorno demonstrated, turns on the question of philosophy's ability to account for the necessary nature of aspects of the world. The fact is that the philosophy of music is dependent upon and, in turn, disclosive of wider methods and ideas developed in analytic philosophy. As Kathleen Stock claims, 'musical works are thought to present special ontological problems, and are often of interest as such to the metaphysician; the issue of what it is to experience music as expressive tends to interest those working on issues in the philosophy of emotion; the question of musical meaning tends to attract those active in the philosophy of language; and so on' (Stock 2007, 1). The issue here is that problems with the methods of contemporary metaphysics, philosophy of language and philosophy of mind often remain unchallenged or unacknowledged when attempting to make sense of musical practices. It seems presumptuous to believe that metaphysicians, philosophers of language and philosophers of mind have their own theoretical shop in order, as it were, such that they can theoretically characterize music in terms of some unified philosophical theory.

The idea of philosophizing *about* music, that is, of having a philosophy *of* music, which is attendant upon pre-established philosophical commitments rooted in contemporary metaphysics, philosophy of language and

philosophy of mind, is precisely the kind of notion that Heidegger saw as germane to reifying practices. For those that espy the few references to *Verdinglichung* in *Sein und Zeit* [*Being and Time*] (1927) and ponder the discussions of the 'thingliness' of the artwork in the essay '*Der Ursprung des Kunstwerkes*' ['The Origin of the Artwork'] (1935–37; publ. 1950), 'the problem of reification', as Lucien Goldmann observes, can be seen to be 'a central problem of the discussion for Heidegger' (Goldmann 1977, 28). According to Goldmann, Heidegger claimed that the 'basis of every objectivist interpretation and especially, all metaphysics as *theory* of being' is the notion of '*Vorhanden*' ['present-at-hand'], 'which is none other than the Marxist and Lukácsian analysis which tells us that, in reification, human reality and social facts are understood as things' (ibid., 12–13). Although it is framed in what Heidegger calls an 'ontologically broad' way and although the existential-ontological structures on which it is formed are anything but simple, the claim that Goldmann attributes to Heidegger is actually quite straightforward. The key methodological point is that detached contemplation of the nature of a particular phenomenon yields a 'present-at-hand object', which, by definition, is an unchanging entity unaffected by its surroundings.[11] Consequently, just as Adorno claimed that reifying identity-thinking ignores the particularity, individuality and heterogeneity of the objects of cognitive enquiry, Heidegger argued that an account of the nature of a thing as it is in itself through some kind of philosophical theory distorts the everyday meaningfulness of our concrete experiences with that phenomenon, a meaningfulness that defies philosophical analysis according to traditional conceptual frameworks but which does not hinder the ways we tacitly make sense of phenomena in significant and organized ways. It is the pre-theoretical meaningfulness of everyday engagements with phenomena that traditional ontological explanations—theoretical accounts of the nature of being itself—seek to distil through reifying theory construction. As Heidegger claimed, the ontologist is occupied with the 'objectivity of definite objects', that is, an object 'as it is given for an indifferent theoretical meaning' (Heidegger GA 63, 3). However, theory construction, as an attempt to posit isolable and independent entities that fix the identity of a particular kind, leaves behind a watered-down thing rather than a distilled one, that is, some sort of empirically-given, hermetically-sealed existent that we initially perceive and, only then, apply a meaning to, rather than an inherently and immediately meaningful phenomenon. According to such an account, philosophers as metaphysicians or ontologists are no longer empathetically engaged with their concrete situations, but are, instead, what Honneth calls 'neutral observer[s], psychically and existentially untouched by [their] surroundings' (Honneth 2008, 24). Indeed, Lukács referred to an individual who takes up such a reifying stance towards the world as an 'unchanged observer' (Lukács 1971, 142). Thus, Honneth suggests that Lukács 'understands "reification" to be a habit of mere contemplation and observation, in which one's natural surroundings, social environment, and

personal characteristics come to be apprehended in a detached and emotionless manner—in short, as things' (Honneth 2008, 25).

Heidegger provided a critique of the kind of contemplative, 'armchair' philosophy found in analytic aesthetics. He argued that bypassing or *looking through* a phenomenon, that is, theoretically applying a meaning to or predicating a meaning of an object of thought, which Adorno termed 'pure speculation', shoulders out the far more common mode of how that 'object' is inherently and immediately meaningful within the context of our everyday practices. Heidegger, therefore, problematized any act of philosophizing whereby our ongoing engaged behaviour in the world is suspended in order to take up a disengaged theoretical stance. As we shall see throughout this study, whether searching for the separately necessary and jointly sufficient conditions of music-related concepts or attempting to construct theories that will provide answers to the questions of aesthetic ontology, meaning and value, what is still being prized is a form of philosophical engagement that precludes an understanding of aesthetic praxis and why it matters to everyday practices. For example, by defining music as 'intentionally organized sound', Gordon Graham (2007) questions whether electro-sonic art works of Varèse and Lutoslawski can be thought of as music 'properly so called'. As shall be explored in greater detail in chapters one and three, such theoretical attempts to draw distinctions between music and non-music on the basis of a definition of the former creates a problem that does not exist to ordinary participants in musical praxis. Such disengaged contemplation of a philosophical pseudo-problem ignores the question of why avant-garde music matters in the context of twentieth- and twenty-first-century modernity. Ultimately, it does not address the contexts and practices in which such music was both produced and received. That being the case, however, music does not preclude the use of concepts that attempt to make sense of aesthetic experiences and that articulate the meaningfulness of musical events. The seemingly unresolvable tension surrounding reification—between an articulation of aesthetic practice for the purpose of communication and comprehensibility and what Adorno called 'metaphysical propositions' that attempt to characterize the 'object'—is a problem when it comes to engaging with works of art. How do we talk about artworks without damaging their irreducibility? How, in other words, do we avoid making de-aestheticizing judgments that strip works of what makes them artistic in the first place? Furthermore, and similarly related, how do we make claims regarding aesthetic practices that preserve their heterogeneity and capaciousness?

If we view pure speculation and theory construction and their dependence on the supreme authority of rationality in human affairs as some of the most important aspects of reifying thought, then, when it comes to characterizing the nature of aesthetic practices, analytic aesthetics, as we shall see throughout this study, seems to articulate aspects of, what Pippin (1991) calls, a distinctly 'modern sensibility'. Consequently, in contrast to the 'modern' tendencies of much of what is considered to be analytic

philosophy, so-called *postmodern* ways of making sense of the world seem to belong, as Wellmer notes, to a network of 'postist' concepts that articulate the experience of the 'death of reason' for cultural modernism, the European Enlightenment and, indeed, the entire span of Western civilization (Wellmer 1985, 48). As Ihab Hassan claims:

> It [postmodernism] is an antinomian moment that assumes a vast unmaking in the Western mind—what Michel Foucault might call a postmodern *épistème*. I say "unmaking" though other terms are now *de rigeur*: for instance, deconstruction, decentering, disappearance, dissemination, demystification, discontinuity, difference, dispersion, etc. Such terms express an ontological rejection of the traditional full subject, the cogito of Western philosophy. They express, too, an epistemological obsession with fragments or fractures, and a corresponding ideological commitment to minorities in politics, sex, and language
>
> (Hassan 1977, 19).

Similarly, Pippin suggests that with postmodernism 'there is, on the one hand, a continuing Nietzschean suspicion about the intractable resistance of the "other", difference, or becoming to any rule or function, any ordering principle' (Pippin 1991, 158). For Pippin, such 'ordering' is a will to power, a subjugation of the Other—'totality, or holistic (and so "terroristic") thinking of all forms is the enemy' (ibid., 159). Instead, 'a "pagan polytheism" [is] is the new hero' (ibid.). He goes on to state that 'we must respect instead the absolute (the new "absolute") primacy of difference, the heterogeneity of language games, and so accept an "agnostics", a permanently unreconciled "play" of opposition' (ibid.). Alternatively, if such a view appears too fragmentary and potentially conservative, that is, respecting the Other by benevolently leaving him or her to their own impoverished games, Pippin suggests we might prefer what Richard Rorty termed a 'de-theoreticized sense of community'—a 'Deweyan attempt to make concrete concerns with the daily problems of one's community' without bothering to provide a theory that 'grounds' that community (Rorty 1991a, 175).[12] The postmodernist's problem, however, is that without the availability of some unconditioned condition which, as Rorty claims, 'will serve as a criterion for the judging the transitory products of our transitory needs and interests' (Rorty 1999, xvi) and with 'the great Nietzschean emphasis on the contingency of interpretive schemata, on power, the agon of competing interpretations, the attack on unity or the "violence" of ordering systems, all in favor of difference, the Other, the body, etc.' (Pippin 1991, 158), postmodern themes tend to articulate ways of doing and thinking that affirm cultural relativism. Under postmodernism, Pippin proposes, 'we require, in legitimating what we do, only the "local" narratives of heterogeneous language games' (ibid., 159). The main issue, therefore, and it is one that we will keep coming back to in

this study, is that if we are only to justify our actions within a framework of 'local narratives', 'we still don't know what could count as the unity or success of such narratives, or what Nietzsche called more honestly the "legislation" of values. We don't know what counts as one game, as opposed to others, or why playing it is any less hegemonistic or "terrorist" than a "grander" game' (ibid.). Ultimately, Pippin suggests, 'if we just happen to be playing it, recognize that, and continue playing it, then questions of power and validity have been grossly confused without any motivation' (ibid.).

A not uncontested term, relativism, for Rorty, is, at its simplest level, that 'which will beset us if we give up our attachment to objectivity, and to the idea of rationality as obedience to criteria' (Rorty 1991b, 38). As shall be explored in greater detail in chapter five, relativism can be seen as existing in tension with objectivity, that is, in tension with such contrasting notions as what Thomas Nagel calls the 'view from nowhere', what Hilary Putnam refers to as the 'God's-eye point of view', pragmatic, phenomenological and hermeneutic accounts of truth and meaning as well as what Rorty refers to as 'unforced agreement' or 'solidarity'. Relativized conceptions of truth (and postmodern theory in general) have influenced the field of aesthetics, specifically, musicology's approach to aesthetic issues.[13] For example, according to Judy Lochhead, the 'postmodern' musicologist conceives of knowledge as 'situated' as opposed to 'absolute' and eschews 'grand narratives' by embracing instead 'local stories of understanding' (Lochhead 2002, 6).[14] It is in this 'postmodern' context that musicology, according to Giles Hooper, emphasizes 'the provisionality of its readings, the unavoidable plurality of interpretation or the contingent "situatedness" of its multiple subject positions' (Hooper 2006, 39).[15] As we shall see in chapter five, a relativized concept of truth is what distinguishes certain 'extremist' postmodern ideas, such as those of Jean-François Lyotard, from other specific critiques of modernity, such as negative dialectics, phenomenological elucidations and hermeneutic readings.

Hooper claims that 'unease with the status of knowledge sees avowedly "postmodern" protagonists battling with one another to prove their own brand of knowledge more reflective, more knowingly problematic and *more absolutely non-absolute than any other*' [italics added] (Hooper 2006, 39). Ultimately, postmodernism, in its most extreme form, is concerned with epistemological relativism, specifically, that 'no mode of knowledge is ever to be privileged over any other' (ibid.). As Lochhead proposes, 'if all knowledge reflects the cultural and historical place and time of the one who knows, then no single perspectival knowledge is privileged and hence no particular way of understanding the world is true in any absolute sense' (Lochhead 2002, 6).[16] As Hooper notes, and as Lochhead illustrates, such self-refuting concern for the 'absolutely, non-absolute' status of knowledge claims has impacted upon musicology's treatment of truth. For example, Gary Tomlinson has argued for a particular brand of 'postmodern' musicology that focuses on 'contextualism', which '*will aim to describe a local set of meanings in as full a volume*

as possible. It will not pose as a reconstruction of some putative and unitary "original" situation the music inhabited but will recognize the myriad situations we as historians might construct around a musical utterance and the plurality of meanings the music might thus engage' [italics added] (Tomlinson 1993, 22). Granted Tomlinson does not explicitly condone relativism, but by espousing a brand of 'postmodern' musicology that aims to articulate *locally developed meanings*, the question that remains is, as Mark Everist asks, 'how are we to judge the value of one interpretation over that of another?' (Everist 2001, 400). The same question can be asked in response to Jonathan D. Kramer's claim that postmodern music '*locates meaning and even structure in listeners*, more than in scores, performances, or composers' [italics added] (J. Kramer 2002, 17). Similarly, the problem haunts Björn Heile's suggestion that 'questions of canon and taste are *obviously subjective* and contentious' [italics added] (Heile 2013, 118). The 'problem of relativism', as Everist calls it, is such that relativized conceptions of truth fail to do justice to the notion of legitimacy and its role in making sense of central issues in reception history and canonic discourse. It is the problem of a relativized conception of truth that disciplines, such as musicology, must address if they are to affirm the plurality of meanings that surround aesthetic practices.

Although meaning pluralism is a consequence of hermeneutic activity, it does not follow that no particular reading should be considered to be more legitimate than any other. One of the issues, as Pippin observes, is that, with postmodernism, 'fragmentation and anomie, the *Zerissung* of culture long ago identified by Hegel as the chief effect of modernization, are simply to be accepted as some sort of (ironically) "grand" and final resolution of history, and the issue of a possible relation between the "actual" and the "possible", the concrete need for, and potentiality of, forms of reconciliation is, as it were, "transcendentally" ruled out of court' (Pippin 1991, 159). If postmodern approaches to aesthetics have given a voice to those subcultures and minorities that had previously been excluded from 'modern sensibilities', it seems counter-intuitive to deny those voices the opportunity to make claims to legitimacy in a trans-cultural and trans-historical sphere of evaluation, justification and critique. If relativizing approaches to truth call into question the notion of *legitimate* aesthetic interpretations, they do so, in part, because what has been either forgotten or ignored is the idea that historical development has allowed for the validation of certain meanings, values and truths whilst denying the validity of morally repugnant positions. Racism, sexism and homophobia, for example, are prevalent, but to accord racist, sexist and homophobic readings of artistic practices validity is no longer morally permissible. The relativist's problem, as Alastair Williams observes, is that 'to think that multiple narratives have replaced meta-narratives is to assume that large-scale historical processes are largely fictitious and can countenance no internal differentiation. Such a claim would have to argue, against all the evidence, that there are no discernible characteristics of global integration' (Williams 2001, 119).

Rorty goes some way to clarifying the issue. He believes that conceptions of truth based on what Putnam calls 'local cultural norms' have 'offensively parochial overtones' (Rorty 1991b, 26). As we shall see in this study through the respective ideas of Heidegger and Gadamer, in order to call into question notions that support the relativity of truth, we must not believe that justificatory practices begin and end at the borders of our local culture (whatever that may be). Instead, we are required to debate, contest and justify norms within a shared political sphere of contrasting, trans-cultural and trans-historical worldviews, which, *après* Wittgenstein, we may call a 'form of life'. In terms of dealing with the validity of judgments—a matter that is vital to understanding not just aesthetic practices but also how moral and ethical life functions and develops over time—Rorty argues that 'beliefs suggested by another culture must be tested by trying to weave them together with beliefs we already have' (ibid., 30).[17] In other words, locally developed norms and meanings do not operate independently from norms developed in other cultures. Different cultures and their norms come together all the time, whether in the sphere of global politics or the global media, through human migration, through social media, through the trading of goods, through finance capitalism or through the distribution of cultural artefacts and symbols. For Rorty, 'alternative cultures are not to be thought of on the model of alternative geometries': 'alternative geometries are irreconcilable because they have axiomatic structures, and contradictory axioms. They are *designed* to be irreconcilable. Cultures are not so designed, and do not have axiomatic structures' (ibid.).

Although 'postmodern' approaches to aesthetic issues seem, at first sight, to exist in tension with reifying theory construction associated with analytic aesthetics, they can only articulate the individuality or contingency of meaningfulness up to a point before such assertions begin to undermine the validity of the very institution to which they belong. Rorty, for example, in defending himself from the charge of being a relativist, suggests that those trying to deflect such a charge by appealing to the tropes of 'making knowledge', 'inventing knowledge' or the 'subjectivity of claims to knowledge' are 'being merely whimsical' (Rorty 1999, xviii). For Rorty, to claim that we have 'invented' truths, morals, meanings and knowledge(s) is to question whether anybody should take us seriously. He observes how the opponents of post-Nietzschean European philosophy and American pragmatism like to suggest that to abandon the vocabulary of Plato and Aristotle is to abandon rationality—'that to be rational consists precisely in respecting the distinctions between the absolute and the relative, the found and the made, object and subject, nature and convention, reality and appearance' (ibid., xviii-xix). Rorty claims that if we think about rationality in this way, then those that advocate relativism are, indeed, irrational. Ultimately, the point Rorty is making is that if we consider the concept of rationality in terms of a 'neutral ground illuminated only by the natural light of reason', then the idea 'that "true" means something different in different societies' starts to make sense (Rorty 1991b, 25). For Rorty, the terms of debate between what

he calls realists and relativists centre upon the question of whether 'knowledge, man, and nature *have* real essences which are relevant to the problem at hand' (ibid., 24). As he claims, 'for only such a person could imagine that there was *anything to pick out* to which one might make "true" relative' [italics added] (ibid., 25). For example, 'only if one shares the logical positivists' idea that we all carry around things called "rules of language" which regulate what we say, will one suggest that there is no way to break out of one's culture' (ibid., 25–6). Consequently, if we deny that knowledge, language, truth, man and nature have some sort of 'intrinsic natures' to which our views and ideas must correspond, and if we deny that we can come up with some self-refuting, 'positive theory which says that something is relative to something else'—that, for example, 'truth is simply the contemporary opinion of a chosen individual or group'—then the pragmatist can be seen 'as a partisan of solidarity, his account of the value of cooperative human enquiry has only an ethical base, not an epistemological or metaphysical one' (ibid., 24). The crux of the matter, for Rorty, is that 'not having *any* epistemology, *a fortiori* he [the pragmatist] does not have a relativistic one' (ibid.). Rorty, therefore, refutes claims that he is either a 'relativist' or an 'irrationalist' 'by saying that these charges presuppose precisely the distinctions we reject' (Rorty 1999, xix). That is not to say that Rorty rejects conceptual distinctions, for example, between 'good Xs and the bad non-Xs'. Rather, he is against a certain specific set of distinctions—'the Platonic distinctions'.

Part of this study will be concerned with demonstrating how aesthetics can continue to affirm the gains made by Continental theory in general only by calling into question Kant's and Kantian distinctions as well as the categories of traditional logic and ontology from which they are derived. If, as Rorty claims, accusations of relativism only make sense within a framework of the traditional philosophical distinctions between, for example, subjective and objective, mind and world, content and form, rational and irrational, absolute and relative, particular and universal, non-identity and identity, freedom and nature and spirit and substance, then the role of aesthetics will be to engage with those philosophical traditions that aim to dissolve the problems that arise when these distinctions are made. As I will demonstrate in chapters one, two and three, the key to a non-reified engagement with aesthetic practices, which also avoids the charge of relativism, is to be found in more phenomenological and hermeneutic traditions of contemporary philosophy. Consequently, postmodern approaches to aesthetics need to recognize, as certain areas of analytic philosophy have done, that a plurality of worldviews and multiple claims to legitimacy can only be understood within a trans-cultural and trans-historical sphere of norms, normalization and norm-transcendence.

It is not easy to construct a dialogue between contrasting approaches to aesthetic issues. Each approach comes with its own theories, fields and frames cultivated within specific traditions that defy casual understanding, instead demanding detailed, proficient and continuous practical engagement.

Furthermore, analytic aesthetics and 'postmodern' aesthetics are not monolithic theoretical enterprises comprised of a single methodology, terminology or subject matter. What constitutes 'analytic philosophy' seems like an ever-reconfiguring constellation of long-standing metaphysical, epistemological, linguistic and ethical problems but with little or no agreement on where the boundaries of the discipline begin and end.[18] Indeed, attempts to draw a distinction between analytic and European traditions of philosophy in terms of superficial differences between proper names, philosophical problems, geography, methodologies and prominent figures do not really justify a genuine, hard-and-fast divide. Furthermore, interdisciplinary dialogue is also a hermeneutic problem. How do those who wish to participate in interdisciplinary discourse allow the other discipline to be wholly Other whilst still trying to understand that discipline, its subject matters, methods of doing and ways of thinking from the standpoint of one's own disciplinary situatedness? In attempting to bring about a dialogue between analytic and non-analytic traditions based upon the common issue of reification, this study will attempt to show how analytic aesthetics can learn much from non-analytic approaches to aesthetics as well as from aesthetic practices themselves. However, I will also demonstrate that postmodern aesthetics can also learn from ideas cultivated in certain Anglophone circles, ones that are critical of the sorts of ideas and methods associated with contemporary analytic aesthetics. In other words, there are reasons to believe that certain aspects of analytic philosophy can assist non-analytic aestheticians in dealing with and overcoming the relativizing impulses of postmodernism.

In chapter one I develop my account of the relationship between reification and aesthetics through the work of Heidegger and Adorno in order to offer a vision for a non-reified engagement with artistic practices. I demonstrate how we can distance ourselves from theoretical attempts to characterize the object 'music' and, thereby, understand musical practices as inherently and immediately meaningful phenomena that disclose the worlds in which they are created, performed and received. I conclude by illustrating how a world-disclosive account of the work of art is crucial to metaphysics.

The following two chapters explore problems surrounding the interpretation of aesthetic practices in relation to the world-disclosive vision of art offered in chapter one. By engaging with the debates surrounding Richard Wagner's music dramas, chapter two illustrates how an understanding of aesthetic truth and meaning in the context of social norms can challenge some of the classic conceptions of truth and meaning in analytic aesthetics. Drawing mainly on the work of Hans-Georg Gadamer, as well as what I see to be related ideas in the work of Robert Brandom, Huw Price, Albrecht Wellmer and Ludwig Wittgenstein, what this chapter seeks to clarify is the idea that interpretations of aesthetic experiences matter within a space of historically-mediated, social norms. By engaging with Wittgenstein's account of rule-following, I demonstrate how our interpretations of aesthetic practices can either articulate norms or go against them. I conclude

that norm-transcending practices can themselves become normalized through historical changes that they helped initiate.

Having attempted to make sense of the normative basis of aesthetic truth in chapter two, the third chapter considers the relationship between more traditional theories of meaning and the concept of reification. I argue that theorizing about art and artworks both presupposes and affirms an 'empiricist' conception of meaning. I provide a challenge to such a way of thinking about aesthetic meaning through engagement with W. V. O. Quine and Donald Davidson's respective critiques of the 'dogmas of empiricism'. Turning to recent discussions in analytic philosophy on the disclosive aspects of language, I conclude by both affirming and expanding upon the relationship between norms and aesthetic meaning.

Having focused on the problems surrounding the association between analytic aesthetics and reification, the fourth chapter examines the relationship in the context of postmodernism, specifically, in the context 'postmodern' musicology. I begin by articulating the widespread narrative concerning the development of twentieth-century musicology. This 'story' involves the emergence of 'New Musicology' from a disciplinary environment of 'positivistic' research and 'formalist' analysis. I go on to demonstrate how 'postmodern' musicology can be viewed, on the one hand, as overcoming the reifying impulses of its 'modernist' past and, on the other hand, as articulating a relativized conception of truth.

Chapter five shows how the 'postmodern' turn in aesthetics relates to broader issues within twentieth-century European philosophy. By engaging with Manfred Frank (1988) and Wellmer's (1993) respective critiques of cultural relativism as well as their relation to the world-disclosive conception of art articulated in previous chapters, I call into question the more emphatic and problematic claims attributed to postmodern theory. Consequently, I argue that after reifying and relativizing approaches to aesthetic truth, what is to be valued about artistic practices is their ability to create new ways of making sense that provide an opportunity for critical engagement with aesthetic, social and philosophical norms. I conclude that art is both world-disclosive and, at the same time, critical.

NOTES

1 The dialogue between philosophy and musicology has been assisted since 2011 by well-attended annual conferences at King's College, London, organized by the Royal Musical Association's Music and Philosophy Study Group and the American Musicological Society's Music and Philosophy Study Group. I'd like to thank the committee of the RMA Music and Philosophy Study Group for inviting me to present parts of this study at its conferences and workshops.

2 Adorno's unpublished lectures on aesthetics are housed in the Adorno Archiv, Akademie der Künste, Berlin. The present quote is to be found in Bowie (2013, 136).

3 Honneth acknowledges that Lukács put forward an account of reification as objectification. However, the former also observes that Lukács proposed a second 'unofficial' explanation, which 'judges the defect of reifying agency against an ideal of praxis characterised by empathetic and existential engagement' (Honneth 2008, 29). It is this unofficial account that motivates Honneth's rehabilitation of reification.

4 Commentators have challenged Honneth's reformulation of the term. For example, Timothy Hall has suggested that even though Honneth is right to seek to broaden the debate in contemporary social and political thought by returning to Lukács' concept of reification, 'he misses the opportunity to broaden this debate still further by underestimating the crisis of political subjectivity that Lukács foresaw' (Hall 2011, 197). The Frankfurt School's complex constellation of Western capitalism, technology, instrumental reason and reified consciousness, which, as Andrew Feenberg (1981) has observed, was prefigured by Lukács' sociological broadening of Marxism through Weberian sociology and philosophical deepening of Marxism through Hegelian idealism, is only hinted at in Honneth's analysis. Both Hall and Feenberg read Lukács' essay along the lines of the second 'unofficial' analysis of reification. According to this account, Lukács, like Adorno, was politically motivated to explore forms of thought and action that do not suppress the qualitative content of our conceptual schemes.

5 Honneth admits that he uses the term 'reification' in a *direct* sense only when referring to our relations with other persons (Honneth 2008, 63). He claims that he hardly sees any support for the strong hypothesis that an 'objectification of nature could in any way harm the primacy of care or qualitative experience': 'we may regard the possibility of interactive, recognitional dealings with animals, plants and even things to be ethically desirable, but this normative preference cannot provide any sound arguments for claiming that society cannot go beyond these forms of interaction' (ibid., 61–2). Instead, Honneth argues for a reified relation to nature in an *indirect* or *derivative* sense when we lose sight of the multiplicity of ways in which the world has significance for those we have recognized. He introduces the idea of the intersubjective mode of engagement with the natural world as the basis for his account of the reification of other things besides human beings. The problem is that when it comes to dealing with works of art, Honneth cannot simply claim that 'we can take up a reifying stance toward the objective world without losing the possibility of cognitively disclosing it' (ibid., 64). The principal argument for this study is that we do, in fact, violate the practice-based conditions of our resulting cognitive relationship to artworks when we take up an objectifying stance toward them.

6 Braver goes on to show that Ludwig Wittgenstein and Martin Heidegger made similar arguments for similar views on a wide range of fundamental issues. Braver proposes that 'if a load-bearing bridge can be built between Heidegger and Wittgenstein, perhaps this will facilitate dialogue between analytic and continental thinkers in general, making the traditions intelligible to each other, thus allowing a fruitful crosspollination' (Braver 2012, 2).

7 For Adorno, the meaning of the term 'metaphysics' is distinctly Kantian in origin. In the preface to the second edition of *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* [*Critique of Pure Reason*], Kant claimed that metaphysics is 'a wholly isolated speculative cognition of reason that elevates itself entirely above all instruction from experience' (Kant 1998, B xiv).

8 See Wellmer (1993, 204–23).

9 Adorno also noted that concepts can also be more than the particular thing that is included under it, thus allowing for certain aspects of reality to be kept alive despite the fact that these aspects may be unacknowledged or unrealized when it comes to our current understanding of the object. This idea will be explored in chapter four.

10 Peter Dews observes that Adorno's critique of identity-thinking offers a challenge to post-structuralist thought that, in the face of deceptive identity, demands an engagement with ineffably singular points of immediacy. For Adorno, according to Dews, post-structuralist solutions to the problem of identity were largely mistaken—'pure singularity is itself an abstraction, the waste-product of identity-thinking' (Dews 1994, 57). For Adorno, what is thought to be immediate is, in fact, highly mediated. As Dews explains, 'if every moment is prized purely for its uniqueness, without reference to a purpose or a meaning, to a before or an after, without a reference to anything which goes beyond itself, then what is enjoyed in each moment becomes paradoxically and monotonously the same' (ibid.).

11 See, for example, Heidegger GA 51, 69–76.

12 Pippin acknowledges that these (anti-)theoretical ways of doing neither bring about a resolution of the problems encountered in early critiques of modernity nor offer an advance beyond the dialectical program suggested by Hegel in response to those early critiques. For example, Pippin shows how Jacques Derrida's efforts at deconstruction are merely a return to some of the unresolved issues in Heidegger's works, mainly that both Derrida and Heidegger wish to invoke 'an autonomous arche', something that Rorty (1982, 90–109) also observes in the work of both Derrida and Heidegger. For Pippin, Derrida and Heidegger appeal to the notion of the unconditioned condition as a way of grounding our actions, beliefs and justifications. Such a notion evokes the Kantian aporia whereby if we impose a principle on ourselves, then presumably we must have a reason to do so; but, if there was an antecedent reason to adopt that principle, then that reason would not itself be self-imposed; yet for it to be binding on us, it had to be self-imposed (Pippin 1991, 160–4). It follows that Heidegger and Derrida are, according to Pippin, neither removed from the problems that plagued 'modern', post-Kantian philosophy nor 'postmodernists' according to the 'traces of themes' he discerns.

13 When discussing the history of twentieth-century musicology, musicologists, generally, albeit crudely, distinguish 'old', 'modern', fact-governed musicology and 'formalistic' music analysis from 'postmodern' New Musicology, which seems to have commenced in the early 1990s. What emerged through this 'postmodern' turn was a musicology that advocated cultural relativism, affirmed interpretive and evaluative plurality, defended epistemological contingency and insisted upon heterogeneous engagements with the nature of music. The turn towards 'postmodernist' ways of doing and thinking was, it is widely believed, stimulated by dissatisfactions with outmoded, 'modern' musicological positions, sensibilities and methodologies. Although musicologists seem to enjoy calling into question this quasi-redemptive narrative, the fact such an institutional furor occurred in the early 1990s suggests that there is an element of truth to the story.

14 Too often, Björn Heile contends, has musical and musicological 'postmodernism' been 'reduced to either a simple chronological successor to modernism . . . or a crude antithesis to it' (Heile 2009, 1–2). Consequently, in order to remind the reader that the ways of doing and thinking which characterize 'postmodern' musicology can be viewed as critical responses to fundamental problems in Western modernity, I will use 'scare quotes' when referring to 'postmodern' musicology. As Jonathan D. Kramer argues, 'postmodern' music 'is not simply a repudiation of modernism or its continuation, but has aspects of both a break and an extension' (Kramer 2002, 16). Indeed, Heile suggests that postmodernism could be viewed as a 'particular aspect in the ongoing history of musical modernity, an aspect that is connected to a specific phase but not necessarily restricted to it' (Heile 2013, 119).

15 Wellmer demonstrates how postmodernism can be viewed—ambiguously—as both a critique of modernity and a break from modernity. Consequently, not only is postmodernism a 'refutation of the steely electronic casing of the modern world—i.e., a transformation of enlightenment into cynicism, irrationalism and particularism'—it also, and at the same time, aims for 'a self-transcendence of modernity in the direction of a truly "open" society' (Wellmer 1985, 57). It is in this sense that postmodernism, like, for example, Critical Theory, hermeneutics and phenomenology, is disclosive of a critical attitude to social, philosophical and aesthetic modernity.

16 Such claims demonstrate that relativism—of the kind that every claim to knowledge is as good as every other—is self-refuting. As Hilary Putnam demonstrates, 'if statements of the form "X is true (justified) relative to person P" are themselves true or false *absolutely*, then there *is*, after all, an absolute notion of truth (or of justification)' (Putnam 1981, 123). Consequently, 'a *total* relativist would have to say that whether or not X is true *relative* to P is *itself* relative' (ibid.).

17 The ambiguity here is that Rorty also claims that we must be 'ethnocentric', whereby 'to be ethnocentric is to divide the human race into people to whom one must justify one's beliefs and the others' (Rorty 1991b, 30).

18 See, for example, Biletzki and Matar (1998) and Glock (2008).

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