

GALINA USTVOLSKAYA:
ORTHODOXY AND TRANSGRESSION IN SOVIET MUSIC

by

Alexander Samuel Popowich

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ABSTRACT

Galina Ustvolskaya (1919-2006) is an enigmatic figure in the history of Soviet music. Despite its undeniable quality and avant-garde nature, Ustvolskaya's music was neither celebrated nor officially suppressed during the Soviet period, and this ambiguous position continues to this day. It is as if Ustvolskaya was twice silenced, once in her own time, and once more in ours. Employing critical theory ranging from the work of Pierre Bourdieu, through the gesture theory of Robert Hatten and David Lidov, to concepts of the body in Mikhail Bakhtin, Julia Kristeva, Judith Butler, and Susan Sontag, I investigate the structural and discursive reasons for the silence surrounding Ustvolskaya's work.

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This thesis is dedicated to Marie-Claire Simard, without whom the researching and writing of this thesis would have proceeded much less smoothly.

Determining how all this stands in Russia would presuppose submitting the stratification over there to an analysis that would scarcely be tolerated.
T.W. Adorno¹

All who really love my music should refrain from theoretical analysis of it...
G.I. Ustvolskaya²

1 T.W. Adorno, *Introduction to the Sociology of Music* (New York: Continuum Publishing, 1976), 57.

2 Quoted in Olga Gladkova, *Musik als Magische Kraft* (Berlin: Ernst Kuhn, 2001), 1.

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INTRODUCTION

In his introduction to the Everyman edition of Samuel Beckett's trilogy (*Molloy, Malone Dies, The Unnameable*), Gabriel Josipovici quotes Kierkegaard's "contrast between mere end and significant conclusion":

the lives of... men go on in such a way that they have indeed premises for living but reach no conclusions – quite like this stirring age which has set in movement many premises but also has reached no conclusion. Such a man's life goes on till death comes and puts an end to life, but without bringing with it an end in the sense of a conclusion. For it is one thing that a life is over, and a different thing that a life is finished by reaching a conclusion.¹

For Beckett, Josipovici maintains, writing itself was implicated in this particular variation of the "meaningless" philosophy of life. The literary use of words was empty, solipsistic since the act of writing was by nature a solitary one, while the very nature of words is social.² This contradiction between the emptiness of written words and the very real need to write was a source of conflict until, in 1946, Beckett realized the kind of work he might do that could transcend it: the trilogy itself. Prior to this discovery, Beckett maintained an attitude of distance and irresponsibility towards his work and his readers, caused by a feeling of disgust in the self-centered, "masturbatory" limits he believed to be inherent in the act of writing. As Josipovici says, this – as well as Beckett's "tone of haughty disdain for the reader" – was "not likely to win him many fans in the decade of Auden, Malraux and Sartre."³

It is precisely this problem of "fans" – of recognition or consecration – that I would like to raise with respect to the music and career of Galina Ustvolskaya. Much of what Josipovici says about Beckett could be applied equally to Ustvolskaya. Many of her statements concerning public performances of her work and about the very public music

1 Søren Kierkegaard, *On Authority and Revelation* (1848), cited in Gabriel Josipovici, introduction to *Molloy, Malone Dies, The Unnameable*, by Samuel Beckett, xx1-xxxiv (New York Everyman Library, 1997), xi

2 "This sense of horror and disgust at the uselessness of words in literature is not of course unique to Beckett. Romantic and post-Romantic writers like Holderlin and Mallarmé, Kafka and Hofmannsthal, had already been gripped by despair at the thought of writing anything in a world where the writer was no longer, as in Homer, the mouthpiece of the Muses, but merely someone indulging himself in solitude." Ibid., xi

3 Ibid., xiv

of Shostakovich⁴ suggest that publicity and public exposure are shameful and embarrassing⁵ For Ustvol'skaya as well as Beckett the social content of music has been lost and what remains is a dirty, abject, solitary working out of the "premises of living"⁶ Ustvol'skaya's early public pieces were eventually suppressed as if shameful or filthy⁷

Also like Beckett, Ustvol'skaya had very few supporters or promoters throughout her working life, even though her music fit with the "underground," avant-garde music of the time (even anticipating it by several years) Her music is extremely difficult (one contemporary listener called it "very ugly")⁸, and certainly would have met the (admittedly vague) criteria for "formalism" so anathema to Soviet cultural politics Yet she was not repressed, forced to publicly recant her formalism and to promise to follow a path more acceptable to the Soviet cultural authorities as Prokofiev and Shostakovich, among others, had been forced to do As Viktor Suslin, a fellow composer and Ustvol'skaya's editor at Musikverlag Hans Sikorski in Hamburg, writes "The music of Ustvol'skaya is not "avant-garde" in the usual sense of the word It is perhaps for just this reason that her work was never subjected to the same public condemnation as the music of several of her colleagues in the USSR"⁹ Unlike the underground composers who came after her, such as Andrey Volkonsky and Edison Denisov, Ustvol'skaya's music was never "banned,"¹⁰ but neither was it publicly performed It seems that, except for Shostakovich, some of her composition students, and the occasional performer (such as Oleg Malov), her music had few admirers and no champions¹¹

4 For example, in Simon Bokman's memoir *Variations on the Theme Galina Ustvol'skaya* (Berlin Ernst Kuhn, 2007)

5 Thea Derks, "'Sind Sie mir nicht Bose!' Very nearly an interview," *Tempo*, 1995 31 33

6 Frans C Lemaire, *Le destin russe et la musique un siecle d'histoire de la Revolution a nos jours* (Paris Fayard, 2005), 526 Lemaire refers to Ustvol'skaya's destiny as "singular and solitary"

7 Marian Lee, "Galina Ustvol'skaya The Spiritual World of a Soviet Artist" (PhD diss., Peabody Conservatory of Music, 2002) In an interview with Gladkova, Ustvol'skaya says that her early works were composed out of "extreme physical hardship" and "to help [her] family" Gladkova, 18

8 Boris Schwarz, *Music and Musical Life in Soviet Russia* (Bloomington Indiana University Press, 1983), 315 The listener in question is Roy Harris and, while Ustvol'skaya is not explicitly named as the composer of the sonata, scholarly consensus agrees that it is hers

9 Viktor Suslin, "The Music of Spiritual Independence Galina Ustvol'skaya", in *Ex Oriente Ten Composers from the Former USSR* ed Valeria Tsenova (Berlin Verlag Ernst Kuhn, 2002), 99

10 Peter Schmelz, *Such Freedom, if only Musical Unofficial Soviet Music during the Thaw* (Oxford, New York Oxford University Press, 2009), 127 The extent and nature of any ban against the "unofficial" composers remains an open question

11 Lee, "Galina Ustvol'skaya," 12 Lee writes that while Gladkova's official biography of Ustvol'skaya noted that her music was "virtually ignored" those interviewed [by Lee] contest this statement and say that Ustvol'skaya's work was performed no less frequently than any other notable composer in

Fair enough, one might think: perhaps Ustvolskaya was merely a second-rate composer (never mind the opinion of Shostakovich),¹² whose music was simply not deemed worth performing in the Soviet period. I do not think the issue is as simple as that, given her own ambiguous attitude toward composition and performance – what is more to the point is how few proponents she continues to have among musicologists and historians of Soviet music. Today, her music is increasingly performed and recorded, but she continues to be all but ignored in recent scholarly work on Soviet music. Valeria Tsenova's *Underground Music from the Former USSR*, published in 1998, which contains articles on a significant number of mid-century Soviet composers by eminent musicologists refers only once to Ustvolskaya (in the chapter on Boris Tishchenko, one of her students).¹³ In his 2009 work on “unofficial Soviet music during the Thaw,” Peter Schmelz states that, engaging “only with the seminal compositions of the Soviet 1960s... that best represent the period,” he chooses “to omit some composers widely known today, such as Galina Ustvolskaya, who were rarely mentioned either by my informants, or by critics, officials, or other composers.”¹⁴ What biographical information has been published (by Viktor Suslin, Simon Bokman, and Olga Gladkova) are all memoirs of their authors' time with Ustvolskaya. A scholarly biography has yet to be written.¹⁵

In addition to this evidence, which might appear too circumstantial, there is evidence of a reluctance to perform Ustvolskaya's works that seems extreme, even in the Soviet case. To judge by Peter Schmelz' accounts of the early careers of Volkonsky and Denisov, public premieres, while complicated, at least took place. Ustvolskaya had to wait on average twenty years between composition and publication¹⁶, and Gladkova notes that, while Ustvolskaya's music was not often performed in the USSR, each premiere

Leningrad and was received with great enthusiasm” Schmelz, *Such Freedom*, 184-185 Schmelz acknowledges the difficulty of determining the presence of unofficial bans, as well as the extent of unsanctioned performances

12 Shostakovich wrote that “it is not you are influenced by me rather it is I who am influenced by you” Louis Blois, “Shostakovich and the Ustvolskaya Connexion A Textual Investigation,” *Tempo* 182 (Sept, 1992) 10.

13 Valentuna Kholopova, “Boris Tishchenko. Striking Spontaneity against a Rationalistic Background,” in *Underground Music from the Former USSR*, ed Valeria Tsenova (Amsterdam. Harwood Publishers, 1998), 52

14 Schmelz, *Such Freedom*, 58

15 Dr Andreas Holzer of the Universitat fur Musik und darstellende Kunst, Vienna, is currently working on a scholarly monograph about Ustvolskaya

16 “Wie lange mußten Ihre Werke normalerweise bis zur Druckausgabe warten? In der Regel etwa zwanzig Jahre” Gladkova, 17

was significant “in the life of the Philharmonic.”¹⁷ While they may have been significant events, these premieres – like publication – were extremely delayed. In the list of works prepared for Sikorski by Viktor Suslin, as well as that published by Gladkova, delays range from three years and less for Ustvol'skaya's early work, to around twenty years for her more unpalatable pieces, such as the Third Piano Sonata, which was written in 1952 but not performed until 1972.

As a partial explanation for this, Viktor Suslin writes:

If Ustvol'skaya's music is less known than that of her American and Polish counterparts [Ruth Crawford Seeger and Grazyna Bacewicz], her path to recognition was perhaps the most arduous. Her graduation from the Leningrad Conservatory in 1947 coincided with the onset of the Zhdanov era of cultural purges. It was hardly a nurturing environment for a fledgling modernist, especially one of the wrong gender. Her reported reclusiveness and reluctance to promote her work are no doubt conditions which were happily reinforced by a reactionary music establishment which has yet [as of 1992] to give her due recognition.¹⁸

No doubt all of this does apply to Ustvol'skaya's situation. And yet, there seems to be more to it than that, and indeed the mechanisms through which these institutional forces and dynamics operated to prevent Ustvol'skaya's music from being heard remain to be investigated.¹⁹ But they are amenable to critical theory, which is precisely the reason for the work that follows.

Like Beckett's prose, Ustvol'skaya's music evinces a “tone of disdain” for the listener (in her case, however, I do not think the tone is “haughty”) as well as “disgust,” though perhaps not for the task in which she is engaged. This conception of disgust, and the reaction of “turning away” from it rather than engaging with it, is something to which I would like to return in Chapters 3 and 4. Before that, however, we need to address the

17 “In der Heimat wurden Ustvol'skayas Werke nicht häufig, aber jede Premiere war eine bedeutendes Ereignis im Leben der Philharmonie ” Gladkova, xi

18 Blois, “Shostakovich and the Ustvol'skaya Connexion” 10

19 There may be a generational problem here as well all accounts of “underground” Soviet music begin with Andrei Volkonsky, which seems a bit too neat, as Volkonsky (b. 1933) was the first composer who could absolutely be said to have “clean hands”, a term used to signify the first generation that could not be considered complicit in any way with Stalinism Cf Abraham Rothberg, *The Heirs of Stalin Dissidence and the Soviet Regime 1953-1970* (Ithaca Cornell University Press, 1972), 43. “[T]he younger generation, which had not shared in the depravities of power under Stalin, were by virtue of their age in a position to criticize their elders with impunity, and to ask them to justify themselves.” Ustvol'skaya fell between two generations, that of those who were tainted by association with Stalinism (like Shostakovich) and that which had categorically “clean hands” (like Volkonsky and Denisov)

place of Ustvol'skaya in the history of Soviet music. What is required is not a positivistic history of publications and performances, but a critical history grounded in a theory of society. Only once we have constructed a theoretical model (Chapter 1) and untangled the threads of the history of Soviet avant-garde music (Chapter 2) can we hope to address the question of silence and turning away which makes Ustvol'skaya's music at once so compelling and problematic.

But first, I would like to touch briefly on Ustvol'skaya's biography.²⁰ Galina Ivanovna Ustvol'skaya was born in Petrograd in 1919²¹, and studied first at the Leningrad College of Music (1937-1939)²² and then at the Conservatory under Shostakovich until 1947. Ustvol'skaya was admitted to the post-graduate program in composition in 1947 and completed her studies in 1950, despite the dismissal of Shostakovich from his teaching post in 1948 (it is unknown with whom Ustvol'skaya studied between 1947 and 1950). During the war she was evacuated to Tashkent and then lived with her father in Tikhvin (200 km east of Leningrad). From 1947 to 1974, Ustvol'skaya taught composition at the College of Music there: an interesting account of her teaching practice can be found in Simon Bokman's memoir, *Variations on the Theme: Galina Ustvol'skaya*.²³

Her working career can be divided into the following three periods. First, we could assign a "public" period from 1946 to 1949/50, during which she seems to have been intent on a mainstream career, albeit without sacrificing any of her individuality and originality. It is in this period that her socialist realist works for public occasions fall (see Appendix 3). A second period, from 1950 to 1979/80, witnessed a "turning inward" of Ustvol'skaya's style. The music of this period was criticized at the time for "narrow-mindedness," and pieces such as the Octet (1949/50), the Third Piano Sonata (1952) had to wait twenty years to be publicly performed.²⁴

20 Further information can be found in the biographical sketch written by Viktor Suslin for Sikorski. The only full-length biography of Ustvol'skaya remains Olga Gladkova's *Galina Ustvol'skaya Muzyka kak navazhdenie* (St. Petersburg: Muzyka, 1999).

21 As a result of anti-German feeling in the lead up to the First World War, St. Petersburg was known as Petrograd from 1914-1924 (the year of Lenin's death), after which it was known as Leningrad. In 1991 the city was once again named St. Petersburg.

22 This was a college attached to the Conservatory proper. Its purpose was to provide the basic musical training required for entrance into the Conservatory.

23 Bokman, *Variations*, passim.

24 Lee, "Galina Ustvol'skaya," 14. Lee equates this period of Ustvol'skaya's composition with the practice of writing "for the desk drawer" (i.e. without hope of public performance). This question remains open, since some of Ustvol'skaya's work, such as the Symphonic Poem No. 1 (1958) were performed soon

The third period, from 1980 until Ustvol'skaya's death in 2006, witnessed an increased harmonic and melodic astringency and violence (for example, extreme repetition, very dense clusters and unrelieved harmonic dissonance) in performance, especially in late pieces such as the Fifth and Sixth Piano Sonatas (1986 and 1988, respectively). Ironically, it was during this period that a new appreciation for her works began to develop. The first performance of Ustvol'skaya's works in the United States took place in 1975, under the auspices of Laurel Fay (then a graduate student at Cornell University), and her music became more and more well-known and appreciated from then until an "international breakthrough" at the Wiener Festwochen in 1986.²⁵

Ustvol'skaya's individual style formed quickly (the constraints of public, socialist-realist composition notwithstanding), and by the Octet of 1949 all the elements of her mature style were present.

Hallmarks of her unique style show each individual note obsessively marked with intense expression, extreme range of dynamics from ffff to pppp, extreme range of registers and constant repetitive short motifs combined with a relentless rhythmic obsession with the quarter note.(...) The often abrasive and brutal intensity of these obstinate (sic) beats inspired Dutch musicologist Elmer Schenberger to give Ustvol'skaya her infamous nickname "the lady with the hammer."²⁶

Despite the often modest forces deployed in her works, Ustvol'skaya's music is also unexpectedly powerful, due to the extremity of ranges noted above, as well as to her use of clusters and overtones (generated through ostinato), and the sudden and jarring contrasts between extremes (e.g. loud pounding ostinato, chorale-like chords, and silence in the Fifth Piano Sonata, for example). Ustvol'skaya herself said: "My music is never chamber music, not even in the case of a solo sonata."²⁷

after composition Lee provides a useful chart comparing dates of composition and first performances The question of performance chronology is vexed by Ustvol'skaya's suppression of most of her public, socialist-realist works from her official worklist See Viktor Suslin, "Worklist"

http://www.sikorski.de/463/en/0/a/0/5021304/ustvol'skaya_galina/werke.html (accessed January 5, 2011)

25 This festival marked the first attested public performance of Ustvol'skaya's music in the West, and inaugurated a period of consistent performances at Western festivals Lee, "Galina Ustvol'skaya," 2

26 *Ibid*, 14 The nickname refers to the hammering ostinatos at high volume so characteristic of Ustvol'skaya's music

27 Viktor Suslin, "Biography"

http://www.sikorski.de/358/en/ustvol'skaya_galina.html (Accessed January 5, 2011)

There is a sense in which this very “narrow” style, focusing on individual notes (even within complicated clusters),²⁸ echoes Beckett's disenchantment with words that are not used in any social or transactional way. We can see how, in comparison with Shostakovich, Ustvolskaya's music might appear terse and unapproachable. Beckett's disgust at the solitary practice of generating words into a void finds a homology in Ustvolskaya's music, especially during her later period (e.g. the total and abject frustration of the Sixth Piano Sonata, her penultimate work), and in the work of some of the symphonies in which a single human voice utters dejected syllables towards an unhearing God. In the end, the disgust of useless sound which Beckett overcame through the total solipsism of his trilogy was transfigured in Ustvolskaya's music through the body and musical gesture, saving the music from its own abjection through a reintroduction of intersubjectivity.²⁹

The quality of the abject,³⁰ however, is suggestive of reasons why Ustvolskaya might have occupied such an ambiguous position during her own time, neither repressed nor celebrated, neither welcomed nor shunned. If, as I will argue, Ustvolskaya's music engaged with the abject, then it would make sense that, in a Bourdieusian context, her music was quite literally “unthinkable” at the time when it was written.³¹

The argument here is, briefly, as follows: Following the Russian revolution, all fixed musical value began to be contested. In the early 1930s a new musical orthodoxy was implemented (socialist realism), which implied an opposing heterodox musical style, a style diametrically opposed to the dominant, orthodox one, and defined solely in contrast to it. The quintessential oppositional composer in this period was Dmitri Shostakovich. By the late 1950s, Shostakovich's music had itself become the dominant, orthodox musical language, and a new generation of composers (“unofficial” or “underground” composers like Volkonsky, Denisov, Schnittke, and Gubaidulina) came to

28 Lee, “Galina Ustvolskaya,” 23

29 Robert Hatten, *Interpreting Musical Gestures, Topics, and Tropes* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004), 97. Musical gesture, according to Hatten, is always intersubjective. Cf. also Robert Hatten, “Theory of Musical Gesture and its Application to Beethoven and Schubert,” in *Music and Gesture*, ed. Anthony Gritten and Elaine King, 1-23 (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006)

30 Julia Kristeva, *The Powers of Horror* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), passim

31 For Pierre Bourdieu's theory of orthodox, heterodox, and the unthinkable, see *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 159-170

occupy a heterodox position. But beyond orthodox and heterodox there is necessarily music which is beyond discourse, that is transgressive, abject. This position, I would argue, was occupied by Galina Ustvolskaya. Constantly repositioning herself in total contrast to Shostakovich's music (which she adamantly maintained could have no influence at all on her own music),³² Ustvolskaya consciously and willingly (though perhaps unhappily) put herself outside mainstream musical life in the Soviet Union.

In order to untangle all the threads present in this argument, I will first need to discuss Pierre Bourdieu's sociology in the context of the "new musicology" (Chapter 1), and then to sketch the shape of the Soviet "field of cultural production" and its succession of consecrated and rising avant-gardes, which provides the motive force, in Bourdieu's theory, to the field and to dominant modes of thought and language (Chapter 2). Bourdieu's sociology helps us to move beyond traditional categories of understanding Soviet society, and the homologies in his theory between large-scale sociological structures and smaller ideational and embodied structures allows us to connect Ustvolskaya's music directly to her contemporary social life. Chapter 3 will introduce the concept of the body in the semiotics of music, and will raise the subject of the grotesque in Shostakovich's music. Chapter 4 will show how Ustvolskaya's music transgressed the grotesque limits of Shostakovich's musical language (and could therefore be viewed as abject), while at the same time constructing a different form of musical communication based primarily on the body, rather than the "corrupt" and "devalued" notes of orthodox music.³³ In this way, Ustvolskaya called into question the "premise for living" which Soviet music had, until then, tacitly accepted, and also negotiated a place for herself and her music in a world in which both life and music come to an end without coming to a conclusion. Seeming to break off in mid-phrase, mid-gesture, the Finale of her Sixth, and last, Piano Sonata, is emblematic of her bleak and uncompromising view of life and music.

32 Blois, "Shostakovich and the Ustvolskaya Connexion" 10. Ustvolskaya is quoted as saying "In my music there is no reference to the music of Shostakovich, nor can there be."

33 "Orthodox" in a musical, not a religious, sense.



Fig. 1. Last notes of *Piano Sonata No. 6*.³⁴

The contents of this thesis will not, or at least not primarily, be historiographical. The *locus classicus* of Soviet music history remains Boris Schwarz's *Music and Musical Life in Soviet Russia* (1972; expanded, 1983),³⁵ with further correctives, added detail, and new research carried out by, for example, Richard Taruskin,³⁶ Neil Edmunds,³⁷ Amy Nelson,³⁸ Kirill Tomoff,³⁹ and Peter Schmelz.⁴⁰ This thesis, then, will concentrate on using critical and cultural theory to explicate more broadly Ustvol'skaya's life position in Soviet musical culture.

A final word must be said here about the concept of "thinkability." Following the linguistic turn in cultural and critical theory introduced by structuralism, thought itself is a function of language. In the work of Saussure, as well as the work of theorists who draw upon his work, like Lacan, the structure of the mind and the possibilities of thought

34 Galina Ustvol'skaya, "Sonate Nr. 6," in *Piano Works Vol. 3* (Hamburg: Musikverlag Hans Sikorski, 1996), 36.

35 Schwarz, *Music and Musical Life*.

36 Richard Taruskin, *Defining Russia Musically: Historical and Hermeneutical Essays* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997).

37 Neil Edmunds, *The Soviet Proletarian Music Movement* (Oxford, New York: Peter Lang, 2000).

38 Amy Nelson, *Music for the Revolution: Musicians and Power in Early Soviet Russia* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2004).

39 Kirill Tomoff, *Creative Union: The Professional Organization of Soviet Composers, 1939-1953* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006).

40 Peter Schmelz, *Such Freedom*.

are linguistic. In later theorists such as Foucault and Bourdieu, language becomes fleshed out into discourse, making discourse both the necessary condition of thought as well as constituting its limits.

In theory, of course, this does not mean that thoughts cannot arise in the mind without being discursively ordered, simply that – in the words of Foucault – “nothing has any meaning outside of discourse.”⁴¹ Stuart Hall writes that discourse

constructs the topic. It defines and produces the objects of our knowledge. It governs the way that a topic can be meaningfully talked about and reasoned about. It also influences how ideas are put into practice and used to regulate the conduct of others. Just as a discourse ‘rules in’ certain ways of talking about a topic, defining an acceptable and intelligible way to talk, write or conduct oneself, so also by definition, it ‘rules out’, limits and restricts other ways of talking, of conducting ourselves in relation to the topic or constructing knowledge about it.⁴²

Bourdieu, following Foucault, sees in discourse the exercise of power relations with an end to the controlling of thought.

[I]n class societies, everything takes place as if the struggle for the power to impose the legitimate mode of thought and expression that is unceasingly waged in the field of the production of symbolic good tended to conceal, not least from the eyes of those involved in it, the contribution it makes to the delimitation of the universe of discourse, that is to say, the universe of the thinkable, and hence to the delimitation of the universe of the unthinkable.⁴³

It is in this sense that I describe Ustvolskaya’s music as “unthinkable” at the time it was composed. The universe of discourse, the *episteme* (to use Foucault’s term) that was at play in Soviet music from the 1950s to the 1970s “ruled out” Ustvolskaya’s music. Since there was no way to formulate, to discuss her music in linguistic terms, there was no place for it within the network of symbolic relations that constituted the field of cultural production.

41 Foucault, *Archaeology of Knowledge*, 32.

42 Stuart Hall, “The Work of Representation,” in *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*, edited by Stuart Hall (London: The Open University, 1997), 44.

43 Bourdieu, *Theory of Practice*, 170.

1. MUSICOLOGY AND THE SOCIOLOGY OF BOURDIEU

Musicology and Interdisciplinarity – Bourdieu’s work and the “new musicology” – Practice and Subjectivity – Practice Theory, Ideology, and Soviet Music – Bourdieu and Marxist Musicology – Interpretation and the Problem of Homology

Musicology and Interdisciplinarity

In “What is the History of Books?,” a seminal work in the field of contemporary book history, Robert Darnton outlines a transition “from the established strains of scholarship,”¹ by which he means traditional analytical bibliography, to a new kind of cultural history:

The new book historians brought the subject within the range of themes studied by the “*Annales* school” of socioeconomic history. Instead of dwelling on fine points of bibliography, they tried to uncover the general pattern of book production and consumption over long stretches of time. [...] Rare books and fine editions had no interest for them; they concentrated instead on the most ordinary sort of books, because they wanted to discover the literary experience of ordinary readers.²

For Darnton, the competing methodologies and interests in this new book history signalled “interdisciplinarity run riot” and in 1982, he attempted to “propose a general model for analyzing the way books come into being and spread through society” in order “to see the subject as a whole.”³ A similar kind of stock-taking took place in 1985 with Joseph Kerman’s equally seminal *Contemplating Music* (entitled *Musicology* in the U.K.).⁴ Like Darnton, Kerman begins with the question of terminology and proceeds to address the discipline’s varying fortunes up to his own time. Like the history of books, musicology passed through a positivistic phase, eventually to develop into a broader sub-field of cultural studies, which traced its own lineage through academic Marxism in the UK and the impact of a corpus of French theory which eventually, in the late 1970s and

1 Robert Darnton, “What is the History of Books?,” *Daedalus* 111, no. 3 (1982) 66

2 Ibid For a theoretical discussion of continuous vs. discontinuous, positivist vs cultural history, see Michel Foucault, *L’archéologie du savoir* (Paris: Gallimard, 1969). A succinct account of the “contrasting implications” between the work of Bourdieu and Foucault is Tony Bennett’s “Culture, Power, Knowledge Between Foucault and Bourdieu,” in *Cultural Analysis and Bourdieu’s Legacy Settling Accounts and Developing Alternatives*, ed. Elizabeth Silva and Alan Warde, (New York, London: Routledge, 2010), 102-116

3 Darnton, “What is the History of Books?”. 67

4 Joseph Kerman, *Contemplating Music: Challenges to Musicology* (Boston: Harvard University Press, 1985)

early 1980s, coalesced into an interdisciplinary field known (with varying degrees of irony) as “the new musicology.” From the 1960s on, Kerman and others had been calling for a more experiential study of music called criticism, one which aligns in many respects with the new field of book history.⁵ Marxism, feminism, and gender studies, ethnomusicology, and a large number of other theoretical perspectives were brought to bear on the study of music, engaging with traditional (music) theory and analysis in order to create a broader discipline of what might be called the social or cultural study of music.⁶ Rose Rosengard Subotnik, in a chapter entitled “On Grounding Chopin,” sums up the approach of this new discipline:

For me... the notion of an intimate relationship between music and society functions not as a distant goal but as a starting point of great immediacy, and not as an hypothesis but as an assumption. It functions as an idea about a relationship which in turn allows the examination of that relationship from many points of view and its exploration in many directions. It is an idea that generates studies the goal of which (or at least one important goal of which) is to articulate something essential about why any particular music is the way it is in particular, that is, to achieve insight into the character of its identity.⁷

Bourdieu's work and the “new musicology”

The attempt to enrich the study of music (as of books) by moving beyond the positivistic, while situated securely in the field of cultural studies, raises interesting connections with the work of Pierre Bourdieu, who hoped to move beyond positivism in the study of society, and to overcome standard dichotomies in sociology and anthropology, such as those between subject and object, or between positivism and relativism. The alternatives to merely positivistic approaches to anthropology provided by Lévi-Strauss were what

5 Rose Rosengard Subotnik, “In Response to ‘A Musicological Offering’,” *New York Review of Books*, February 13, 1986. In her letter, Subotnik states that she has argued “like Kerman, that American musicology should go beyond its traditional focus on such positivist problems as identifying watermarks, comparing editions, and even producing authentic texts,” which were also three of the main activities of traditional bibliography.

6 The origins of which lay in the “sociology of music” of Theodor Adorno and other members of the Frankfurt School, as well as work done in the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies in Birmingham, for example in Stuart Hall and Paddy Whannel’s *The Popular Arts* (London: Hutchinson, 1964). Cf. T.W. Adorno, *Introduction to the Sociology of Music*.

7 Rose Rosengard Subotnik, “On Grounding Chopin,” in *Music and Society: The Politics of Composition, Performance, and Reception*, ed. Richard Leppert and Susan McClary (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 105-133. This volume also contains Susan McClary’s “The Blasphemy of Talking Politics During Bach Year” (pp. 13-63), which argues for much the same kind of engagement as Subotnik.

initially attracted Bourdieu,⁸ but he eventually moved beyond the epistemological certainties of structuralism (i.e. the reduction of phenomena to binary oppositions) as well as its strict objectivism, i.e. structuralism's privileging of the "objective" understanding of the observer or researcher over the "subjective" experience of social participants. Like the new musicologists, Bourdieu recognized the place of structuralist research which, the structuralists claimed, exposed the hidden truth of social phenomena. In his first major theoretical work, *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (1972),⁹ Bourdieu maintained that structuralism, while valuably supplementing the approach of old-fashioned positivism, did not tell the whole story either, and that a "second break" had to be made which would allow a reflexive understanding of both the data and the objects which the analyst constructs to make sense of the data. Bourdieu's theory of practice required researchers to focus not only on either the objective "meaning" of social phenomena ("objectivism"), or on the experiential or phenomenological meaning of social phenomena to the actors themselves ("subjectivism"), but to keep both of these aspects in mind simultaneously. In this respect, Bourdieu's movement from structuralism to his own form of post-structuralism mirrors the movement in musicology from positivistic research, through the sociology of music in the 1970s, eventually to cultural musicology in the 1990s.

Subotnik's essay – which constituted one of the first major contributions of the "new musicology" – first appeared in *Music and Society* in 1986. The spirit of Adorno informs much of the work in that volume, and his importance in delineating the problems and questions of what he called "the sociology of music" cannot be underestimated. Indeed, applying Bourdieu to musicology can seem, sometimes, as if engaging by proxy with Adorno's work. Indeed, Bourdieu himself suggests that "sociology has to define itself *against* Adorno's work":¹⁰

Had Adorno lived long enough to counter these criticisms, his reply might have been equally harsh. Bourdieu, he would most probably argue, heralds an age-old "scientism" – which, for Adorno, implies a thought that is preoccupied with its

8 Claude Lévi-Strauss, *L'anthropologie structurale I* (Paris Plon, 1958), *L'anthropologie structurale II* (Paris. Plon, 1973)

9 Pierre Bourdieu, *Esquisse d'un théorie de la pratique* (Genève Droz, 1972) English edition *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (Cambridge. New York, 1977)

10 Nedim Karakayali, "Reading Bourdieu with Adorno The Limits of Critical Theory and Reflexive Sociology," *Sociology* 38 (2004) 352

own epistemological schemes – under the mask of a “reflexive sociology.”¹¹

It is perhaps for this reason – the similarities and differences dividing the work of Bourdieu and Adorno – that such strong reactions both for and against Bourdieu’s theory have arisen. Adorno informs a good portion of the new musicologists (Richard Leppert and Rose Rosengard Subotnik, for example), and requires a type of political engagement from those who draw from him that Bourdieu does not.¹² Nader Karakayali attributes this primarily to a difference in each theorist’s conception of “reflexivity” and, fundamentally, in their conception of what sociology has to achieve. For Karakayali, the different approaches to reflexivity indicate a distinction between Adorno’s and Bourdieu’s attitudes towards “what might be considered as the most general ‘flaw’ of sociology,” that is, the setting up binary opposites, or “antinomies.”¹³ For Adorno, the antinomies present in sociology are historical, and are therefore symptoms in the Marxian superstructure of very real contradictions in the socio-economic base.¹⁴ The only way to overcome these antinomies, then, is through a revolution and reconfiguration of the fundamental forces and relations of society. The task of sociology, for Adorno, is “neither to overcome nor to accept, but to reveal and agitate.”¹⁵ For Bourdieu, in contrast, reflexivity *can* overcome these binary oppositions, the most important of which were objectivism vs. subjectivism¹⁶ and substantialism vs. relationalism.¹⁷ These appear again and again in a dialectic relationship throughout his work.

Resolving or overcoming identifiable antinomies provides a springboard for much of Bourdieu’s work. In *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, Bourdieu begins with an attempt at overcoming the theoretical dichotomy of subjectivism and objectivism, while in *The Field of Cultural Production*, he is concerned with reconciling substantialist modes of

11 Ibid

12 Despite his focus on power relations and domination, Bourdieu retains a traditional scientific (positivistic) distance in his language and in his concepts

13 Ibid , 358

14 For the notion of “symptom” in Marxism, cf Slavoj Žižek, *The Sublime Object of Ideology* (London, New York Verso, 1989)

15 Karakayali, “Reading Bourdieu with Adorno” 369

16 See above, p 11

17 Substantialism can be defined as the understanding of phenomena or objects defined as bearing properties in themselves, in contrast to objectivism, or the understanding of phenomena or objects as having properties only in relation to other phenomena or objects

thought with relational ones.¹⁸ In this respect, Bourdieu is close to the post-structuralist distrust of binary oppositions most apparent in deconstruction, but his response is not simply to identify and expose the fundamental contradictions of these dichotomies, but to overcome them by exposing on the one hand their mutual constitution and on the other hand their construction in the mind of an observer prior to their being observed. While Derrida was content with the *process* of deconstruction, and was distrustful of the solidifying of this process into a technique,¹⁹ he remained concerned with the limits, the fundamental instability or incoherence of the seemingly solid oppositions, of structuralism. Bourdieu, on the other hand, constantly sought a method of overcoming this instability, in a sense searching for a way back to the theoretical certainty of structuralism without its inherent contradictions, instabilities, and aporiae, following the principle laid down in Marx's eleventh thesis on Feuerbach²⁰. Indeed, another part of that text could stand as an epigraph for all of Bourdieu's theory of practice:

The question whether objective truth can be attributed to human thinking is not a question of theory but is a practical question. Man must prove the truth – i.e. the reality and power, the this-sidedness of his thinking in practice. The dispute over the reality or non-reality of thinking that is isolated from practice is purely a *scholastic* question.²¹

Practice and Subjectivity

The problem of the relation of practice to objective knowledge is the starting point of Bourdieu's first major work, the *Outline of a Theory of Practice*. Practice, in Bourdieu's view, is not simply "what people do," but rather activity organized and engendered by unconscious, spontaneous strategies and choices. This is the kind of "unconscious" activity that takes place on a daily basis, the kind of action that we do not think about

18 Pierre Bourdieu, "The Field of Cultural Production, or, The Economic World Reversed," in *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 29-73.

19 Derek Attridge, "Singularities, Responsibilities Derrida, Deconstruction and Literary Criticism," in *Critical Encounters: Reference and Responsibility in Deconstructive Writing*, ed. Cathy Caruth and Deborah Esch (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1985), 109.

20 "Philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways, the point is to change it." This famous maxim was published by Marx in 1845, along with other comments on the work of Ludwig Feuerbach (1804-1872). Karl Marx, "Theses on Feuerbach," 1845. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Marx/Engels Selected Works*, vol. 1 (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1969), 13.

21 *Ibid.*

consciously, but nevertheless would be noticeable (even irksome or frightening) were it not to take place, or were it to take place differently. Bourdieu's examples are drawn from ritual practices he observed while doing anthropological work in Algeria. Practices, in Bourdieu's view, take place in a field – a network of relationships, not only between people, but between people, institutions, ideas, opinions, cultures, traditions, texts, etc. – and it is the field that manages the elements of practice. One's position within the field – managed from birth by social background and education – determines the practices in which one engages unconsciously, those that one can consciously choose to participate in (or not) and, most broadly, those that are even available for choosing. The possible practices available to a white, middle-class woman in North America are very different from those available to a poor, African woman. Many practices are purely cultural, but following Althusser, Bourdieu sees the economic as determining in the final instance.²²

People, however, are not automatons, and practices are still “chosen” (at least in some sense) by the practitioner. These choices have a logic of their own: 1) they are practical (they do not require conscious deliberation)²³ and 2) they must be coherent (they can be turned immediately into practical action).²⁴ The structures of the mind or the personality that allow us to follow this “practical logic” Bourdieu calls *habitus*, which is both structured by the field and which structures it in turn.²⁵ The concept of *habitus* recurs frequently in Bourdieu's work, sometimes with subtly different definitions.

Perhaps the clearest definition understands *habitus* as

a system of lasting, transposable dispositions which, integrating past experiences, functions at every moment as a *matrix of perceptions, appreciations, and actions* and makes possible the achievement of infinitely diversified tasks.²⁶

Bourdieu takes issue with any sociological approach which sees practices as organized and determined by rules. Rules are not flexible enough, not internalized enough, to lead

22 Bourdieu, *Theory of Practice*, 83.

23 Conscious deliberation would be too slow and mentally cumbersome for the spontaneous “art of living” which we practice every day

24 *Ibid*, 109

25 Bourdieu sometimes calls this mutual structuring “structuration,” which suggests a comparison with the work of Anthony Giddens. Like Bourdieu, Giddens seeks to overcome an antinomy, in his case between functionalism and structuralism, and “to put an end to each of these empire-building endeavours”

Anthony Giddens, *The Constitution of Society: Outline of a Theory of Structuration* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1984), 2

26 Bourdieu, *Theory of Practice*, 82-83

to practices, whereas habitus, as a manageable schema of ways of understanding, relating to, and acting in the world, is engrained, unconscious, and flexible enough to follow the practical logic (practicality and coherence) which Bourdieu's theory requires. Bourdieu sees the construction of "rules and norms" as very much a product of the "objectivist" anthropology (such as structural anthropology), which his theory of practice was developed to counter.²⁷

Bourdieu's initial break with structuralism came from a recognition of the inadequacy of the objective interpretation of social actions which was one of the recognized values of structuralism. As an attempt to make the observation and analysis of society "scientific," Levi-Strauss's structural anthropology attempted to show the objective structures which determined the practices of a given society.²⁸ This objectivity was seen as a valuable alternative to subjective (or, as Bourdieu puts it, ethno-methodological) interpretations of actions and practices.²⁹ However, by concentrating on the "objective" conditions for a practice, the researcher loses sight not only of the subjective position of the participants, but also of the conditions and structures which produced the researchers' own (objective) practice of observation and analysis, which has the effect of distancing the researcher from the object of study by constituting it as a representation of a practice, rather than as the practice itself.³⁰ Bourdieu's theory of practice was primarily an attempt, first to reconcile the objectivist and subjectivist approaches to interpreting practices, and second to open up a space for reflexivity on the part of the observer, that is, to force the observer to bear in mind that what was being observed was a constructed representation rather than a "reality."

27 An alternative to Bourdieu's theory of self-formation is that of the later Foucault, which "dispute[s] the possibility that the architecture of the person might be construed in terms of the universal socio-psychological mechanisms invoked by the concept of habitus. Rather, [it stresses] the historically pluralized spaces and practices of self formation that are produced by the ways in which different epistemological and moral authorities format the person, laying out the self in the form of the divisions, crevasses, and surfaces that are needed for their own actions on it." Bennett, "Culture, Power, Knowledge," 105. Both Bourdieu's and Foucault's positions were attempts to reintroduce agency into the completely structured subjectivity of structuralism. Foucault's work on the subject can be found in *The History of Sexuality*, vol 3 (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978) and *The Hermeneutics of the Subject* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005).

28 Much of *Outline of a Theory of Practice* positions itself with relation to Levi-Strauss' *Elementary Structures of Kinship* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1969). *Les structures élémentaires de la Parenté*, written in 1949, had been revised and reissued in 1967.

29 For a discussion of the methodological pitfalls of "native theories," cf. Bourdieu, *Theory of Practice*, 17-19.

30 Bourdieu, *Theory of Practice*, 2.

This reconciliation took the form of a “dialectical” alternative to both objectivism and subjectivism. The relations between “the objective structures to which the objectivist mode of knowledge gives access and the structured dispositions within which those structures are actualized” are in constant play,³¹ and the researcher must guard against attempting to fix the relations (between objective structure and lived-experience) at any moment in time, or viewing the relations as in some way eternal. Structuralism, based as it is on the synchronic preference of the Saussurean model,³² tended to achieve this fixity primarily by isolating elements of practice in time. For the structuralist anthropologist, “everything takes place as if agents’ practice, and in particular their manipulation of *time*, were organized exclusively with a view to concealing from themselves and from others the truth of their practice, which the anthropologist and his models bring to light simply by substituting the timeless model for a scheme which works itself out only in and through time.”³³ This ostensibly timeless representation of a practice which exists only in time is a violation of the practice under observation, and it is this violation that Bourdieu seeks to overcome.³⁴ In fact, it was precisely this recovery of music and musical practice as historically specific that was one of the cornerstones of the new musicology, since for a practice to be situated within its society and “listening communities,” those societies and communities themselves must be historically located.³⁵

To achieve this, Bourdieu posits a homology between the fundamental violation implicit in a synchronic interpretation of social practices, and the violation of those practices inherent in the identification of “rules and norms.” These violate the reality of a practice by being removed from the actual lived-experience of the participant. No

31 Ibid , 3

32 That is, of phenomena in relation to other phenomena that exist at the same time, rather than of phenomena in relation to different states of themselves over time “Saussure’s separation of the synchronic from the diachronic, of historical from structural research, is equally absolute, and contains a methodological presupposition which is just as peremptory a value judgement ‘to the degree that something is meaningful, it will be found to be synchronic’ ” Fredric Jameson, *The Prison House of Language* (Princeton Princeton University Press, 1972), 5

33 Bourdieu, *Theory of Practice*, 6

34 This of course puts him at odds with the foundation of Saussure’s thought, which is that speakers of a language are only conscious of their language at a given moment in time, and do not carry with themselves the history of that language

35 “[A]s the New Musicology has taught us, musical meaning has as much to do with listening communities as it does with well-established attempts to ‘anchor’ it in reassuring discourses ” Krin Gabbard, “Race and Reappropriation Spike Lee meets Aaron Copland,” in *Postmodern Music / Postmodern Thought*, edited by Judy Lochhead and Joseph Auner (New York Routledge, 2002), 306

participant in a practice (except under specific cases) is conscious of his/her practice being determined, dictated, or even constrained. They do not act in accordance with a catalogue of rules or norms. Rather, the agent is an improviser, and the stage of this improvisation is the stream of time. “To restore to practice its practical truth, we must reintroduce time into the theoretical representation of a practice which, being temporally structured, is intrinsically defined by its *tempo*... To substitute *strategy* for the *rule* is to reintroduce time, with its rhythm, its orientation, its irreversibility.”³⁶ Bourdieu’s use of the terms *tempo* and *rhythm* should be especially significant to musicologists, since music has often been understood as the shaping of sound over time. As opposed to the plastic or visual arts, music only exists as an unfolding duration. As Adorno writes, “music resembles language in the sense that it is a temporal sequence of articulated sounds which are more than just sounds.”³⁷ This understanding of the inherent temporality of music is precisely what Bourdieu wants to express regarding practice.

Rather than a set of external, classifiable rules, then, agents act according to strategy, and this strategy is determined by internal dispositions which have been inculcated by society from childhood. This “cultivated disposition” or habitus³⁸ is “inscribed in the body schema and in the schemes of thought” and enables “each agent to engender all the practices” consistent with the social structure which cultivated that disposition.³⁹ What appear to objectivist observers to be rules which determine behaviour are, instead, a “small batch of schemes enabling agents to generate an infinity of practices

36 Ibid , 8-9 In this view, socialist realism of the Soviet variety can be seen as an attempt impose a law or rule on an area traditionally left to spontaneous improvisation and habitus (“art”)

37 T W Adorno, “Music and Language A Fragment,” in *Quasi una Fantasia Essays on Modern Music*, 1-9 (London, New York Verso, 1998) 1 Two more quotes should suffice to support the connection between music and time “The phenomenon of music is given to us with the sole purpose of establishing an order in things, including, and particularly, the co-ordination between *man* and *time*” Igor Stravinsky, *An Autobiography* (New York Norton, 1962 [1936]), 54 “Music is motion in time” Felix Saltzer, quoted in Jean-Jacques Nattiez, *Music and Discourse. Toward a Semiology of Music* (Princeton Princeton University Press, 1990), 94

38 Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (Cambridge, MA Harvard University Press, 1984), 13. Bourdieu offered many different definitions of habitus. An appropriate one in this context is “the durably installed generative principle of regulated improvisations [which] produces practices which tend to reproduce the regularities immanent in the objective conditions of the production of their generative principle, while adjusting to the demands inscribed as objective potentialities in the situation, as defined by the cognitive and motivating structures making up the habitus” Bourdieu, *Theory of Practice*, 78

39 Ibid , 15

adapted to endlessly changing situations, without those schemes ever being constituted as explicit principles ”⁴⁰

This is not to say, however, that these structured dispositions are “the exclusive principle of all practice”, the reality of domination and power requires us to recognize that the “regulated improvisation” of the habitus, laws, *and* traditional, explicit rules exist within a society, their symbolic power supported by very real sanctions ⁴¹ Bourdieu’s main concern with the violation done to practice by the construction of rules as *reasons for* or *motives of* action is the implied “mechanistic” or “finalistic” view of practices, which he sees as the only two positions available to any externally structured interpretation of action ⁴² He does not then discard the “constructed subject” of structuralism (which achieves its apotheosis in the “death of the author” of Barthes and Foucault), but allows for a measure of agency (through strategic choices) within a given structure However, recognition of the structure is still a requirement for any dialectical interpretation and theory of practice “Only by constructing the objective structures is one able to pose the question of the mechanisms through which the relationship is established between the structures and the practices which accompany them ”⁴³

Practice Theory, Ideology, and Soviet Music

The importance of this theory to a study of Soviet culture stems not only from the problems still surrounding Soviet history, but also those surrounding Soviet historiography Not only is the scholar of Soviet culture faced with the problem of determining and understanding the objective structures and practices of Soviet society, he/she must also contend with the structures and practices which have informed everything that has been written about Soviet culture The separation between the lived experience and the objective representation of society is reinforced throughout the various levels of representation and objectivism, e g 1) the objectivism of the state versus the lived experience of the people and 2) the objectivism of all those who have written on

40 Ibid 16

41 Ibid , 21

42 Ibid 73 76 Bourdieu posits Sartre’s total freedom of existentialism as the furthest reach of non structured practice a position Bourdieu dismisses

43 Ibid , 21

Soviet history versus the lived experience of both the ordinary people and the *nomenklatura*⁴⁴. Unpacking these levels of reinforced objective/subjective pairs remains a constant problem in the writing of Soviet history. Bourdieu's theoretical models suggest a new way to approach this problem.

Objective structures, such as Soviet cultural organizations, concerts, congresses, etc., do not simply determine practices, but the *representations* of practices (e.g. ideology, discourse), thus symbolically reinforcing the strategic choices of agents in their improvisation by the "rational" justifications inherent in conforming to an ideological or discursive category or imperative.⁴⁵ To understand these structures (of both practices and representations), Bourdieu encourages a move away from the *opus operatum* (the thing done, the practice) to the *modus operandi* (the principle which provoked the practice). Since it is clear that the *modus operandi* is both structured by previous practices, by current strategies, and by "second-order strategies" (i.e. ideologies and other discursive which serve to represent individual, personal choices as of broader, public legitimacy), Bourdieu's model must expand to include not merely anthropological theories and theories of fields, but also a theory of ideology. Bourdieu's theory of ideology rests on the notion that "each agent, wittingly or unwittingly, willy nilly, is a producer and reproducer of objective meaning [...] because his actions and works are the product of a *modus operandi* of which he is not the producer and has no conscious mastery."⁴⁶ This ideology is not individual, but social: the habitus *creates* an objective social world by consensus and shared practice, unconscious and therefore taken for granted.⁴⁷ Based on differences (inequality) in the materials, however, the fact of social divisions or objective conditions of existence engenders differences of habitus – and therefore ideology – among the various social classes.⁴⁸ In this view, history (as a discursive, narrative or textual object, rather than as mere "events of the past")⁴⁹ is a product of the intersection

44 The upper class of Soviet society

45 Ibid , 21-22

46 Ibid., 79

47 Ibid , 80

48 "Thus, when we speak of class habitus, we are insisting, against all forms of the occasionalist illusion which consists in directly relating practices to properties inscribed in the situation, that 'interpersonal' relations are never, except in appearance, *individual-to-individual* relationships and that the truth of the interaction is never entirely contained in the interaction " Ibid , 81

49 See Hayden White, *Metahistory The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century* (Baltimore Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973), 30-31.

of habitus and objective events which can only be understood/recognized/interpreted by those possessing “a discourse capable of securing symbolic mastery [i.e. language] of the practically mastered principles of the class habitus”⁵⁰ Since habitus is primarily unconscious (even when accompanied by an ideology), “class-consciousness” can be equated to a discourse that allows events to be consciously interpreted rather than merely unconsciously encountered. In agreement with Engels and with Althusser (on this point at least),⁵¹ Bourdieu maintains that “in the last analysis,” it is the “economic bases of the social formation in question” that determine the objective structures present in any conjunction between habitus and situation,⁵² that Bourdieu agrees with Althusser on this one point makes his disagreement with the fundamental principles of Althusser’s reading of Marx even more striking.⁵³

This may seem like a long way from musicology, but once the importance of situating music in its social and historical context was recognized, then broader questions of how to understand those contexts (e.g. politically, economically) became paramount. As Jacques Attali has written,

There is no power without the control of noise and without a code for analyzing, marking, restricting, training, repressing, and channeling sound, be it the sound of language, of the body, of tools, of objects, or of relationships with others and with oneself. All music – all organizations of sounds – is a method of creating or consolidating a community, it is the link of power with its subjects, and an attribute of this power, whatever its form.⁵⁴

Bourdieu and Althusser, just as much as Foucault, are theorists of power, and any investigation of music as “the link of power with its subjects” must take theories such as theirs seriously.

50 Bourdieu, *Theory of Practice*, 83

51 Louis Althusser, *For Marx* (London, New York: Verso, 1977), 111-112

52 Bourdieu, *Theory of Practice*, 83

53 Ibid., 83-84. This critique of Althusser is based primarily on the essay “Marxism and Humanism” in *For Marx*, but also on elements present in *Reading Capital*. Louis Althusser and Etienne Balibar, *Reading Capital* (London, New York: Verso, 1997)

54 Jacques Attali, forward to *Music and Marx: Ideas, Practice, Politics*, edited by Regula Burckhardt Qureshi. *Ideas, Practice, Politics* (New York, London: Routledge, 2002), x

Bourdieu and Marxist Musicology

Althusser's Marxism represents what Regula Burckhardt Qureshi describes as "academic Marxism, consolidated in the 1970s in the social sciences" which "was centred in studies of political economy that addressed structures of capitalist domination and differential economic-political power across societies"⁵⁵ Qureshi includes in this strand of Marxism both Lévi-Strauss and Althusser, and defines it in opposition to both "humanist or cultural Marxism" (which includes Bourdieu) and "activist," "political," or "state" Marxism associated with the Soviet Union and China

Marxist musicology tends to fall predominately into the first strand, that occupied by Lévi-Strauss and Althusser, in which music as a symbolic or ideational practice is fundamentally determined by material culture, in accordance with the doctrine of historical materialism. Marxism, in this view, "locates determinative forces in structures and political relations, identifying labor and value within economically diverse societies, thereby theorizing the articulation of material, social, and cultural domains"⁵⁶ It is not surprising that Bourdieu is also cited in support of this kind of Marxism, in which "material production implicates culture and aesthetics as practices within 'fields of culture'"⁵⁷ Bourdieu, it seems, is not fundamentally in opposition either to cultural or academic Marxism, but remains on the edge of both

In Bourdieu's view, giving primacy to either the objective or the subjective to the exclusion of the other violates the truth of an experience. For Marxists such as Althusser, exposing the objective truth of social relations is precisely the object of Marxism, and this objective truth is that social relations are produced and determined by material production. Bourdieu would agree with this up to a point but, as David Gramit points out, "ignoring symbolic practices in search of an objective account of society is ultimately as deceptive as considering only those practices in isolation"⁵⁸

For Bourdieu, the direct, "personal" domination of one person or class by another becomes unnecessary as the dominant class "appropriates" both the economic and

55 Regula Burckhardt Qureshi, introduction to *Music and Marx*, xvii

56 Ibid

57 Ibid

58 David Gramit, "Music Scholarship, Musical Practice, and the Act of Listening," in *Music and Marx*, ed. Regula Burckhardt Qureshi, 3-22 ((New York, London: Routledge, 2002), 4

cultural fields of production to the extent that these fields are constructed in such a way as to ensure their own reproduction from moment to moment and generation to generation without the direct exercise of power. They do this through the mediation of “institutionalized mechanisms” which, by wielding “symbolic” rather than direct, physical power, give the relations of domination “the opacity and permanence of things” which “escape the grasp of individual consciousness.”⁵⁹ The implication here is that mainstream Marxists tend to ignore symbolic structures and practices in order to focus on the material forces and relations of production; only after these forces and relations have been exposed and understood can social and symbolic relations be understood and revealed. Not only is Bourdieu’s sociology fully compatible with other strands of Marxism (i.e. cultural Marxism), but it *in fact* rests upon materiality just as firmly as academic Marxism. It is the body, prior to the subject’s initiation into the symbolic realm of language, which inculcates habitus within him/herself. The academic Marxists’ discussion of commodities, production, labour, and exchange, is predicated on the materiality of the human body, and Bourdieu’s theory of social class also rests on the embodied habitus. In Bourdieu’s terms, social class is simply the result of a particular habitus inscribing itself on agents from a given culture through their embodied experience of similar objective, material, conditions:

Since the history of the individual is never anything other than a certain specification of the collective history of his [sic] group or class, *each individual system of dispositions* may be seen as a *structural variant* of all the other group or class habitus, expressing the difference between trajectories and positions inside or outside the class.⁶⁰

“Trajectory” may be understood as the actual life of a person, with each trajectory consisting of a succession of “structuring moments” in which the habitus “structures, in terms of the structuring experiences which produced it, the structuring experiences which affect its structure.”⁶¹

However, despite the material foundation of Bourdieu’s theory in the body, the determination of the individual by structure is fundamentally symbolic precisely because, from the earliest moment, the structures inscribed through the body are in themselves

59 Bourdieu, *Theory of Practice*, 184.

60 Ibid., 86.

61 Ibid., 86-87.

symbolic. Social relations are felt by the individual first (i.e. prior to language) as embodied structures, for example in the relations between children and parents. In this way, Bourdieu manages both to subscribe to the materialist thesis and to avoid being caught in its totalizing determinism. For some (i.e. cultural) Marxists, this nuance is welcomed, while for others (i.e. academics or non-humanists), it is precisely this qualification of materialism that is problematic. Bourdieu's theory, then, offers something different from that of academic Marxists.

The symbolic system, then, operates through the body in the determination of subjectivity, by transforming its "practical coherence" into a "practical taxonomy" which is, in language with which no Marxist could take issue, a "transformed, misrecognizable form of the real divisions of the social order."⁶² Such taxonomies are ambiguous and problematic because at the same time that they make action possible by providing the individual both with choices and with justifications and rationalization for those choices, they also limit possible choices and justifications through the structure of the taxonomy itself. In other words, the individual is provided with a set of ideas which allow for a certain range of actions: anything that cannot be thought cannot be transformed into action. For example, if the "practical taxonomy" of my social class specifies music as functionally tonal, then not only am I unable to appreciate or to play atonal music, I cannot even imagine an atonal music. The material basis of this practical taxonomy might arise from the fact that I have never heard any music which is not tonal, and this inculcation of tonality took place upon my body prior to any initiation into the symbolic order of things. With respect to Ustvolskaya's music, it was precisely because it offended the habitus of her listeners at *bodily* level that made their reaction to it so strong.

The contents of a given practical taxonomy appear to a social group or class as "doxa," i.e. all that is self-evident, common sense, or that which is never even thought or spoken about, let alone questioned. But the doxic mode – the condition of living in strict conformity with a practical taxonomy – can be threatened by contact with other groups or classes possessing a different doxa or taxonomy (hence xenophobia, racism, homophobia, and other fears of ideas and conditions of living which directly oppose the "natural" or

62 Ibid., 163.

“self-evident” order).⁶³ This contact explains the transformation of doxa slowly, over time, which allows, for example, for racist or homophobic attitudes to be wiped out, or for alternatives to tonality to become first thinkable, then put into practice. But doxa can also be violently overturned by provoking a legitimation crisis, forcing a recognition of the arbitrariness of that which has been taken for granted and natural. When the arbitrariness of the practical taxonomy can no longer be misrecognized or avoided (i.e. when ideological structures are exposed), the unconscious adherence to doxa can no longer exist. What replaces it is a conscious “orthodoxy” which is protected but can never again be common sense, self-evident, or natural, since this would require the restoration of a “primal state of innocence” which is impossible.⁶⁴ We can see the workings of orthodoxy in the attitudes of proponents of tonality after the introduction of atonality. Rather than unconsciously producing music which was “naturally” tonal, such composers had to consciously create tonal music, and had to come up with justifications for that which previously needed no justification. In the Soviet Union, the doxic mode of music (exemplified especially by Rimsky-Korsakov) was replaced with an orthodox music which attempted to maintain many of the characteristics of pre-Revolutionary music, but was unable to do so by referring to its naturalness or self-evident qualities, or even to the cultural capital possessed by the “consecrated” pre-Revolutionary composers.⁶⁵ Instead, the Soviet Cultural authorities had to set up an orthodox musical style (“socialist realism”) which was maintained, not through appeals to natural legitimacy, but through brute force and intimidation.

Brute force is not, however, the only weapon available to cultural authority (i.e. those with the power to grant or withdraw cultural capital), in the struggle to define and maintain orthodoxy. Ideological, symbolic weapons are also used. But the replacement of doxa by orthodoxy also opens up a space for its opposite – heterodoxy – which is comprised of all those ideas which come into being once the self-evident doxa has been overthrown, but which are not the dominant ideas maintained by those who possess

63 This links doxa with the musicological concept of markedness to which we will return later

64 Bourdieu, *Theory of Practice*, 169

65 Bourdieu equates consecration with canonization, legitimacy, recognition, a higher level of cultural capital, and sees the dynamic of the field of cultural production as a competition for consecration by those with varying levels of cultural capital, primarily those occupying established cultural positions on the one hand and the avant-gardes hungry for recognition on the other. See Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), passim

cultural capital. In the absence of doxa, the fields and subfields of culture become economies of cultural capital, witnessing the production, consumption, and exchange of capital between the various poles of orthodoxy and heterodoxy. Think of a world of whiteness initially taken for granted (doxa), whose arbitrariness (white) becomes recognized. The world remains white through the expenditure of energy to support the orthodox view (that the world is white), but this now conscious thought brings into being an opposite concept (blackness), which would be defined as heterodoxy. Interestingly, only blackness can come into being as heterodox to whiteness. All other colours remain unthinkable, unimaginable or, in Bourdieu's terms, "beyond discourse"

The universe of discourse is practically defined in relation to the necessarily unnoticed complementary class that is constituted by the universe of that which is undiscussed, unnamed, admitted without argument or scrutiny⁶⁶

Critical Models and Soviet Music History

In Chapter Two I will argue that the economy of culture eventually witnessed the setting up of a musical orthodoxy based on Shostakovich which necessarily implied its opposite, the heterodox music of composers such as Andrei Volkonsky and Edison Denisov. However, this view also implies a world of musical possibilities not allowed by either the orthodox or heterodox musics and hence all but unthinkable. Part of this universe "beyond discourse" was, I think, explored by Galina Ustvolskaya, which could explain why her music was ignored (silenced) by both the orthodox and heterodox music communities in the Soviet Union.

In the Soviet Union, as in all class societies, the direct "personal" domination of one person or class by another became unnecessary by the end of the 1920s as the dominant class appropriated both the economic and cultural fields of production. By the early 1930s, after periods of upheaval during which there could be no orthodoxy⁶⁷ to replace the doxa destroyed in the revolution, these fields had been reconstructed in such a way as to ensure their own reproduction from moment to moment and generation to

⁶⁶ Ibid , 170. This is a very Foucauldian view of discourse and silence.

⁶⁷ Revolution, after all, is predicated on the desire or need to produce a new world order (*novus ordo saeculorum*) in which all orthodoxy is fundamentally undermined. See Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution*, 47 and passim.

generation with less and less exercise of direct power. Gradually arrest, terror, and repression were replaced by the mediation of “institutional mechanisms” such as the composers’ union which, by wielding symbolic rather than direct, physical power, gave the relations of domination “the opacity and permanence of things” which “escape the grasp of individual consciousness”⁶⁸

In other words, class society employs the full panoply of consecrating, legitimizing, and authorizing institutions (courts of law, educational institutions, etc.) to buttress doxa – or even orthodoxy – in order to avoid the necessity of direct domination. In the Soviet case of course, the economic position of the country was such that the necessity of direct domination did not disappear until after the death of Stalin, at which point these very “institutionalized mechanisms” which had been created in the early 1930s became even more powerful. This can be seen, for example, in the trial of Sinyavsky and Danil in 1966, which used symbolic power against heterodox views, rather than the very real, physical power the Soviet regime employed in the show trials of the 1930s. Bourdieu writes the following regarding the power of the state to impose legitimacy and silence alternative ideas:

In class societies, everything takes place as if the struggle for the power to impose the legitimate mode of thought and expression that is unceasingly waged in the field of the production of symbolic goods tended to conceal, not least from the eyes of those most involved in it, the contribution it makes to the delimitation of the universe of the unthinkable, as if euphemism and blasphemy, through which the expressly censored unnameable nonetheless finds its way into the universe of discourse, conspired in their very antagonism to occult the “aphasia” of those who are denied access to the instruments of the struggle for the definition of reality.⁶⁹

This could stand as a description of the entire cultural history of the Soviet Union.

Bourdieu recognizes that the domination of individuals in class or capitalist society is a “condition of the appropriation of the material and symbolic profits of labour”⁷⁰. Class or capitalist society is, for Bourdieu (following Marx and Engels) *always* a society based on domination, and since domination, in Bourdieu’s model, is symbolic, much of the work of domination is achieved through the symbolic legitimation of the established order. This task, however, “does not fall exclusively to the mechanism

68 Ibid , 184

69 Ibid , 170

70 Ibid , 184

traditionally regarded as belonging to the order of ideology, such as law. The most successful ideological effects are those which have no need of words, and as no more than complicitous silence”⁷¹

Bourdieu comes closest to outlining the political necessity of his work by stating that those analyses of ideology which restrict themselves to analysis of discourse, and which ignore the “institutional mechanisms” which support discourse and ideology serve only to support ideology, rather than unmasking it. This is because “the greater the extent to which the task of reproducing the relations of domination is taken over by [institutional mechanisms], which serve the interests of the dominant group without any conscious effort on the latter’s part, the more indirect and, in a sense, impersonal, become the strategies objectively oriented towards reproduction”⁷². In *Distinction* we can see this played out in the artistic/cultural field

Once a system of mechanisms has been constituted capable of objectively ensuring the reproduction of the established order by its own motion, the dominant classes have only to *let the system they dominate take its own course* in order to exercise their domination, but until such a system exists, they have to work directly, daily, personally, to produce and reproduce conditions of domination which are even then never entirely trustworthy.⁷³

Again, Bourdieu’s formulation can be directly applied to the Soviet situation

Because they cannot be satisfied with appropriating the profits of a social machine which has not yet developed the power of self-perpetuation, they are obliged to resort to the *elementary forms of domination*, in other words, the direct domination of one person by another, the limiting case of which is appropriation of persons.⁷⁴

These various oppositions lead Bourdieu to conclude that social systems (or symbolic systems) contain “only two ways of getting and keeping a lasting hold over someone: gifts or debts, the overtly economic obligations of debt, or the ‘moral,’ ‘affective,’ obligations created and maintained by exchange, in short, overt (physical or economic) violence, or symbolic violence – *censored, euphemized, i.e. unrecognizable, socially*

71 Ibid, 188. Cf. Louis Althusser ‘Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses,’ in *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1971) and, on silence, Michel Foucault [1976], *The History of Sexuality* vol 1 (New York: Vintage Books, 1990), 27.

72 Bourdieu, *Theory of Practice* 189.

73 Ibid, 190.

74 Ibid, 190.

recognized violence”⁷⁵ For Bourdieu, in fact, there is only one mode of domination if domination can only take place between persons, i.e. directly, then it must be disguised “In order to be socially recognized it must get itself misrecognized” There is only one kind of domination, but two kinds of worlds – the kind of world where violence is accepted as part of the established order, and worlds where it is not In those latter worlds such violence must be hidden from view despite happening in public, it must be (mis)recognized as something *other than violence*, the violence must be symbolic⁷⁶

It is notable that the Stalinist period has been characterized (along with the reign of Peter the Great) as one of the “most self-consciously symbolic eras of Russian history”⁷⁷ This characterization ought to alert us to some of the more indirect forms taken by the exercise of power and violence The need to maintain orthodoxy following the revolution (see Chapter 2) required not only physical repression – of which it had plenty – but symbolic repression It is this symbolic repression that affected Ustvolskaya’s music the most While very real potential for physical repression hung over herself, her friends, and her family, symbolic repression took the form of socialist-realist policy on the one hand, and the dominant (and dominating) musical language of Shostakovich on the other hand Ustvolskaya’s suppressed early work can be understood as affected precisely by this repression, and it was not until around 1950 that she was able to escape its effects, though we cannot be sure to what extent

Interpretation and the Problem of Homology

In her well-known essay “The Blasphemy of Talking Politics during Bach Year,” Susan McClary sums up her analysis of the opening movement of the fifth Brandenburg Concerto as follows

On the surface, closure is attained [with the final ritornello], but the subversive elements of the piece seem far too powerful to be contained in so conventional a manner We are relieved at this closure (the alternative seems to be madness) but surely also somewhat troubled by its implications The usual nice, tight fit between the social norm, as represented by the convention of concerto procedure,

75 Ibid , 191

76 Ibid , 196 197

77 Catriona Kelly and David Shepherd, introduction to *Constructing Russian Culture in the Age of Revolution 1881 1940*, ed Catriona Kelly and David Shepherd (Oxford Oxford University Press, 1998), 2

and specific content is here highly problematized. Certainly social order and individual freedom are possible, but apparently only so long as the individuals in question – like the sweet-tempered flute and violin – abide by the rules and permit themselves to be appropriated. What happens when a genuine deviant (and one from the ensemble’s service staff yet!) declares itself a genius, unconstrained by convention, and takes over? We readily identify with this self-appointed protagonist’s adventure (its storming of the Bastille, if you will) and at the same time fear for what might happen as a result of the suspension of traditional authority... Bach thus articulates very powerfully precisely the dilemma of an ideology that wants to encourage freedom of expression while preserving social harmony.⁷⁸

In 1985 (which, as we have seen, was a transitional time for musicology), such a view might have been “blasphemous,” but with the rise of the new musicology, this kind of interweaving of the musical and the socio-political has become quite accepted by those scholars. In the study of Soviet music, however, this view is problematic: in what way does an analysis like McClary’s differ from the (now discredited) attempts by Soviet cultural power to read similar narratives in or impose them upon Soviet music?⁷⁹

I am not suggesting here that there are or can be no connections between the social and the work of art, or between different cultural fields. What I want to insist upon, however, is a more nuanced view than the “political content” view of artistic meaning which is shared – it seems to me – both by McClary and by the theorists of socialist realism.

Bourdieu’s view of the interrelationships between cultural artifact (e.g. a piece of music) and the society and culture that produces or interprets it in a sense inverts the view of both McClary’s musicology *and* socialist realism. For Bourdieu, the work of art is inscribed within a field of cultural production (as well as exchange and consumption) and it is this positioning – rather than the vicissitudes of its content – that inscribes itself upon the work of art.⁸⁰ In this way, we are able to avoid the problematic ascription of any kind of permanent significance to either form or content (the two traditional poles of

78 McClary, “Blasphemy,” 40-41

79 For a survey of the actual manifestations of socialist realism in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe more generally, see Mikuláš Bek, Geoffrey Chew, and Petr Macek (eds), *Socialist Realism and Music* (Prague. KLP, 2004).

80 “The habitus, understood as a set of durable dispositions derived from the writer’s or artist’s position in the economic and social fields, serves, in however mediated a fashion, as the main route through which economic and social relationships impinge on the organization of literary and artistic forms ” Bennett, “Culture, Power, Knowledge,” 104

hermeneutics), and to move beyond such a position to the view of a work of art as both *structuring* and *structured by* its field of production *as well as* the field of its reception. This mutual structuration expresses the underlying fact that habitus applies to works of art as well as to human beings. As a result, all that we have said regarding doxa, violence, repression, and the economy of positions within the field, also apply at the level of the work itself.

But what Bourdieu is advocating is not a return to the structuralist hermeneutics of, for example, Lévi-Strauss.⁸¹ Bourdieu is close both to Jameson's "political unconscious" – with its exhortation to "always historicize" both the production and interpretation of a work of art⁸² – and to the "suspension of unities" that constitutes the starting-point for Foucault's archeology.⁸³ The artifact constitutes a position within the field (a position *taken* by the agent who produces the work), and it therefore reflects the structures that gave rise to it and helps to structure the positions that come after it. Both the Fifth Brandenburg Concerto and McClary's analysis of it are positions within the field of cultural production, with McClary's analysis structured by all that has come before and by her own position within the field. "The Blasphemy of Talking Politics during Bach Year" says more about McClary's own time and position than it does about the Brandenburg concerto.

This homology between artifacts and agents is an important one for Bourdieu. It allows for the same concepts (habitus, structure, autonomy) to be applied at different levels of the fields (or among different kinds of positions).

All relations among agents and institutions of diffusion or consecration are mediated by the field's structure. To the extent that the ever-ambiguous marks of recognition owe their specific form to the objective relations (perceived and interpreted as they are in accordance with the unconscious schemes of the habitus), they contribute to form the *subjective* representation which agents have of the *social* representation of their position within the hierarchy of consecrations. And this semi-conscious representation itself constitutes one of the mediations through which, by reference to the social representation of possible, probable or

81 The structuralist understanding of the content and meaning of an artifact is enacted, if not ruthlessly exposed, by Anthony Burgess in his novel *M/F* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1971).

82 Fredric Jameson, *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1981).

83 See Michel Foucault, *The Archeology of Knowledge*. For a critique of Bourdieu's contention that his "space of possibles" and Foucault's "field of strategic possibilities" are similar, see Bennett, "Culture, Power, Knowledge."

impossible position-takings, the system of relatively unconscious strategies of the occupants of a given class of positions is defined.⁸⁴

This statement could apply just as well to works of art as to the agents that produce them. Shostakovich's 8th Symphony, for example, which we will analyze in Chapter 3, owed much of its recognition and interpretation to the constitution of the musical field in 1943. The social expectation of Shostakovich's music during the war, the *extremely* consecrated position of the 7th Symphony (1941), the symphony's unsuitableness as propaganda compared to other music of the time, the grotesque elements – all of this combined with the 8th Symphony's musical content to acquire a certain quantity of cultural capital, a certain position within the field. How far it strayed from the orthodoxy not only of socialist realism but of Shostakovich's own prior output also affected the symphony's relative position. That symbolic violence did not occur to it, which happened, for example to *Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District*, and the 4th Symphony, was a result of the precise quantity of consecration the 8th Symphony managed to achieve. Bourdieu's field of cultural production does not simply contain people, but works of art as well, each occupying its own position, and all positions affected by homologically equivalent forces and dynamics.⁸⁵

It is because of this homology that Bourdieu's concept of the field allows us to refocus our investigation on different levels of the field – people, for example, or works of art – at different times. This in turn provides us with a method to understand social and cultural meaning as extrinsic to a text (i.e. as determined by the field), rather than simply relying on the internal understanding of a text which forms the basis of McClary's work and of socialist realism (in terms of content) on the one hand, and the structuralists and Jameson (in terms of form) on the other.⁸⁶ Achieving this kind of analysis of a particular area of Soviet culture is precisely the task of this thesis.

84 Pierre Bourdieu, "Is the structure of *Sentimental Education* an Instance of Social Self-analysis," in *The Field of Cultural Production*, 133

85 In fact, the field cannot be dissociated from the elements "within" it. Indeed, the set of these elements *is* the field, in the same way that the set of points in a Cartesian plane *is* the plane itself.

86 Bourdieu associated the "external mode of analysis" primarily with Marxist critics like Lukacs and Adorno. Cf. Bennett, "Culture, power, knowledge," and Pierre Bourdieu, "Principles for a Sociology of Cultural works," in *The Field of Cultural Production*, 176-191 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993).

2. SOVIET ORTHODOXIES AND AVANT-GARDES

The Post-Revolutionary Moment in Soviet Music – The Avant-Garde in Soviet Music History – Cultural Capital and the History of Fields – Soviet Orthodoxy and Its Discontents – Soviet Music History as the Cycle of Avant-Gardes – The “Ustvolskaya Myth” and the Dominance of Shostakovich

The Post-Revolutionary Moment in Soviet Music

One of the first requirements of any theorist seeking to apply Bourdieu’s sociology to a study of Soviet culture is to map the positions and roles of all the social agents active in the cultural field at a given time. In the period immediately following the Civil War (1918-1921),¹ for instance, the cultural field consisted of a number of organizations and networks of agents which need to be accounted for. In Bourdieu’s view, such organizations and networks make up a given cultural field through the cultural positions they take. This “position-taking” can come about through the production and dissemination of cultural artifacts, for example by an author or a publisher, but it can also come about through the occupation of a recognized position within a society’s cultural life, for example simply by being the minister of culture, or the head of an artistic organization. In this case the level of recognition corresponds to the amount of cultural capital possessed by the individual. As a result, the cultural field consists not only of narrowly-defined cultural producers such as writers and artists, but all those who contribute to “the creation of the creator” – that is, publishers, music company executives, art gallery owners, impresarios, etc. The economy of cultural capital among all these positions drives changes in the cultural field over time, as new positions are taken and capital is exchanged.

In the musical field from 1921 to 1932, the following state organizations conferred varying levels of cultural capital on all those connected with them:²

- Narkompros (“The Ministry of Enlightenment,” essentially the culture ministry)
- Proletkult (Proletarian cultural movement, active from 1917-1925)

¹ Various dates can be chosen for the Civil War. I have used the dates most commonly used in Soviet Historiography. For an account of the Civil War and the consolidation of Bolshevik political and cultural power, see Richard Pipes, *Russia Under the Bolshevik Regime. 1919-1924* (New York: Knopf, 1995).

² For detailed accounts of these organizations, see Edmunds, *The Soviet Proletarian Music Movement*, 17-52

- RAPM (The Revolutionary Association of Proletarian Musicians)
- ASM (RAPM's rival, the Association of Contemporary Musicians)
- ORKiMD (Association of Revolutionary Composers and Musicians)³
- Prokull (Production Collective of Student Composers)
- The St Petersburg and Moscow Conservatories

In addition to these official organizations, the Soviet musical field included composers, professional and amateur musicians, (state-run) music publishers, concert and festival organizers and audiences. Naturally, there was much overlap between these unofficial networks and the official organizations. Many of the members of RAPM, for example, published ideological or theoretical pieces in various musical journals. This was a period of openness, experimentation, and (relative) freedom of expression, and many theoretical and political questions were debated in all media and on all occasions.

So far, the mapping of cultural positions fits with Bourdieu's prescriptions for a study of the cultural field. What makes the Soviet case different, however, is the difficulty in separating the field of cultural production (and its subfields) from the determining fields of the economy and political power. In "The Field of Cultural Production," Bourdieu organizes society into nested fields and subfields. According to the standard bourgeois model Bourdieu is interested in, the cultural field is relatively autonomous from the economic and political realms, by which he does not mean that economics and politics do not hold sway over the cultural field (which they clearly do). It simply means that the logic of the cultural field is the reverse of the wider logic of capitalist society: "the more completely it fulfills its own logic as a field, the more it tends to suspend or reverse the dominant principle of hierarchization." However, "whatever its degree of independence, it continues to be affected by the laws of the field which encompasses it, those of economic and political profit."⁴

Bourdieu goes on to state that the consecration of artists in this model *increases* the more autonomous they are from economic and political considerations, as evinced by "historians of art and literature when they exclude from their object of study writers and

³ Established in 1921, ORKiMD was a government organization established "to direct music along party lines", ORKiMD was in many ways similar to RAPM, but with closer government ties. Jonathan Green and Nicholas J. Karolides, *The Encyclopedia of Censorship* (New York: Facts on File, 2005), 590.

⁴ Bourdieu, "The Field of Cultural Production," 38-39.

artists who produced for the market”⁵ As a result, Bourdieu divides the cultural fields into two “poles” – the field of restricted production (consisting of those artists who produce without wide dissemination, i.e. who produce only for other artists) and the field of expanded production (consisting of those who produce for the widest possible dissemination) In a free-market, liberal-capitalist society, this dynamic of economic, political, and cultural positions takes one form, and this is the form assumed in Bourdieu’s work In the Soviet Union, however, this dynamic has to be recast to take into consideration the *overdetermination* of the cultural field by the economic and the political

As a period of experimentation and free expression, and as a result of Lenin’s New Economic Policy (NEP) which allowed for a liberalizing of the economy after the austerity of War Communism,⁶ the Soviet 1920s were much closer to Bourdieu’s model than would later be the case The relative autonomy of the cultural field (relative both to the Civil War period and to the 1930s) allowed for more “restricted production,” i.e. the creation of music not geared towards mass tastes and consumption (primarily by adherents of the ASM such as Roslavets and Mosolov) alongside the continued existence of “light genres” of popular music (i.e. Bourdieu’s expanded production, or production for the market)⁷ During the NEP period (1921–1928), the Bolshevik government allowed the cultural field to remain autonomous while it consolidated power in the economic and political sectors The pronouncements of both Lenin and Lunacharsky (head of the cultural ministry) supported a pluralistic cultural life, one that did not disavow the achievements of pre-revolutionary culture Among and between the organizations like RAPM and ASM, debates raged over the relative merits of pre-revolutionary, contemporary European “avant-garde” music such as that of Schoenberg and Webern,⁸ and proletarian music Concerts, festivals, and newspapers were all used to promote particular views of what Soviet culture should be, now that the Civil War was over and the time to build a new socialist culture had come

5 Ibid

6 The period during the Civil War when all agricultural and industrial production was under direct government control as part of the war effort See Pipes, *Russia Under the Bolshevik Regime*, 316–320

7 Richard Stites “The Ways of Soviet Popular Music to 1953,” in *Soviet Music and Society under Lenin and Stalin: The Baton and Sickle*, ed. Neil Edmunds 19–32 (London, New York: Routledge, 2004), 7

8 The term ‘avant garde’ is problematic, as we shall see In this instance, I have used it to signal the allegiance of the ASM composers with their most modern contemporaries in Western Europe

The Bolshevik regime, then, did not attempt to dictate cultural policy during the 1920s. Due to the lack of a pre-Revolutionary avant-garde (if one agrees with Taruskin)⁹ and/or the break caused by the Revolution and Civil War, the questions of legitimacy and consecration could not be adopted from pre-Revolutionary sources, but had to be fought over from scratch. This is not to say that aesthetic judgements were not made by those possessing pre-Revolutionary cultural capital (e.g. Lenin, Trotsky, or Gorky), but that no class of producers made it through the Revolutionary and Post War period with their consecrated positions intact. By the end of the 1920s, however, economic and political control was assured, and the death of Lenin in 1924 had cleared the way for Stalin's assumption of leadership. The totalizing bias of Stalin's rule made direct control over the cultural field (indeed, over all fields) a primary concern, and by 1932 the extension of the state apparatus into Soviet cultural life was completed. The heterogeneous organizations of the 1920s with their competing discourses and world-views were abolished and replaced by the single doctrine of "socialist realism"¹⁰ as well as centrally-controlled cultural unions to promulgate the doctrine, including the USSR Union of Composers.

From a relatively autonomous position, the field of cultural production became completely dominated by the political field. As a result, those who had staked out autonomous positions in the 1920s, i.e. in the subfield of restricted production, such as the composers of ASM, found themselves in the 1930s without any symbolic capital at all. The careers of the "modernists" Nikolai Roslavets and Alexander Mosolov, for example, were cut short and their music officially suppressed from the mid 1930s onwards. The field of expanded production (e.g. the mass market), which had existed independent of the field of restricted production throughout the 1920s, became much more important after 1932. According to Soviet dogma, the focus of cultural production had to be on the mass-market, with severe consequences for those who would not or could not produce music suitable for mass consumption (for example, in the attacks against formalism in 1936 and 1948)¹¹

9 See below, p. 38

10 See Appendix 1

11 Shostakovich was the most prominent victim of these attacks, but he was by no means their only target. See Anna Ferenc, "Music in the Socialist State," in *Soviet Music and Society under Lenin and Stalin*, 8-18

The Avant-Garde in Soviet Music History

For Bourdieu, the history of the field of cultural production is the history of successive avant-gardes. In order for an avant-garde to come into existence, however, it must position itself against an orthodox, established, consecrated music. The succession of avant-gardes, then, is nothing more than the translation of heterodox positions into orthodox ones through the economy of recognition and consecration which constitute the varying fortunes of cultural capital. We will see below how these successions can be understood in a Soviet context, and in the previous chapter we briefly noted the way in which an orthodox (“socialist realist”) music came to dominate the cultural field.¹² We have to turn, now, to the question of the Russian avant-garde. The concept of the avant-garde is notoriously hard to pin down,¹³ and it is therefore better to approach the question pragmatically rather than attempt to theorize too dogmatically.

In his typically provocative style, Richard Taruskin maintains that, first, nothing like a musical avant-garde existed in Russia from around the turn of the century until after the revolution.¹⁴ In addition, and contrary to the views of many historians of Soviet music, for Taruskin the avant-garde position was occupied not by the cohort of composers and musicians who subscribed to what constituted the latest trends in Western European music, but those who promoted “proletarian music” and have been condemned in most accounts of Soviet music as reactionary and repressive. For Taruskin, “the avant-garde” cannot be essentialized, and must always be drawn from the historical reality of the place and time under investigation.

The term [“avant-garde”] does not properly signify the mere possession or use of an “advanced” technique. An avant-garde is something else. The term is military, and it implies belligerence: countercultural hostility, antagonism to existing institutions and traditions. Avant-gardes always put traditionalists on the defensive and turn them reactionary.¹⁵

¹² See above, p. 23.

¹³ For a survey of the literature on the topic, see Hubert F. van den Berg, “Avant-Garde: Some Introductory Notes on the Politics of a Label,” in *Sound Commitments: Avant-Garde Music and the Sixties*, ed. Robert Adlington (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 15–29.

¹⁴ Taruskin, *Defining Russia Musically*, 86. “[I]t was the Bolshevik coup that gave rise to the only musical avant-garde Russia has known in the twentieth century.”

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 87.

It is of vital importance, then, that one be able to identify the “existing institutions and traditions” present at any historical moment. In this respect, Taruskin’s position is very close – if not identical to – that of Bourdieu, who insists that, in the study of cultural objects or artifacts, “the task is that of constructing the space of positions and the space of position-takings in which they are expressed.” This construction is the task of the historian and the sociologist, and requires making the two-fold break Bourdieu discussed in the *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, where he proceeds to say that

one of the major difficulties of the social history of philosophy, art or literature is that it has to reconstruct these spaces of original possibles which, because they were part of the self-evident givens of the situation, remained unremarked and are therefore unlikely to be mentioned in contemporary account, chronicles or memoirs¹⁶

This difficult task is – fundamentally – the entire program of Taruskin’s *Defining Russia Musically*. In order to discuss Soviet avant-gardes (and thus, in Bourdieu’s terms, the entire history of culture in the Soviet Union), we have to attempt to reconstruct at least a part of the field at some starting point, however arbitrary.¹⁷ Only by recreating the field as it was at a certain point in time can we begin to understand towards what the “avant-garde” was antagonistic. Taruskin, then, begins this discussion with the state of Russian art music at the end of the 19th century, with the “Belyayev School.”

Mitrofan Petrovich Belyayev was a wealthy capitalist who, in the years after the death of Musorgsky in 1881, set up a publishing company, several concert series and prizes to support music in Russia. The ultimate goal of the “Belyayev circle” was to “set up an establishment that [would govern] all aspects of musical creation, education, and performance.”¹⁸ Around 1886-7, Rimsky-Korsakov provided, along with Lyadov and Glazunov, the main creative direction for the activities of Belyayev’s concerns and, after his death in 1903/4,¹⁹ the three continued to support Belyayev’s legacy. Taruskin contends that in sympathy with Belyayev’s own aesthetic preferences, they more or less determined the dominant style of Russian music from the turn of the century until the

16 Bourdieu, “The Field of Cultural Production,” 31

17 Following Bourdieu’s model, the cycle of avant-gardes could conceivably stretch back as far as Russian music itself

18 Francis Maes, *A History of Russian Music from Kamarinskaya to Babı Yar* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002) 173

19 22 December 1903 (Old Style) / 4 January 1904 (New Style)

Revolution: “So powerful were the blandishments it could offer, even without any raw state power to back them up, that the Conservatory/Belyayev nexus made for an absolutely invincible establishment. The result, with the single equivocal exception of Scriabin, was the near-total absence of a Russian musical avant-garde all through the period of literary and painterly experimentation now known as the Silver Age.”²⁰ For Taruskin, Russian music from the death of Rimsky-Korsakov (1908) until the Revolution was “simply a matter of maximalism – intensifying the means employed toward extensive ends,”²¹ i.e. the musical language of Rimsky-Korsakov. Stravinsky’s *Firebird*, for example, “was an exact analogue to his teacher’s [Rimsky-Korsakov] fantastic operas, replete with a folkloric diatonic idiom representing the human characters and a coloristic chromatic one representing the supernatural.”²² For Taruskin, while Rimsky-Korsakov is typically included among the “Mighty Five” composers of mid- to late- 19th century Russia,²³ in fact he “was at the head of another school of composers altogether, one that is never mentioned in Western history texts since it does not conform to the stereotypical behaviour the West expects from Russian composers.”²⁴

An initial objection might be made regarding the place of Stravinsky and Prokofiev in this model, since both composers are typically regarded as members of the Western European avant-garde – what Taruskin refers to as “elite modernism” or “modernist professionalism.”²⁵ Both Prokofiev and Stravinsky were admired by Shostakovich and, at least in Stravinsky’s case, the admiration was reciprocated.²⁶ But Stravinsky had been a student of Rimsky-Korsakov’s, and the case can (and has been) made to “insert [Stravinsky’s] work into a context of the past, not the future.”²⁷ In

20 Taruskin, *Defining Russia Musically*, 83

21 Ibid , 85.

22 Ibid

23 Balakirev, Cui, Borodin, Musorgsky, and Rimsky-Korsakov For many years, these composers were considered natural, untutored, nationalistic, and essentially “Russian” in sharp contrast to the more “European” Chaikovsky Due mainly to Taruskin’s work, this view is no longer widely held. See Francis Maes, *A History of Russian Music: From Kamarinskaya to Babi Yar* (Berkeley University of California Press, 2002), xii

24 Ibid, 82

25 Ibid , 87

26 Orlando Figes, *Natasha’s Dance: A Cultural History of Russia* (New York Metropolitan Books, 2002), 584

27 Taruskin, *Defining Russia Musically*, 377

response to their essay “*The Rite of Spring* Considered as a Nineteenth-Century Ballet,”²⁸ Taruskin writes that Joan Acocella, Lynn Garafola, and Jonnie Greene “perceive no break with tradition, but manifold extensions of it”²⁹

Prokofiev's case was a little different. Rather than extending the legacy of the nineteenth century into the modernist twentieth – as Stravinsky did – Prokofiev actively rejected modernism in order to return to a classical model which he felt offered more musical possibility. In his recent history of Russian music “from Kamarinskaya to Babi Yar,” Francis Maes writes that Prokofiev – in addition to making other career defining errors in judgement –

misjudged also the importance and the tenacity of the modernist movement. In an interview with Olin Downes of the *New York Times* his 1930 American tour, Prokofiev stated that modernism in music had gone as far as it could. Yet at the time that he himself was returning to a melodic style and traditional forms, the most radical consequences of modernism were still to come.³⁰

Despite, then, their inclusion among the ranks of the avant-garde in traditional musicology, the composers active during Russia's “Silver Age”³¹ must be seen as extending (in Stravinsky's case) or returning to (in Prokofiev's) the musical traditions of the 19th century which, in the Russian context, meant the harmonic and melodic language of Rimsky-Korsakov and his heirs.

Given Taruskin's definition of “what an avant garde really is,”³² we can now make more sense of his revisionist view of what constituted the avant garde in the first decade or so of Bolshevik rule. In the years immediately following the Revolution, as we have seen, the Bolsheviks were occupied first with the Civil War and with controlling and running the enormous state apparatus – in short, with keeping the country running. It is not surprising, then, that during this period the Bolsheviks did not attempt to “endanger” (Taruskin's term) the *cultural* institutions of the pre-Revolutionary period, their priority was with the political, economic, and military institutions. In addition to this pragmatic explanation, though, Taruskin attributes the continuation of cultural

28 Joan Acocella, Lynn Garafola, and Jonnie Greene, “*The Rite of Spring* Considered as a Nineteenth Century Ballet,” *Ballet Review* 20, no. 2 (Summer 1992) 68-100

29 Taruskin, *Defining Russia Musically*, 377

30 Maes, *A History of Russian Music* 318-319

31 Generally defined as the first two decades of the twentieth century

32 Taruskin, *Defining Russia Musically*, 86

institutions (like the two Conservatories) to the cultural conservatism of the Bolsheviks. The leading Bolsheviks like Lenin and Lunacharsky “were committed traditionalists in art, faithful to the petty-bourgeois tastes of the nineteenth-century intelligentsia, the social class from which they had emerged.”³³

What has confused musicologists and historians of Soviet culture, Taruskin suggests, is that in the cultural free-for-all that followed the Civil War, the two factions that rose to prominence are misidentified. The Association of Contemporary Musicians (ASM) represented academic, autonomous, technically advanced modernism while the loose agglomeration of groups recognized as part of the “proletarian music movement” – notably the Revolutionary Association of Proletarian Musicians (RAPM) – were antagonistic towards the supposed autonomy of music, and called for an engagement with the new (Soviet) society in the work of composers and musicians. Because the kind of music proletarian musicians proposed was “antimodern, anti-Western, antijazz,” it has tended to be considered reactionary (in so far as those making the judgment were, in a certain sense at least, pro-modern, pro-Western, pro-jazz).³⁴ The academic rigour of the Belyayev School continued in the compositions of the ASM while the countercultural belligerence of, for example, the literary movement was found among the composers and theorists of the proletarian movement, and especially the RAPM.

They stigmatized the music produced and patronized by the ASM as that of the decadent bourgeoisie, denouncing it under four general rubrics: 1) the cultivation of sensual and pathologically erotic moods; 2) mysticism (these two corresponding to what I have called the “sub-Scriabin” mode); 3) naturalistic reproduction of the movement of the contemporary capitalist city (what is usually called futurism); and 4) cultivation of primitive, coarse subjects (these corresponding to the “sub-Stravinsky” or “sub-Prokofiev” modes).³⁵

The misidentification of these two trends in the Soviet 1920s stems, in Taruskin’s view, from the musical preferences of (Western) historians and musicologists:

There is no need for a revisionist vendetta against the ASM; despite the best efforts of its rediscoverers it is finished, forgotten and unrevivable, and many of its members suffered cruelly under Stalin. But there is a need to challenge its status in conventional historiography as the site of a golden age or an authentic

33 Ibid., 88-89.

34 Again, this is Taruskin’s view of the Western discourse of Russian music. This view is no longer as widely held as it was when *Defining Russia Musically* was published in 1993.

35 Ibid., 92-93.

avant-garde. It was merely the phase of Soviet music that most closely conformed to the Western European modernist model, and hence most amenable to exploration and evaluation on the accepted terms of Western musicology. The ASM was *not* the Soviet avant-garde.³⁶

This correction of the relative positions of the RAPM and the ASM help us to see how one can apply Bourdieu's theory to the history of Soviet music. Had the ASM actually constituted "the Soviet avant-garde" in the 1920s, we would be hard-pressed to explain the victory of the style of music championed by the RAPM in 1932. By recognizing that the RAPM constituted a part of a rising avant-garde in opposition to the traditional values of pre-Revolutionary music – which were continued by the ASM – we can more easily understand how "proletarian music" (though not the RAPM itself) achieved dominance (recognition and consecration) in the early 1930s.³⁷ In order to explain this, however, we need to look more closely at Bourdieu's theory of avant-gardes.

Cultural Capital and the History of Fields

In Bourdieu's field theory, the avant-garde is seen as the motive force in the succession of the field's synchronic states, thereby extending a synchronic system (*langue*) in time (*diachrony*).³⁸ As we have already seen, the field at any given moment consists of positions taken by agents who are active in the field.³⁹ Recognizing which agents can be said to be active in the field is a social task; they can be considered active insofar as they were recognized as active by others in the field at the time:

The *space of literary or artistic position-takings*, i.e. the structured set of the manifestations of the social agents involved in the field – literary or artistic works, of course, but also political acts or pronouncements, manifestos or polemics, etc. – is inseparable from the *space of literary or artistic positions* defined by possession of a determinate quantity of specific capital (recognition).⁴⁰

36 Ibid, 91-92 This accusation has had its effects. In part due to their reading of Taruskin, contemporary Soviet music historians (Edmunds, Tomoff, Nelson, et al) steer clear of applying seemingly "objective" assessments to specific kinds of Soviet music.

37 For historical accounts of this period, see Edmunds, *The Soviet Proletarian Music Movement* and Nelson, *Music for the Revolution*

38 For a discussion of the Structuralists' conception of time and the tensions between synchronic and diachronic systems, see Jameson, *The Prison House of Language*, 5-10 and passim

39 As a Structuralist system like *langue*, the positions of the field are defined by mutual difference from each other, rather than by positive values.

40 Bourdieu, "Field of Cultural Production," 30

What constitutes an established position versus a position in contention, then, depends on the amount of cultural capital, or social recognition, commanded by each agent. In Bourdieu's model, those who are struggling to gain recognition constitute the avant-garde who stand in opposition to those who have already won recognition (compare Taruskin's provisional definition). Those who now occupy established positions were once avant-garde themselves (i.e. antagonistic in their struggle for recognition towards the established positions at that time). Once an avant-garde position becomes sufficiently recognized, they are able to exercise control over those institutions which do the actual recognizing (universities, newspapers, etc.), and are therefore able to reinforce their own cultural capital through the seemingly objective consecration of their positions by these institutions.⁴¹

We can immediately see how this control of the institutions of consecration worked in pre-Revolutionary Russia (Belyayev's circle was also in charge of the conservatories, and comprised journalists, etc.), and how, in the 1920s, the position of the ASM was recognized as the established position through figures who connected it to the Belyayev school like Glazunov. It was the RAPM who occupied the actual avant-garde position, in opposition to the consecrated, traditional modernism of the ASM.⁴² Taruskin sums up this model succinctly:

Now because music history in the West has traditionally been written from an elite modernist perspective, with stylistic complexity and technical innovation valued as the chief earnest of cultural authenticity, the ASM has been greatly glorified as the one bright spot in the otherwise deplorable history of Soviet music... [However] the ASM was *not* the Soviet avant-garde. That distinction must be reserved for its great adversary, the Russian Association of Proletarian Musicians (called the RAPM, after its Russian initials).⁴³

Once the relative positions of the ASM and the RAPM are recognized, it should be possible to predict the victory of the RAPM over the ASM, and this is in fact what happened. The event is obfuscated, however, by the fact that the RAPM itself was

41 The clearest account of Bourdieu's position can be found in Pierre Bourdieu, "The Production of Belief: Contribution to an Economy of Symbolic Goods," in *The Field of Cultural Production*, 106-112 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993)

42 It is, of course, Taruskin's position that the ASM remains consecrated in much Western musicology due to the recognition of historians and musicologists who are actively engaged in the field as it now stands

43 Taruskin, *Defining Russia Musically*, 91-92

disbanded at the same time as its aesthetic position was consecrated by the foremost institution capable of granting cultural capital (recognition): the Soviet state.

On April 23, 1932, a resolution was passed which consecrated a single artistic/cultural position as dominant, legitimate. “On the Reconstruction of Literary and Artistic Organizations” dissolved all the heterogeneous cultural organizations, such as – in music – both the ASM and the RAPM, and reconstituted them beneath state-level unions like the Composers’ Union.⁴⁴ The aesthetic position of the Composers’ Union was more or less that of the proletarian musicians (rather than the ASM), and Boris Schwarz, in his *Music and Musical Life in Soviet Russia*, has written about the disenchantment of those composers and musicians who did not subscribe to RAPM’s views.⁴⁵

In terms of Bourdieu’s model, this rise to an established position from an avant-garde one seems obvious enough, and since it is the network of differences that matters rather than any particular characteristics, it does not matter that the particular organization called RAPM ceased to exist, only that the position taken by it in the field of cultural production at that moment became the legitimate, consecrated one. The position of the ASM continued as well (albeit in another form) in the early modernist music of the 1930s. The young Shostakovich, for example, began to occupy an increasingly antagonistic position with respect to the dominant musical language by the early 1930s.⁴⁶

The question of a dominant musical language brings up two other aspects of Bourdieu’s model, those of doxa⁴⁷ and of “language and symbolic power.”⁴⁸ They are concepts vital to an understanding of the Soviet cultural field and the reconstruction of its positions.

44 An English translation of this document can be found in Edward J. Brown, *The Proletarian Episode in Russian Literature, 1928-1932* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1953), 200-201

45 Schwarz, *Music and Musical Life*, 110.

46 Laurel Fay, *Shostakovich: A Life* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 63-65

Shostakovich had certain ambiguous links with the ASM, for example, through his association with Glazunov and Myaskovsky. See Michael Mishra, *A Shostakovich Companion* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2008), 37-71. However, as Taruskin reminds us, “it is fruitless to try to pigeonhole Shostakovich within the ready-made categories of ASM and RAPM; he was bigger than both of them.” Taruskin, *Defining Russia Musically*, 94

47 Bourdieu, *Theory of Practice*, 159-170

48 Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power*, passim

Soviet Orthodoxy and its Discontents

As we saw in Chapter One the unconscious, embodied practices inculcated through habitus constitute doxa, a region of structured practice which is beyond discourse (i.e. that cannot be the subject of discourse). Doxa, however, can be overthrown when the unconscious conditions for its existence, which had previously been seen as natural and taken for granted, are finally recognized as arbitrary. What replaces doxa in this case is a consciously adhered-to version of the same set of practices which Bourdieu calls “orthodoxy.” For Bourdieu the connection between embodied doxa and language, in addition to their implicit connection in the concept of “symbolic systems,” are brought together through the fact that embodied doxa is precisely brought into question when previously unspoken (i.e. non-discursive), taken-for-granted practices are made explicit in language. This process is precisely the one undergone by the bourgeoisie in the late 18th and early 19th centuries as discussed by Habermas in his *Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*,⁴⁹ but it is also the process which opens up new political spaces in revolutionary periods. Hannah Arendt notes the distinction between unspoken doxa and explicit discourse in her discussion of revolution: “power and authority are no more the same than are power and violence.”⁵⁰ In this conception, power is explicit while authority is doxic, power is embodied and unconscious while violence, while either symbolic or horrifically real, is explicit.

As we have seen in the discussion of early Soviet avant-gardes above, the Russian Revolution was precisely that event which made explicit everything that had previously been subject to Russian doxa, all that had been taken for granted, embodied, impervious to discourse, such as monarchy, the church, socio-economic relations, and cultural values. Once this overcoming of the doxic mode had taken place, cultural matters could no longer revert to unquestioned and unquestionable doxa, and the struggle for orthodoxy became the driving feature of Soviet cultural history. The struggle for position in the 1920s between the modernists who found their unquestioned value no longer taken for granted (the ASM) and those who sought to create a new and hopefully more socially

49 Jurgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1989).

50 Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution* (London: Pelican, 1977), 179.

engaged musical language (the RAPM, for example), led to the imposition in the early 1930s of an orthodox musical language supported by the entire weight of Soviet cultural policy.⁵¹ From this point on, constant successions of avant-gardes vying for a dominant orthodox language became the rule of Soviet musical history. Avant-gardes with little or no cultural capital occupied a heterodox position within the field (Taruskin's "antagonistic" position) until they had gained sufficient recognition and cultural capital to be able to take the legitimate, orthodox position within the field. As we have seen, the proletarian position came out of the 1920s as the orthodox musical language as supported by Soviet cultural/governmental institutions. Modernists like Roslavets, Mosolov, Myaskovsky, and Shostakovich found themselves in the position of composers of heterodox music. Both Roslavets and Mosolov suffered under the new dispensation while Myaskovsky also found himself in trouble at various points in his career. By the end of the 1920s Shostakovich had become the leading modernist composer in the USSR, and was one of the few who continued to write modernist works after the imposition of orthodoxy through the creation of the Composers' Union in 1932.

In this respect, then, and following from Arendt's general proposition, Soviet history and culture can be seen as a complex interplay between explicit orthodoxies, repressed heterodoxies, and symbolic power, "that invisible power which can be exercised only with the complicity of those who do not want to know that they are subject to it or even that they themselves exercise it."⁵² Power and authority are complicated questions in the Soviet case, being both symbolic (invisible) and real (visible); it was never taken for granted in any kind of doxic manner, however: it was always recognized as legitimate only through domination. The question of whether Bourdieu's chart of the "division of the labour of domination" (in *Language and Symbolic Power*) could be applied wholesale to the Soviet system has not yet been resolved.⁵³

It is this lack of a doxic mode in the Soviet Union (following its destruction during the Revolution and Civil War) which makes the question of "symbolic violence" so difficult. For Bourdieu, symbolic violence is "that *intimidation...* which is not aware of what it is (to the extent that it implies no *act of intimidation*) [and] can only be exerted on

⁵¹Tomoff, *Creative Union*, 13-36.

⁵²Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power*, 164.

⁵³Ibid., 165.

a person predisposed (in his habitus) to feel it”⁵⁴ The Soviet Union, especially under Stalinism, thrived on this symbolic domination, indeed, almost the whole history of dissident Soviet literature is an attempt to make explicit the symbolic domination (“fear”) along which the lines of power ran. The primary signifier of this kind of power is the fear of arrest in the middle of the night, which Solzhenitsyn calls a “traditional, even literary image” (i.e. a symbol)

The sharp night-time ring or the rude knock at the door. The insolent entrance of the unwiped jackboots of the unsleeping State Security operatives. The frightened and cowed civilian witness at their backs.⁵⁵

But even this image renders power faceless, makes those who wield it voiceless and leave intact the binary oppositions (high and low, official and private) that we have come to expect in Soviet discourse. Voices from beneath (even “from underground”) have been recovered since the fall of the Soviet Union, but they are still situated with respect to a faceless, voiceless, impersonal power hanging vaguely above them. One of the significant elements in Nikita Mikhalkov’s 1994 film *Utomlyonnye solntsem* (*Burnt by the Sun*) is that the KGB operative who, in the end, arrests Colonel Kotov in 1936) is a friend of Kotov’s family, is accepted into the dacha in one relationship (friend, confidant, lover) and leaves it again in a transformed relationship (jailer).⁵⁶ But Dmitri is never faceless, and his actions and behaviours are not determined by his position within the regime’s structure or the *apparat* but by his relationships with Kotov and his family, with his KGB subordinates, perhaps with Stalin himself. For a long time in the West we have tended to see Soviet power as implacable and impersonal, but in doing so we ignore the power of the “cult of personality” not only surrounding Stalin, but surrounding authority itself.⁵⁷ The extent to which this has been the case in previous periods of Russian history, or indeed in post-Soviet Russia, is still contested, but it is certainly true that symbolic and real violence have marked Russian history to varying degrees in different periods. It is significant that periods of real violence have provided the material for some of the

54 Ibid, 51

55 Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, *The Gulag Archipelago* (New York: Harper and Row, 1973), 4

56 *Burnt by the Sun*, DVD, directed by Nikita Mikhalkov (1994)(Culver City, CA: Sony Pictures, 2003)

57 Another cinematic example can be found in Pavel Chukhrai’s 1997 film *Vor* (*The Thief*), in which the young boy Sanya is enraptured by the tattoo of Stalin on the soldier who is living with his mother. *The Thief*, DVD, directed by Pavel Chukhrai (1997)(Culver City, CA: Sony Pictures, 1999)

greatest works of art in Russian and Soviet culture, for example Musorgsky's *Boris Godunov* and Eisenstein's *Ivan the Terrible*, both of which bore recognized implications for Stalinism throughout the 1930s and 40s

This personal – symbolic – level of authority, however, is in stark contrast to the very public instances of symbolic domination which were employed throughout the Soviet period to impose cultural and political orthodoxy, directly in the case of those on whom the real violence fell, and indirectly in the case of Soviet citizens who simply interpreted the ritual elements on public display, and for whom the violence was (only) symbolic

This is not to suggest that there was a single style or level of the silencing of discourse through the exercise of power. Just as there is a continuum that contains both symbolic and real (violent) power, so there is a continuum that contains varying “shades of ineffability”⁵⁸. In addition to the epistemological limits discussed, for example, by Foucault, the Soviet continuum contains the following kinds of limits on discourse

- The prevention of speaking about certain topics that are part of the *episteme*⁵⁹
- The impossibility of formulating an idea or experience in legitimized language. The coded language of Soviet literature – especially satire – is an attempt to circumvent this
- The ability to work through or with ideas or experiences not amenable to discourse through alternative representations (i.e. alternative epistemes in which such ideas or experiences are open to discursive thought). Ustvolskaya's music is an example of this

A word needs to be said here regarding Foucault's formulation of the classical Greek concept of *episteme*. Originally simply the Greek word for knowledge, Foucault used it to mean the historical conditions on which knowledge and discourse are grounded. Thus, certain ideas cannot – given a particular socio-historical moment – spontaneously occur to people, though these ideas may become possible should certain new circumstances arise. Since various epistemes or power/knowledge systems (discursive systems) can

58 William Echard, personal communication

59 Orlando Figes' *The Whisperers* is precisely about this kind of silencing

coexist, the possibility for ideas to move from thinkable/sayable to unthinkable/unsayable (and vice versa) is possible. These “shades of ineffability” become possible both through the play of different epistemes at a given historical moment, but also through the possibility of non-discursive understanding/expression. Throughout this thesis, I focus primarily on the last point – the ability of working with certain ideas and concepts through representations that exist outside of discourse – but it is important to bear in mind all the other kinds of discursive limiting at play in the Soviet context.

Soviet Music History as the Cycle of Avant-Gardes

In the case of Soviet music, instances of symbolic domination and violence occur after periods of relative heterogeneity in cultural matters, periods in which heterodox (read: avant-garde) positions tend to encroach on established, recognized ones. The first and perhaps most significant of these ritual and symbolic bloodlettings was, of course, the condemnation of Shostakovich and others in 1936 for formalism in the wake of Stalin’s reaction to *Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District*. Formalism, a term which had been in general use for some time,⁶⁰ was now imposed as a label on the heterodox position, negatively defined as an aberration from the established, orthodox doctrine of socialist realism.⁶¹

The decision of the Soviet cultural authorities to reduce the amount of cultural capital won by avant-garde, heterodox positions during the 1930s, and their identification

60 Until now, the term formalism had been associated primarily with the Russian Formalist school of literary theory. See Victor Erlich, *Russian Formalism: History Doctrine* (The Hague: Mouton, 1955). For an account of the term as applied to music, see Edmunds, *Soviet Proleterian Music Movement*, 28-29.

61 See Appendix 1. Recent reevaluations of socialist realism can be found in Bek, et al. *Socialist Realism and Music*. Evgeny Dobrenko “proceeds from an assumption that the fundamental differences between the revolutionary and Stalinist cultures should not be sought only in the level of social tastes, the interests of the social elites, the ‘evil will’ of Stalin, the natural political dynamic of the postrevolutionary process, the inertia of bureaucratic institutions, and so forth, but rather in a synthesis of all these factors.” Evgeny Dobrenko, *Political Economy of Socialist Realism* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007), xi.

of Shostakovich as a leading member of the rising avant-garde,⁶² explains why they chose to wait two years before denouncing *Lady Macbeth* as “muddle instead of music.”⁶³ By 1936, Shostakovich’s position in Soviet music was extremely important, i.e. he was no longer the young up-and-coming composer of the 1920s, but had become a well-known and serious player in the field of Soviet music. His first opera, *The Nose*, had been attacked as formalist by the RAPM in 1927, but in the period before 1932, orthodoxy was still in contention, and the attack had very little effect on Shostakovich’s career. After 1932, when the fundamental values of RAPM had been enshrined in the doctrine of socialist realism and backed by the weight of the Soviet government, such an attack carried much more weight.

While Frans Lemaire sees in “L’affaire *Lady Macbeth*” – the full-scale attack on formalism in music that followed the denunciation of the opera – a reaction to a subtle critique of Soviet collectivization and de-kulakization (class war) policies which Stalin believed to be present in the opera,⁶⁴ Richard Taruskin argues that Shostakovich “used his awesome powers to perpetrate a colossal moral inversion”⁶⁵ – the “whitening” of Katerina Ismailova’s character – and that it was this immoral element that drew Stalin’s ire.

By applying Bourdieu’s model, however, we can arrive at a new way of understanding the *Lady Macbeth* affair. Leaving aside the “objective content” of the piece (as, simply, the historically local characteristics which define difference), we can position *Lady Macbeth* in the Soviet cultural field as an element of a symbolic system which, through the use of a new musical language, attempts to dislodge an already occupied position within the field. This was the position of Dzherzhinsky’s opera *The Quiet Don*, for example, which premiered in 1935 and won its composer a Stalin prize. *The Quiet Don*, based on the novel by Mikhail Sholokhov (winner of the 1965 Nobel

62 Indeed, Taruskin refers to him as “the one major and enduring Soviet composer of the period with genuine avant-garde, not merely elite-modernist, leanings” Taruskin, *Defining Russia Musically*, 94

63 Initially, Shostakovich’s opera was considered a success “le nouvel opéra du jeune Chostakovich fut accueilli très favorablement par la majorité de la critique, il ne quitta plus la scène durant deux ans” Lemaire, *Le desin Russe*, 169.

64 Ibid ,159-190.

65 Taruskin, *Defining Russia Musically*, 502

Prize for literature) was a triumph of socialist realist opera.⁶⁶ On *Lady Macbeth's* premiere in 1934, its position within the field would not have been determined by its relation to Dzherzhinski's opera in particular. Following Stalin and Molotov's very public congratulation of the Dzherzhinski, however, and with all the symbolic capital this recognition conferred, Shostakovich's opera was not only seen in a new light, but demanded an equal and opposite symbolic reaction from the authorities. This symbolic reaction came, as we know, in the denunciation of 1936.

This dynamic of waves of heterodox avant-gardes rising to the dominant position within the field, punctuated by ritual and symbolic acts of domination or violence, continued throughout the Soviet period and, in a very real sense, defined it. During the Second World War, socialist realist orthodoxy was loosened and Shostakovich gained more cultural capital for his war symphonies (which combined accessible, patriotic music in the 7th with high-modernist difficulty in the 8th). This loosening of orthodoxy required a reaffirmation of socialist realism when the war was over – the 1948 imposition of the Zhdanov doctrine included, but was not restricted to, a denunciation of Shostakovich.

By 1958, however, Shostakovich and his “clones”⁶⁷ constituted a new established order in Soviet music. Nominally (symbolically), socialist realism remained the orthodox language, but Shostakovich's music (either by him or by the “little Shostakoviches”) occupied the dominant positions within the field. Symbolically, Shostakovich's position was cemented by his joining the Communist Party in the 1960s, an act that has troubled Soviet music scholars ever since.⁶⁸ The period in which Shostakovich's ascendancy was assured is known as “The Thaw,”⁶⁹ and is the subject of a recent study of “unofficial music” of the period by Peter Schmelz. The new generation of “underground composers” positioned themselves against the consecrated language of Shostakovich, occupying heterodox positions within the field. Significantly, it is this occupation of an orthodox

66 Lemaire, *Le destin Russe*, 170 Interestingly, Lemaire states that Shostakovich helped Dzherzhinsky to finish the opera, and also helped with the orchestration (171) For an explanation of “socialist realist opera,” see Appendix

67 Laurel Fay, *Shostakovich A Life*, 163 A 1948 cartoon in *Sovetskaya muzyka* depicted a long line of “malenkie Shostakovichi” (“little Shostakoviches”) emerging from the St Petersburg Conservatory Fay translates the last line of the satirical verse below the cartoon as “all the Shostakovich clones”

68 Ibid

69 The term is drawn from Ilya Ehrenburg's novel *Otpepel'* [The Thaw] (Moskva Sovetskij pisatel, 1954) For an account of the reception of Ehrenburg's novel and the beginnings of the Thaw period, see Orlando Figes, *The Whisperers Private Life in Stalin's Russia* (New York Picador, 2007), 590-596

position by Shostakovich and a heterodox position by the unofficial composers, beginning (in Schmelz' view) with Andrey Volkonsky,⁷⁰ that exposes the problematic position of Ustvol'skaya in this schema. Generationally, Ustvol'skaya falls between Shostakovich (b. 1906) and Volkonsky (b. 1933). She does not fit the neat generational model sketched out by Schmelz, despite being a pedagogical bridge between the two generations.⁷¹

The "Ustvol'skaya Myth" and the Dominance of Shostakovich

In his introduction to one of the few critical engagements with Ustvol'skaya's music, Ulrich Tadday writes of the increased attention being paid to Ustvol'skaya's life, in contrast to the continued ignorance of her music. There is a gap, he writes, between her life and her work which ought to be called the "Ustvol'skaya Myth." "Neither our increased enchantment with the composer, nor our struggle against the critical disenchantment of her mythos are of truly scholarly interest. Only the sober observation and analysis of [her] music, whose secret has not long been lifted, merits our attention."⁷²

The use of the terms "myth" (*Mythos*), enchantment (*Verzauberung*) and disenchantment (*Entzauberung*) are significant in locating the place of Ustvol'skaya in the field of Soviet music. Olga Gladkova's authorized biography is entitled "Music as Magic" (*Musik als Magische Kraft*)⁷³, and seems to reflect an esoteric, even hermetic, focus in Ustvol'skaya criticism, stemming perhaps from her oft-quoted statement in the introduction to Gladkova's biography that her music is spiritual, but not religious, and that "my music can simply not be understood."⁷⁴

70 Peter Schmelz, "Andrey Volkonsky and the Beginning of Unofficial Music," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 58, no. 1 (2005) 139-207, and *Such Freedom*, 67-68

71 David Fanning, "Shostakovich and his Students," in *Shostakovich and his World*, ed. Laurel Fay (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), 275-302

72 Ulrich Tadday, "Vorwort," *Musik-Konzepte* 143 *Galina Ustvol'skaja*, 3-4 (Munich, Text+Kritik, 2009), 3 "Weder die weitere Verzauberung der Komponistin noch die kramphaft kritische Entzauberung ihres Mythos sind von wahrhaft wissenschaftlichem Interesse. Allein die nüchterne Betrachtung und Analyse einer Musik, deren Geheimnis noch lange nicht gelüftet ist, verdient unsere Aufmerksamkeit." My translation.

73 The Russian title, *Muzyka kak navazhdenie*, means "music as hallucination," "music as obsession," or "music as witchcraft."

74 Galina Ustvol'skaya, introduction to Olga Gladkova *Musik als Magische Kraft* (Berlin: Ernst Kuhn, 2001), ix "Daher kann auch ich sagen. 'Meine Musik läßt sich einfach nicht verstehen!'"

The view of Ustvol'skaya as spiritual in a non-ecclesiastical, even pagan sense, the sense of music as witchcraft, as enchanting situates her life and work beyond both official structures of church and state, but also beyond (or before) reason and science. There is a sense in which Ustvol'skaya's music is not amenable to intellectual criticism or musical analysis, that it is somehow pre-symbolic in the Lacanian sense, struggling against the tyranny of the father, the tyranny of metaphor, and maintaining in the face of the symbolic a focus on the Imaginary, a focus on the body.

As we have seen, the musical language of Shostakovich had come to be dominant, in Bourdieu's sense, by the late 1950s. Ustvol'skaya's early music, from the mid-1940s until the mid-1950s, is firmly under the domination of Shostakovich's language.⁷⁵ Her career, then, can be seen as an attempt to rebel against, to escape, the attentions of the father (who, in the Lacanian model, is the representative of the Other, of the symbolic order itself). Ustvol'skaya sought to escape from Shostakovich in reality, through much of what she said to students. She is quoted as saying, "it would seem that such an outstanding figure as Shostakovich was not outstanding to me – on the contrary, was painful, and killed my best feelings,"⁷⁶ anecdotes reiterating this fill the memoirs of her students.⁷⁷ But she also (and perhaps most importantly) sought to reject his dominance through a symbolic rejection of his language. The relationship of teacher to student was strained in Shostakovich's insistence to the extent that it was he who learned from her, and not vice versa, in his sharing of his own work-in-progress with her, and in his quoting of her music in his own.⁷⁸ It is not a stretch to see in this relationship that of a father to a daughter, and to recognize in Shostakovich's proposal of marriage (1954) an attempt on his part to take the relationship to its incestuous conclusion.

That Shostakovich's language was the dominant musical language in the period following his rejected marriage proposal means that, in Bourdieu's schema, he wielded

75 Blois, "Shostakovich and the Ustvol'skaya Connexion": 10

76 Quoted in Alex Ross, "Radio Ustvol'skaya," *The Rest is Noise* blog, May 2010
<http://www.therestisnoise.com/2010/05/index.html> (Accessed November 19, 2010)

77 In the absence of a scholarly biography, Ustvol'skaya's student's memoirs are all we have. See, for example, Bokman, *Variations*, p 41 "Attempts to speak about Shostakovich with Galina Ustvol'skaya were unsuccessful. It was not a 'forbidden topic', but any question, remark, or phrase, containing his name, was interrupted by a dismissive hand gesture"

78 Ibid.

enormous symbolic power. Thus it was that, even after graduating from Shostakovich's class (in which he wielded real power), Ustvolskaya could not escape his power over her. However, for Bourdieu, symbolic power is "that invisible power which can be exercised only with the complicity of those who do not want to know that they are subject to it or even that they themselves exercise it,"⁷⁹ such as the "Shostakovich clones" of the period. Ustvolskaya understood only too well her subjection to Shostakovich's invisible power, and had to find a way out. It is my contention that she found a way out in a return to the body, to the Imaginary as opposed to the Lacanian Symbolic. I will return to this question in Chapter 4.

For right now, we have to determine the consequences of a symbolic rejection, a rejection of language. For Bourdieu doxa, while initially inculcated through the body, was also, and perhaps most fully, a function of discourse (i.e. language).

So far as the social world is concerned, the neo-Kantian theory, which gives language and, more generally, representations a specifically symbolic efficacy in the construction of reality, is perfectly justified. By structuring the perception which social agents have of the social world, the act of naming helps to establish the structure of this world, and does so all the more significantly the more widely it is recognized, i.e. authorized.⁸⁰

This is in agreement with Foucault's (and Butler's) understanding of the constitutive, but *also the exclusionary* power of discourse. Discourse creates subjects capable of and desiring to speak, but it also creates subjects who are incapable or not authorized to speak.⁸¹ For Foucault, "in every society the production of discourse is at the same time controlled, selected, organized and redistributed by a certain number of procedures whose role is to conjure up the powers and the dangers, to master the arbitrary event, to dodge the weight, the redoubtability, of materiality."⁸² Foucault goes on to say that, in a society like ours, we know "the procedures of exclusion,"⁸³ which for Bourdieu are not only those of participation in discourse, but those of doxa itself. Doxa – that discourse which

79 Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power*, 164

80 Ibid. 105

81 Bourdieu quotes Austin in this regard

82 "[J]e suppose que dans toute société la production du discours est à la fois contrôlée, sélectionnée, organisée et redistribuée par un certain nombre de procédures qui ont pour rôle d'en conjurer les pouvoirs et les dangers, d'en maîtriser l'événement aléatoire, d'en esquiver la lourde, la redoutable matérialité." Michel Foucault, *L'ordre du discours: leçon inaugurale au Collège de France prononcée le 2 décembre 1970* (Paris: Gallimard, 1971), 10-11. My translation

83 Ibid., 11

goes unrecognized as discourse (and therefore wields symbolic power) – excludes what it does not dominate through an exclusion from discourse (from Symbolic, that is linguistic, or conscious, thought). In rejecting the domination of Shostakovich’s symbolic power, Ustvol’skaya rejected his language, and therefore placed herself outside of discourse. This exclusion is precisely the cause of the “gap” between her life (known and understood) and her music, which is not only *not* understood, but *incapable of being understood*, since understanding is reliant upon the Symbolic order, language itself. The only way to understand the music of Ustvol’skaya, then, is to leave the realm of language, of discourse (which excludes Ustvol’skaya anyway), to a non-linguistic, pagan, magical and Imaginary realm dominated not by language, but by the body.⁸⁴

84 Note that by framing Ustvol’skaya’s rebellion in this way, as a symbolic rebellion against the father, we avoid the standard feminist critique in, for example, Rachel Foulds’ “Masculinity versus Femininity: An Overriding Dichotomy in the Music of Soviet Composer Galina Ustvol’skaya,” *eSharp*, Issue 9, Spring 2007 (no pagination)

3. LANGUAGE, THE BODY, AND THE GROTESQUE

The Relation of Music to Language and the Body – Habitus and Performativity – The Theory of Embodiment – The Body and the Semiotic – Markedness Theory – Bodily Gesture and Musical Gesture – Gestures of the Grotesque Body – Case Study: Shostakovich

The Relation of Music to Language and the Body

At the beginning of his chapter on “The Social Conditions for the Effectiveness of Ritual Discourse,” Bourdieu states that

As soon as one treats language as an autonomous object, accepting the radical separation which Saussure made between internal and external linguistics, between the science of language and the science of the social uses of language, one is condemned to looking within words for the power of words, that is, looking for it where it is not to be found.... The power of words is nothing other than the *delegated power* of the spokesperson, and his speech – that is, the substance of his discourse, and inseparably – his way of speaking – is no more than a testimony, and one among others, of the *guarantee of delegation* which is vested in him.¹

If we replace the words “language” and “words” with “music” in this paragraph, we begin to see how Bourdieu’s linguistic model can be more or less directly applied in music. Rather than a theory of immanent meaning in music (“looking within music for the power of music”) such as that proposed by, for example, John Shepherd and Peter Wicke,² Bourdieu’s model allows us to look for the power of music in its social context. In the case of Shostakovich and Ustvolskaya, it should be clear from the preceding chapters that the dominance of Shostakovich’s music was inextricably linked with his delegated power in Soviet cultural society, while the lack of recognition of Ustvolskaya – both for her person and for her music – was precisely due to her lack of (symbolic) power. Shostakovich, in other words, possessed “power in proportion to [his] symbolic capital, i.e., in proportion to the recognition [he] receive[d]” from Soviet cultural society, which power was employed “as the socially recognized power to impose a certain vision of the social world.”³

1 Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power*, 107

2 John Shepherd and Peter Wicke, *Music and Cultural Theory* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1997). See also John Shepherd, *Music as Cultural Text* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991) While Shepherd and Wicke (correctly) insist on the grounding of musical meaning in the social, they still maintain that meaning arises primarily in purely musical elements

3 Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power*, 106.

In Chapter Two, we saw how Soviet cultural authority was constituted, and how its recognition of authorized and legitimized language exerted that authority over agents in the Soviet cultural field. We saw how, by the late 1950s, the musical language of Shostakovich had been recognized and consecrated as that with the most symbolic power, and how Ustvolskaya, for reasons of her own, rejected her teacher's language and, in effect, removed herself from the discourse of Soviet music. It is now time to make the connection between this "being outside of discourse" and the silencing not only of critical response to her music, but of the music itself. This connection is composed of two different strands, both focused firmly on the body as the site of affect and subjectivity that is beyond discourse: the first strand is concerned with identity politics, the second with the abject.

"Biopolitics" is a term that arose in the Collège de France lectures given by Michel Foucault between 1975-1978,⁴ as well as in the first volume of his *Histoire de la sexualité* (1976). Foucault's biopolitics extend Bourdieu's notion of the embodied habitus to take into consideration the direct application of power on the body. The "set of relations" or "procedures" which, in Bourdieu, both structure the subject and are in turn structured by the subject are, for Foucault

not "self-generating" or "self-subsistent", they are not founded on themselves. Power is not founded on itself or generated by itself () There are not family type relationships and then, over and above them, mechanisms of power, there are not sexual relationships with, in addition, mechanisms of power alongside or above them. Mechanisms of power are an intrinsic part of all these relations and, in a circular way, are both their effect and cause. What's more, in the different mechanisms of power intrinsic to relations of production, family relations, and sexual relations, it is possible, of course to find lateral co-ordinations, hierarchical subordinations, isomorphic correspondences, technical identities or analogies, and chain effects. This allows us to undertake a logical, coherent, and valid investigation of the set of these mechanisms of power and to identify what is specific about them at a given moment, for a given period, in a given field.⁵

What this translates into, for Foucault, is the notion that the mechanisms of power already present within a given discourse serve to create the subjectivities (people) that implement that power and reproduce it over time. In the first volume of the *History of*

4 Published in English as *Society Must Be Defended* (New York: Picador, 2003) and *Security, Territory, Population* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).

5 Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*, 2.

Sexuality, Foucault impresses upon us the fact that in the most sexually repressive period (the Victorian), the discourse surrounding sex (including silence) not only never ceased, but actually increased. The mechanisms of power include the possibility of the transgression of law.

If sex is repressed, that is, condemned to prohibition, nonexistence, and silence, then the mere fact that one is speaking about it has the appearance of a deliberated transgression. A person who holds forth in such language places himself to a certain extent outside the reach of power, he upsets the established law, he somehow anticipates the coming freedom.⁶

Accordingly, the musical field in the Soviet Union, like Foucault's family or sexual relations, was shot through with power relations dependent on a given subject's capacity to speak and to be heard. This brings Bourdieu's notion of legitimacy and recognition down to the level of the individual subject and his/her relation to the mechanisms of power both institutional (such as the Conservatory or the Union of Composers) and personal (being a student, a teacher, or a woman, for example). However, for Ustvolskaya (as for Foucault) the notion of "being" was problematic. Foucault's famous protestation from *The Archaeology of Knowledge* could serve as a motto for Ustvolskaya herself: "Do not ask who I am and do not ask me to remain the same. Leave it to our bureaucrats and our police to see that our papers are in order."⁷ In other words, the data we take to constitute our personalities serve just as much to constrain us, constituting us as subjects of a particular state. Ustvolskaya's abhorrence of interviews is well known, as is her insistence that her music cannot and should not be analyzed or "understood."⁸ Ustvolskaya's rejection of the category of "women's music" is equally well-known but, I would argue, not well-understood. In a letter written to Viktor Suslin at Sikorski (Ustvolskaya's music publisher), Ustvolskaya writes:

What is a "festival of women's music"? Is there really a difference between "men's" and "women's" music? If they organize a festival of WOMEN'S music then it follows that they should also organize a festival of MEN'S music. However, I believe that no such division exists. Only music which is genuine and strong should be performed. Strictly speaking, performing the proposed music within the context of WOMEN'S music is a humiliation. Anton Chekhov

6 Foucault, *History of Sexuality* vol 1 6

7 Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (New York: Routledge 1989), 19

8 Derks, "Very Nearly an Interview," 31, Gladkova, *Musik als Magische Kraft*, 1

expressed this in a reasonable way ‘if the cat writes something remarkable then I will respect her’⁹

This denial of the category of women, along with an ostensible “masculinity” of style,¹⁰ has led some feminist critics to mistakenly characterize Ustvol’skaya’s position with respect to gender. For Rachel Foulds, Ustvol’skaya’s denial of femininity and adoption of a “masculine” musical language was an attempt to avoid being ghettoized as a woman, however, Foulds also maintains that any attempt at understanding her music must be informed by an understanding of Ustvol’skaya as a gendered subject.

Ustvol’skaya would not compromise her role as a composer in favour of a typical domestic role. The Soviet attitude towards equality explains Ustvol’skaya’s adopted attitude and consequent rejection of femininity. In order to fully comprehend Ustvol’skaya’s “gendered self” in her music, it is necessary to take into account her biographical experiences as a woman. Nevertheless, whatever the motivations for her implemented musical language, Ustvol’skaya expresses herself as a woman in a masculine language conveying contempt, in many ways, for both the male and the female.¹¹

Foulds suggests here that Ustvol’skaya’s musical language was a “front,” a ruse to hide her femininity beneath a mask of masculine style and language. But I would read Ustvol’skaya’s letter (also quoted by Foulds in a performative rather than an essentialist light). This is not to suggest that a performative reading is the only – or even the best possibility – but by viewing her statements through the lens of performativity, Ustvol’skaya’s various positions become, at a stroke, more consistent. It is not who she *is* but what she *does* that is important. Do not ask her to remain the same.

In *Gender Trouble*, Judith Butler addresses the contradiction between a universal category of femininity and a performative view of gender.

The presumed universality and unity of the subject of feminism is effectively undermined by the constraints of the representational discourse in which it functions. Indeed, the premature insistence on a stable subject of feminism,

9 Ustvol’skaya Official Site <http://ustvol’skaya.org/eng/index.php> Section “Extracts from letters by Galina Ustvol’skaya to Viktor Suslin,” paragraph 3 (Accessed November 21, 2010)

10 “There is a pounding masculinity in many of Ustvol’skaya’s scores – few men, let alone women, have written music as violent as this.” “The Lady With the Hammer”

<http://www.siu.edu/~aho/musov/ust/ust.html> Section “A Need for Purity” para 4

11 Foulds, “Masculinity Verses Femininity” 13

understood as a seamless category of women, inevitably generated multiple refusals to accept the category¹²

Any feminist account of Usvtolskaya's life and work must take into consideration the exclusionary potential of a narrowly defined category of "woman," but must also address the possibility of rejecting a static identity politics based on "being" for a more performative politics, such as that proposed by Foucault and Butler

Habitus and Performativity

The whole notion of performativity places Bourdieu's habitus under tension. If the habitus structures *identity* formation, then any conception of subjectivity not based on identity (but on performance) throws the notion of habitus into jeopardy, allowing a subject to adopt the habitus of another subject, through performance (this is, in effect, Foucault's position). If this were possible, what becomes of Bourdieu's notion of "the ability to speak," or the recognition of a subject as capable of making a given speech act (or, in other words, take a particular position) by virtue of their (recognized, consecrated) habitus? Butler critiques Bourdieu's position extensively in *Excitable Speech*, but for our purposes, the following points are important to connect language and speech acts with bodily performativity.

Firstly, for Butler, speech acts must be seen first and foremost as bodily acts. As a result, "the bodily effects of speech exceed the intentions of the speaker, raising the question of the speech act itself as a nexus of bodily and psychic forces"¹³ Secondly, given that speech acts are bodily acts, the induction of the subject into language creates not only a grammatical subject, but a particular body as well.

If a subject becomes a subject by entering the normativity of language, then in some important ways, these rules precede and orchestrate the very formation of the subject. Although the subject enters the normativity of language, the subject exists only as a grammatical fiction prior to that very entrance. Moreover, as Lacan and Lacanians have argued, that entrance into language comes at a price: the norms that govern the inception of the speaking subject differentiate the

12 Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1990), 7

13 Judith Butler, *Excitable Speech: A Politics of the Performative* (New York: Routledge, 1997), 99

subject from the unspeakable, that is, produce an unspeakability as the condition of subject formation.¹⁴

In bodily terms, the “speakable” body (i.e. body capable of speech as well as capable of being spoken of) is differentiated from the unspeakable materiality of the uncensored body. Since, for Bourdieu, only what is “within discourse” can constitute a position within a field (i.e. the orthodox and the heterodox, but not what is outside both), only speech acts narrowly defined as acts of using language can be politically or culturally relevant. Butler takes issue with this conception and states that, while Bourdieu provides a plausible explanation for the way in which the inculcation of societal norms occurs, and recognizes that there are other poles than the orthodoxy and the heterodox, he

fails to understand... how what is bodily in speech resists and confounds the very norms by which it is regulated. Moreover, he offers an account of the performativity of political discourse that neglects the tacit performativity of bodily “speech,” the performativity of the *habitus*. His conservative account of the speech act presumes that the conventions that will authorize the performative are already in place, thus failing to account for the Derridean “break” with context that utterances perform. His view fails to consider the crisis in convention that speaking the unspeakable produces, the insurrectionary “force” of censored speech as it emerges into “official discourse” and opens the performative to an unpredictable future.¹⁵

This connection between bodily performativity and performative speech links the embodied habitus with the very relations of power, recognition, and capacity to speak (or to name) outlined at the beginning of this chapter. Since symbolic power, for Bourdieu, is constituted in the ability and willingness to speak, speech acts engage directly with relations of power, and “speaking the unspeakable,” seen as the performance of a speech act by one not authorized to speak, destabilizes the relations of power in unforeseeable ways. In terms of symbolic power, this question of self-censorship and the limits of discourse have enormous implications, obviously, for Soviet history in general, but in particular, they problematize the question of Ustvol'skaya's silence in a particularly flexible and powerful way. Butler's critique also serves to prevent us from applying Bourdieu's model too uncritically.

14 Ibid., 93.

15 Ibid., 142.

The Theory of Embodiment

The concept of embodiment is an important one for Bourdieu. The habitus, in his view, is inscribed/inscribes itself on the individual not (at first) through a symbolic process – “without going through discourse or consciousness.” Instead, the habitus is inscribed through the body (in the mimicry of the child, etc) and through other unconscious “structural exercises” as well as the dialectic between practice and spaces already structured by previous practices (in the home, the office, etc).

The house, an *opus operatum*, lends itself as such to a deciphering, but only to a deciphering which does not forget that the “book” from which the children learn their vision of the world is read with the body, in and through the movements and displacements which make the space within which they are enacted as much as they are made by it.¹⁶

The fact that habitus is inscribed bodily, and only *later* supported by “second-order strategies” such as discourse, makes the following statement important to any study of Soviet culture, and perhaps especially Soviet music:

If all societies and, significantly, all the “totalitarian institutions” [...] that seek to produce a new man through a process of “deculturation” and “reculturation” set such store on the seemingly most insignificant details of dress, bearing, physical and verbal manners, the reason is that, treating the body as a memory, they entrust to it in abbreviated and practical, i.e., mnemonic, form the fundamental principles of the arbitrary content of the culture.¹⁷

The Body and the Semiotic

For our purposes it is more profitable to investigate the possible connections between the embodied habitus and the body as a site of musical signification. The body is only one possible way of combining social theory with musical semiotics. William Echard notes

16 Bourdieu, “The Field of Cultural Production,” 90 In music, cf Roland Barthes, “The Grain of the Voice,” in *Image, Music, Text* (New York Hill and Wang, 1977), 179-189 David Lidov states that “gestures in music are in some way determined by a relation with the body” David Lidov, *Is Language a Music? Writings on Musical Form and Signification* (Bloomington. Indiana University Press, 2005), 11

17 Bourdieu, “The Field of Cultural Production,” 94 With regard to “verbal manners,” one thinks of the ubiquitous “tovarishch” of the Soviet Union

several possible “points of convergence” between them (topic theory, homology and iconicity, and the body),¹⁸ and other points of convergence are suggested by other readings of Bourdieu.¹⁹ My own reading of Echard and of David Lidov has led me to want to explore some of the connections between theories of semiotics and musical embodiment on one hand and Bourdieu’s habitus on the other.²⁰

Much of Lidov’s work – indeed, much of musical semiotics as a whole – seems based on the concept that music, despite the counter-intuitive nature of this proposition, is in some way representational or referential. However, for Lidov, music’s capacity for representation is not of the same *kind* as that of language. Rather than representing entities individuated in space (“gestalt”) and present to vision, as words do, music represents non-individuated kinetic and positional continuities present to the body’s less articulated senses (touch, spatial awareness, etc.)

What words refer to most simply has to do first and foremost with the actions and things we see, including other people, even if our ways of conceptualizing these objects proceeds by identifying physically with them in our imagination. In its elementary reference, language is most characteristically a system of articulated sounds correlated with articulated objects (gestalts), while music, a deeply continuous medium, is correlated with the continuities of the kinesphere as felt in proprioception, not as seen. Musical reference, sustained by principles of tension, direction, energy, motion, and inertia, begins with indices, not symbols.²¹

I would like to argue that a reading of an embodied theory of musical representation through Bourdieu’s habitus (and by extension both his field and practice theory) offers suggestive insights into the struggles for musical orthodoxy in the Soviet Union, yet it remains only a partial account. Theories cannot be held up to objective evaluations of truth or falsity, but stand or fall by their discursive efficacy. I propose that the most satisfying way to apply Bourdieu’s work to the Soviet case is to see the struggles for orthodoxy as taking place at two levels – a large-scale level of linguistic structures – the struggle for a dominant language – and a smaller, more intimate semiotic level – the struggle for a dominant set of musical gestures. As Lidov also points out these two levels

18 William Echard, *Neil Young and the Poetics of Energy* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005), 119.

19 Language, for example, in Bourdieu’s *Language and Symbolic Power*.

20 Both *Is Language a Music?* and David Lidov, *Elements of Semiotics* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1999).

21 Lidov, *Is Language a Music?*, 9.

are complementary, not antagonistic “Elaborated music and language form discourses that convey attitudes and broadly resonant models of experience. When they are considered in their complexity, some of the distance that separates music from language is traversed.”²²

William Echard maintains that semiotics remains useful as a “high-level descriptive framework for theorists who seek to explain the social formation of meaning and who wish to do so in a manner both systematic and non-reductive,” despite “never having acquired a standard methodology or a common set of concepts.”²³ He proposes three possible “points of convergence” between semiotics and the social theories of Bakhtin and Bourdieu: topic theory, homology and iconicity, and the body. The response of the body, or the body as a machine for the production of meaning, is not incompatible with a strict semiotic theory (i.e. one based on the play of signifiers): the necessary link between semiotic concepts, the site on which music’s representational capacity is inscribed, is the body.

Embodiment – the centrality of bodily experience to other experiences – has become a central concern in critical theory since at least the work of Foucault,²⁴ and has remained a central aspect of much postmodern theory. For Echard, the “central focus” on the body “is another unifying theme in the semiotics of popular music and Western concert music.”²⁵ Echard summarizes some of the main concepts in the history of the body as critical object, but most important for this discussion is the link he makes with Bourdieu’s habitus. Following on from “conceptual metaphor theory,” Echard draws an explicit connection with Bourdieu’s theory of practice, and of the habitus in particular. As we have already seen, Bourdieu’s habitus is as much a set of embodied as of mental dispositions, indeed the bodily orientation within the world (the field of practice) is primary for him, both chronologically and strategically. The cultural schema and the economy of practice must be sufficiently internalized (i.e. in the body) to allow for the

22 Ibid. 10

23 Echard, *Neil Young* 112

24 This is particularly the case in, for instance *Discipline and Punish* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1977) and *The Birth of the Clinic: An Archaeology of Medical Perception* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1973)

25 Echard, *Neil Young* 112

unconscious and spontaneous improvisation of strategies which is the hallmark of all practice. In order to fully integrate the Soviet cultural schema outlined in Chapter 2 with the internalized bodily structures of Soviet composers and listeners, we will need to investigate the theory of musical gesture, which has been most deeply developed in recent years by Robert Hatten.

Markedness Theory

Hatten's *Musical Meaning in Beethoven: Markedness, Correlation, and Interpretation* (1994) laid out the theoretical concepts of "markedness" and "troping,"²⁶ and *Interpreting Musical Gestures, Topics, and Tropes: Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert* (2004) applied the early theoretical concepts to a fully-fledged theory of gesture.²⁷ In 2006, Hatten defined human gesture in general as "any energetic shaping through time that may be interpreted as significant."²⁸ This energetic shaping takes advantage of "imagistic perception" and "temporal gestalt perception" to synthesize quanta of sensorimotor movement ("molar gesture") into "affectively loaded," "intersubjective" gestures significant to an interpreter.²⁹

As a *basic category*, then, a prototypical gesture becomes an extremely coherent perceptual gestalt, in that it can combine, in the perceptual present, the nuanced syntheses of both imagistic and temporal modes of gestalt perception. In other words, an interpreter can experience the *immediacy* of a qualitative perception that is being both reinforced and modulated by the *continuity* of a dynamic perception. Interestingly, these two modes of perception correspond to Charles Sanders Peirce's categories of the iconic and the indexical, respectively.³⁰

The concept of "markedness" will be important to our discussion of Ustvolskaya's music, as well as in determining her problematic position within Soviet music. The classification of binary oppositions into marked and unmarked pairs acts as a homology between different interpretive frameworks and systems. Hatten's markedness theory places pairs of like musical elements into a relationship where one of the elements is

26 Hatten, *Musical Meaning in Beethoven*.

27 Robert S. Hatten, *Interpreting Musical Gestures, Topics, and Tropes: Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004).

28 Hatten, "A Theory of Musical Gesture," 2.

29 *Ibid.*, 2-3.

30 *Ibid.*, 2. Hatten's italics.

considered the natural, normal, or ordinary state. This element is considered “unmarked” in the relationship, i.e. it does not require to be explicitly noticed, therefore carries no mark to signal its existence. A good example is major vs. minor tonality. The major is considered so natural and normal that it is taken for granted, is unnoticed. The minor, on the other hand, sticks out, gets noticed. Linguistically, gender is a marked/unmarked pair: the (masculine) word “actor” serves for both male and female thespians; the word “actress,” on the other hand, is marked; it calls attention to the gender of the person specified. Marked elements in a musical composition are determined by their relationship to an unmarked norm in the same way that heterodox formulations in the field of cultural production are defined against orthodoxy. What is neither marked nor unmarked in music is incoherent (or stylistically negligible), in the same way that what is neither orthodox nor heterodox is unthinkable and beyond discourse. This does not mean that elements such as the physical experience of repeated massive, crushing ostinato piano clusters at nearly impossible volume do not exist or are not amenable to critique, simply that the discursive requirements of criticism are different. Discourse itself may prove to be inadequate to comprehend them. I believe that the theory of musical gesture allows us to raise these problematic elements in music, while the theory of the body in Bourdieu – which will be elaborated in Chapter Four – will allow us to discuss the unspoken or unthinkable within a social system.

The hermeneutic work done by Robert Hatten is based primarily on a conception of meaning produced through opposition.³¹ I take this to be equivalent to the concept of definition through “difference” in both Bourdieu and post-Structuralists like Derrida and Deleuze. For Derrida, in a system of two given terms, one term is always privileged, conceived as natural, taken for granted.³² Derrida’s *différance* forces us to recognize each term in the binary system to be defined in opposition to other terms, not necessarily (but most conveniently illustrated as) directly opposed. I suppose that for Hatten, musical binary oppositions are similar, in that they come into being together, with one element

31 Drawing on Peirce’s semiotics, Hatten employs elements of similarity (iconicity) and connectedness (indexicality) in addition to opposition

32 Such as the privileging of the written over the spoken word “By a slow movement whose necessity is hardly perceptible, everything that for at least some twenty centuries tended toward and finally succeeded in being gathered under the name of language is beginning to let itself be transferred to, or at least summarized under, the name of writing” Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology* (Baltimore Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974), 6 and passim

achieving an unmarked orthodoxy, with a network of other elements being more or less marked in relation to one another and to the unmarked term, according to the level of their heterodoxy. The power dynamic implicit in the conception of orthodoxy vs heterodoxy is very much present in Hatten's model.

Markedness deals with one dimension of musical meaning, that which arises from difference, in the Saussurean sense that meaning is difference. Different implies opposition, but the oppositions that are characterized by markedness are typically *asymmetrical*: one term is marked (with respect to some value or feature), and the opposing term (or field) is unmarked.³³

The fact that the unmarked term or field constitutes the norm from which marked terms deviate means precisely that "the marked term is more narrowly defined and distributed, and, significantly, it has a correspondingly narrower realm of meaning than the unmarked term."³⁴ In tonal music this can be seen in the unmarked naturalness of the major mode compared to the marked mode of the minor key.

However, an interpretation of music based solely on the markedness of binary opposition would be too simplistic. Instead, a given musical event achieves a more nuanced significance through the composition of "a number of oppositional relationships."³⁵ In essence, then, the significance of musical events within a work is structured along the same lines as Bourdieu's network of differences within the given fields and subfields of cultural production.

For Bourdieu the field of cultural production is comprised of "positions" – the social agents and cultural products which are defined by the network of relations in which they exist (i.e. by a system of differences) – and "position-takings," the actions taken by social agents through specific instances of cultural production and manifestation, ranging from self-evident forms such as writing a book or a symphony, to speeches, manifestos, directives to subordinates, public exhibitions, etc. Every position-taking, in staking out a position within the network of differences, changes the definition of all the other positions at once. Social agents also are not restricted to those agents more narrowly defined as cultural producers (writers, painters, composers, etc.), but to all those who contribute to "the creation of the creator" (publishers, music company executives, art

33 Hatten, *Interpreting Musical Gestures: Topics and Tropes*, 11

34 *Ibid.*, 11

35 *Ibid.*, 25

gallery owners, impresarios), who Bourdieu insists contribute fundamentally to the production of a work and hence must be understood as active players in the field of cultural production. Positions within a given field are not understood as being defined through positive characteristics, but through differences. The identity of a position, to paraphrase Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, is in its difference from all other positions.³⁶

A musical event, then, can be understood in the same way: it exists within a field of other events and gains its significance through its difference from them. It is this “identity through difference” that allows musical elements to be combined to achieve a more nuanced signification than any would possess on its own. This combination, or troping, of individually contributive semiotic constructions (musical elements) places Hatten’s theory of markedness within topic theory more generally. Topic theory, drawn from Ratner and explored in the work of Raymond Monelle, Kofi Agawu, and others, has become “a standard point of reference for analysts nowadays,”³⁷ and has been well-exploited in music from the 18th and early 19th centuries (i.e. the more stable decades of the common practice era). It has been extended more and more into the 19th century, but has not been used particularly on 20th century music.³⁸

The lack of “common practice” in much 20th century music (even music as resolutely tonal as Shostakovich’s) tends to make the question of oppositionality and markedness more difficult in some ways, but simpler in other ways. In “modern” (i.e. post-common-practice period) music, the work itself posits the unmarked norms that hold throughout the piece. Despite being explicitly “theoretical,” many pieces of modern music set up their own stylistic norms rather than relying on stylistic competencies being brought to them by the listener. It is for this reason that modern music seems so much more “difficult”: the listener has no “horizon of expectations” (*Erwartungshorizont*),³⁹ except that constructed by the piece itself. It is only through repeated engagement with a particular piece that its norms can be internalized and departures from them understood.

36 “Ferdinand de Saussure has remarked that the 'same' phoneme pronounced twice or by two different people is not identical with itself. Its only identity lies in its difference from all other phonemes ” Spivak, “Translator’s Preface,” xi-xii

37 Monelle, “Mahler’s Military Gesture,” 93

38 For example, in V. Kofi Agawu, *Music as Discourse. Semiotic Adventures in Romantic Music* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009)

39 Hans-Robert Jauss, *Toward an Aesthetic of Reception* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1982)

Stylistic norms might apply among the works of a given modern composer, but they do not have to, and they very rarely hold among the works of different composers. In fact, this is not much different from the establishment of tonality in the common practice era; while stylistically troped, major and minor still achieve final significance only within the concrete performance of a particular work for particular listeners. Each of these levels exists in relationship to each other through the play of homologies at all levels of the field of cultural production and the space of possibles. For the purposes of this essay, I will posit a large-scale unmarked dominance of Shostakovich's musical language which created space for a more narrowly-defined heterodoxy exemplified by the unofficial composers of the 1960s such as Volkonsky and Denisov. Ustvolskaya, transgressing the orthodox/heterodox *and* the unmarked/marked oppositions, created something radically *other*, which is why her music was neither embraced nor attacked, but simply ignored.

Bodily Gesture and Musical Gesture

The "meaning" of a gesture *emerges* from the combination of molar gesture into a synthetic gestalt. In other words discrete, individual ("molar") gestures can be linked together (synthesized) into larger, more complex gestures (i.e. a gestalt gesture). In addition, gestures are "intermodal," in that they can be mapped onto any of the body's sensorimotor subsystems, no matter the modality of reception of the gesture.⁴⁰ The energetic shaping present in a piece of music or a performance is not as autonomous as this definition of gesture might suggest. Gestures can be interpreted as part of a related "marked/unmarked" pair, or with other, unrelated, gestures through the notion of "troping" to produce a more nuanced interpretation of a given piece of music.⁴¹

The basic or default level of gestural interpretation in music is motivated by both *indexical* (dynamic, association by contiguity or connection) and *iconic* (imagistic, association by similarity of properties or structures) correlations with gestures in other modalities. The more *symbolic* level is kept coherent by a

40 A classic example of intermodality is synaesthesia. See also the discussion of sonar in bats as equivalent to seeing in humans in Richard Dawkins, *The Blind Watchmaker* (London: Longman, 1986), 21-36.

41 "In many styles, oppositionally marked gestural types, such as grief versus elation, may be correlated with structural oppositions among musical elements, along the lines of the model I developed for *Musical Meaning in Beethoven*. Such oppositional categorization creates a more systematic, *stylistic*, or (in Peirce's terminology) *symbolic* level of meaning for gestures." Hatten, "A Theory of Musical Gesture," 3. Hatten's italics.

musical style; in Classical music a complex tonal syntax obviously places further demands on listeners' interpretive competencies. Musical gestures may be multiply motivated, however, and it is the interaction of indexical and iconic motivations with syntactic and symbolic ones that makes the study of gesture so rewarding for performing styles such as the Viennese Classical. This style draws upon very sophisticated perceptual and cognitive competencies in proposing analogous energetic shapings through time. Based on the competencies implied by a musical style, we can define stylistic types of gestures; new tokens of types, and indeed, new types, will reflect the growth of that stylistic competency.⁴²

These stylistic types, or tokens, must be interpreted independently when they are met in any given musical work, because each token adapts itself to the local strategies required of it in the piece. Among the possible strategies open to a particular type, Hatten identifies the following:

- Spontaneous expression
- Thematic foregrounding
- Dialogic interplay
- Rhetorical marking of shifts or discontinuities
- Troping⁴³

Among these possible strategies, Hatten identifies thematic foreground as “perhaps the most important.” A thematic (or thematized) gesture is both “foregrounded as significant” (giving it an identity within the piece) and used consistently:

In a coherent musical discourse, the gesture may be varied without losing its affiliation to the original form (its identity, perhaps generalized as a schema), as long as the stages of its evolution are (a) progressive (i.e. no huge difference in shape between developmental forms or variants) and (b) temporally associable (no huge gaps in time between instances of the gesture). A thematic gesture is typically designed so as to encapsulate the expressive tone and character of the work or movement; thus, its expressive properties help the listener understand and interpret musical meaning at higher levels, as well. What might otherwise appear accessory – the articulations, dynamics and temporal character of a motive – are potentially structural in that, by their embodiment in thematic gestures, they contribute to the shaping of an emerging expressive trajectory.⁴⁴

42 Ibid , 4.

43 “Among various strategic adaptations of stylistic gestures we find *spontaneous* expression, motivic or *thematic* foregrounding and development, *dialogic* interplay, *rhetorical* marking of dramatic shifts or swerves in the ongoing discourse, and *troping* (as in the creative juxtaposition and implied figurative interaction of two gestures)” Ibid , 6 Hatten’s italics

44 Ibid , 8 I take “coherent” to mean “amenable to critique” and gestures to have been “typically designed” by composers in a manner consistent with the prevailing music of their society

A good example of musical gesture drawn from rock music is the “pick slide.” At points in performance requiring an emphasized anacrusis (notes leading to a downbeat) an electric guitarist will scrape the plectrum along one or two of the guitar strings from a position above the pickups and continuing on to the fingerboard⁴⁵ A well-known example of the pick slide marks the entrance of the lead guitar in Van Halen’s “Hot for Teacher.” The pick slide also serves to introduce the pre chorus of the song. Because the pick slide retains its recognizable character despite variations in speed, volume, direction (which changes the tone produced from rising to falling), and other parameters, the thematic effect of the pick slide in rock music is always recognizable. The gesture thus satisfies Hatten’s properties (a) and (b) above, and also supports Hatten’s theory that gesture allows a listener to interpret a piece of music at a high level. The association of the pick-slide with rock attitude, and the punctuation it provides by signalling an important downbeat, all provide listeners with gestural clues as to the structure of the piece in question.

Because of the bodily connection between listener and gesture employed by both Lidov and Hatten – a connection based on proprioception⁴⁶ – a “gesture may evolve from having a character to ‘being’ a character in a thematic musical discourse,” thus achieving “agency.”⁴⁷ Also, because of the qualities of its character, “gesture may help define a topic.”⁴⁸ Topics have become an important element in musical analysis since they were first introduced by Leonard Ratner in 1980, where they are defined as “subjects for musical discourse,” elements of musical meaning “associated with various feelings and affections.”⁴⁹ Topics can appear as “fully worked-out pieces, i.e. *types*, or as figures and progressions within a piece, i.e. *styles*.”⁵⁰ Whether topics appear as pieces or smaller elements from which pieces are made, one of the ways in which they can be combined is through troping. In Raymond Monelle’s view, topics “might be melodic or rhythmic gestures, harmonic effects, dance measures, musical styles or pictorial references, and

45 The pick slide can be performed in different ways. This is a fairly common way of playing it.

46 See above, p. 63. Proprioception is the ability of a body to sense position, orientation, and movement.

47 Ibid., 8.

48 Ibid.

49 Leonard Ratner, *Classic Music: Expression, Form, and Style* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1980), 9.

50 Ibid.

they might relate to their objects iconically or indexically”⁵¹ In the same way that simple gestures can be combined into larger-scale *gestalts*, so individual topics can be combined through troping

Gestures are richly informative and perceptually immediate, they can of course be stylistically mediated, as well – within the constraints of biological or cultural correlations, of course. But it is the immediacy of biologically typed gestural meanings – anger, grief, joy, disgust, surprise – that allows us to connect viscerally at a basic level with music that may be culturally or historically quite distant from our own time, even as we struggle to decode symbolic levels of gesture or ritualized movement that may have meanings far different from our cultural expectations.⁵²

For Hatten, the integration of topic and trope analysis with gesture might enhance the interpretation of music, for example, by selecting the topics of a piece of music not only for their tropological potential (e.g. how multiple topics might be troped together), but for their gestural associations as well.⁵³ This combination of particular affective and gestural elements through troping is, I will argue, what forces a particular reaction to Ustvolskaya’s music, a reaction of aversion, of turning away.

As can be seen by the above discussion, however, the body in the work of Lidov and Hatten is not (or not only) a blank slate on which discourse is inscribed, but which is inarticulate and non-discursive itself. While this is, generally speaking, the view held by Bourdieu (embodied habitus) and Foucault (biopolitics), the non-discursive aspects of the body is extremely important in the work of both speakers. Lidov and Hatten, however, see the body as capable of its own quasi-discursive performance or activity. It is, in fact, the tension between the body conceived as non- or pre-discursive, and the body conceived as capable of producing its own discursive apparatus, that provides the space for subjects both to evade discourse while still directly implicated within it. The tensions and contradictions of the body as real (non-discursive, immediate), as structured by discourse (habitus), and as capable of producing its own discourse – *all at the same time* – is precisely why the body is such an important theoretical tool, as well as such an important element in all aspects of experience. When I discuss the body, I tend to rely

51 Raymond Monelle, “Mahler’s Military Gesture: Musical Quotation as Proto Topic,” in *Music and Gesture*, edited by Anthony Gritten and Elaine King (Aldershot: Aldgate, 2006), 93.

52 Hatten, “Theory of Musical Gesture,” 10.

53 Ibid., 10.

more heavily on its non- or pre-discursive aspects, but it must be remembered that the body (as theoretical concept) holds all three aspects in a productive tension all the time

Gestures of the Grotesque Body

As Echard indicated, the body is one of the potential sites of connection between social theory and musical analysis. We have seen in the work of Lidov and Hatten how the concept of the body fits into musical analysis, and also its place in Bourdieu's theory of practice. In order to be able to apply this theoretical construct to Ustvolskaya's music, we need to be able to determine the role of the body both in her own music and in the music toward which she was most structurally antagonistic, the consecrated music of Shostakovich. One of the most striking elements in the music of Shostakovich is that of the "grotesque" which, since at least the 16th Century, has been connected to certain aspects of bodily experience, and indeed depends on them for its existence. The grotesque was important to Shostakovich from very early in his compositional career.⁵⁴

The most extensive modern investigation of "The Grotesque Image of the Body" occurs in Mikhail Bakhtin's study of Rabelais, dating from the 1940s, but not published until 1965.⁵⁵ There, Bakhtin discusses examples of the grotesque treatment of the body, associated with the "lower stratum" (i.e. the genitals and the organs which resemble them, like the nose), and with all bodily organs which either connect the body with the world or tunnel into the body (e.g. the mouth, the anus). For Bakhtin,

the artistic logic of the grotesque image ignores the closed, smooth, and impenetrable surface of the body and retains only its excrescences (sprouts, buds) and orifices, only that which leads beyond the body's limited space or into the body's depths. Mountains and abysses, such is the relief of the grotesque body, or speaking in architectural terms, towers and subterranean passages.⁵⁶

It is no accident that Shostakovich's first opera was based on Gogol's (grotesque) short story "The Nose." At the risk of reigniting debates over the critical content of

54 Fay, *Shostakovich: A Life*, 24, 26, 51, 74, 164, etc.

55 *Tvorchestvo Fransua Rable* published in English as Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, [1968], 1984).

56 Bakhtin, *Rabelais*, 317-318.

Shostakovich's music,⁵⁷ it should be possible to make the connection between such music and Bakhtin's view of "the grotesque body" as a literary trope which, along with the concept of "carnival," allows for a constant renewal and revitalisation of the social order in contrast with both the gloomy/elegiac and the public elements of Shostakovich's music. This sets up a structure of triple-opposition which encompasses all responses to Soviet power.

If we consider the grotesque image in its extreme aspect, it never presents an individual body; the image consists of orifices and convexities that present another, newly conceived body. It is a point of transition in a life eternally renewed, the inexhaustible vessel of death and conception. (...) We have already sufficiently stressed the fact that grotesque imagery constructs what we might call a double body. In the endless chain of bodily life it retains the parts in which one link joins the other, in which the life of one body is born from the death of the preceding older one.⁵⁸

The connection between copulation, birth, and the grotesque body is explicitly made in Shostakovich's second opera, *Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District*, notably in the Act 1 love scene, with the vulgar rising, then falling, trombone portamento signifying the tumescence and detumescence of Sergei's penis:⁵⁹

57 These debates have become known as the "Shostakovich Wars," and began with the publication of Solomon Volkov's *Testimony*, which purported to be Shostakovich's own memoirs. In *Testimony*, the proposition is made that Shostakovich included coded messages in his music, messages which signaled his opposition to the Soviet regime. The authenticity of *Testimony*, and by implication the view of Shostakovich as either pro-Soviet, anti-Soviet, or neutral, has been the subject of much debate. See, among others, Laurel Fay, "Shostakovich versus Volkov: Whose Testimony?" *Russian Review* 39, no. 4 (1980): 484-493, and Allan Ho and Dmitry Feofanov, *Shostakovich Reconsidered* (London: Toccata Press, 1998).

58 *Ibid.*, 318

59 Michael Mishra, *A Shostakovich Companion* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2008), 75

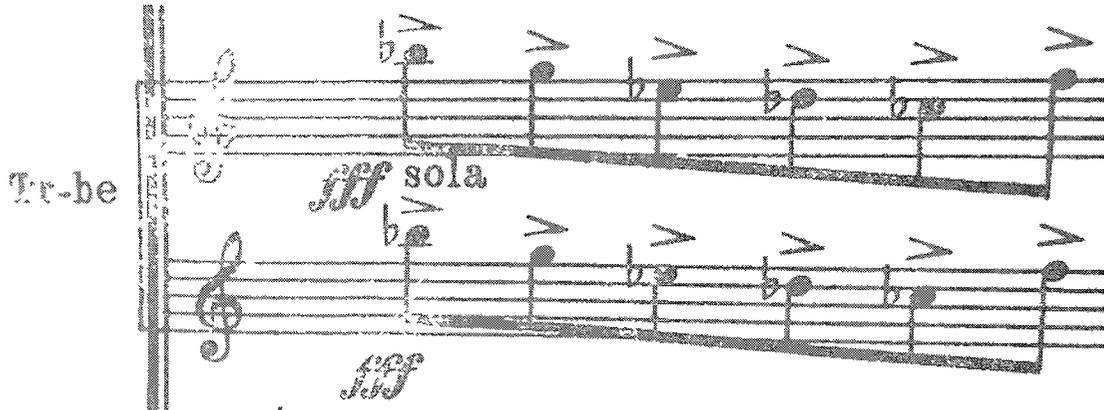


Fig. 2. Shostakovich, *Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District*.⁶⁰

The concept of the grotesque in the music of Shostakovich has been investigated in some detail by Esti Sheinberg, and further examples of the grotesque can be found in her *Irony, Satire, Parody and the Grotesque in the Music of Shostakovich*.⁶¹ For Sheinberg, however, the concept of the grotesque is conflated with an equally important related concept to which we will return: the abject. This conflation serves to “muddy the waters,” rendering the concept of the grotesque less sharp, and negating the distinction between the grotesque and the abject and hence, for the purposes of this essay, the distinction between the music of Shostakovich and that of Ustvolskaya.

Following Bakhtin, Sheinberg sees connection between the grotesque and the body as self-evident, and therefore links motion (i.e. bodily gesture through time) to the fullest exploitation of the grotesque mode: “The ball scene is a *locus classicus* of the grotesque, most probably due to the fact that grotesque images seem to gain more prominence when in motion.”⁶² Other characteristics of the grotesque – for Sheinberg – are its relationship with the fantastic and its lack of any and all boundaries. However, the terms in which she discusses the grotesque here (horror, revulsion, fear and loathing of the lack of boundaries) seem more characteristic of what Kristeva has termed the abject:

⁶⁰ Dmitry Shostakovich....

⁶¹ Esti Sheinberg, *Irony, Satire, Parody and the Grotesque in the Music of Shostakovich: A Theory of Musical Incongruities* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000).

⁶² Bakhtin, *Rabelais*, 218.

The lack of boundaries between the familiar and unfamiliar evokes a feeling of horror when we realize that such a transformation has occurred.... What is appalling is not the aberration in itself, but the natural, almost imperceptible way in which the transformation often takes place.⁶³

I would like to suggest that it is this confusion of the grotesque and the abject that forces Sheinberg to posit a qualified form of the grotesque (“the satirical grotesque”) to distinguish between the two components of her conflated concept.

Sheinberg lays out her terms in the following manner:

While the grotesque deals with the unresolvable, satire has corrective ends. The grotesque presents defects that are beyond control, such as physical deformities. While satire arouses laughter that is rooted in contempt, the grotesque provokes feelings of horror and disgust, mixed with a helpless despair.⁶⁴

It seems to me that Sheinberg has abandoned her previous reliance on Bakhtin, for whom the satirical was not a special form of the grotesque, but constituted the grotesque in and of itself. What Sheinberg refers to as “the satirical grotesque,” I would argue, is what Bakhtin calls the grotesque *tout court*. This is made clear in what follows from Sheinberg:

However, there is a kind of satire that makes use of the grotesque. In this kind the apparently incorrigible physical deformities function as reflections of some other spiritual and behavioural deformities, which are the actual object of the derisive comment.⁶⁵

This is precisely Bakhtin’s concept of the grotesque, rooted in laughter, the grotesque elements of the body serving as signifiers for other grotesqueries (social, moral, behavioural) in the world of Rabelais. What Sheinberg refers to as the (non-satirical) grotesque is – following Kristeva – best called by the name of abjection.⁶⁶ Once we have made (or rather re-made) this distinction, it is possible to posit the following characteristics of both the grotesque and the abject:

63 Ibid., 221.

64 Ibid., 229

65 Ibid.

66 Kristeva, *The Powers of Horror*.

Grotesque	Abject
Motion	Stasis ⁶⁷
Approaching a limit	Transgressing a limit
Lack of control	Too much control
Laughter	Revulsion
Conservative	Experimental

Fig. 3. Contrasting aspects of the grotesque and the abject.

The elements of motion, of a limit, of a lack of control, and of laughter are all present in the grotesque elements of Shostakovich’s musical language. The 8th Symphony serves as a useful example for how the grotesque elements run up against their own limits within the formal system of a classical symphony. I have chosen the 8th Symphony because of a considerable proportion of grotesque moments contrasting with orthodoxy. Elements of the grotesque have been identified in many of Shostakovich’s works, not only those analyzed by Sheinberg, for example in the 9th String Quartet and the 14th Symphony. Indeed, the grotesque has long been associated with Shostakovich’s style and, as an anecdote from his youth relates, began even in his conservatory days. When Shostakovich showed his composition teacher the beginning of a third movement Scherzo, the teacher replied:

I cannot say anything about such music. What is this enthusiasm for the Grotesque? There were already Grotesque bits in the Trio. All the cello pieces are Grotesque and finally this Scherzo is also Grotesque!⁶⁸

The 8th Symphony contains a sufficient number of marked grotesque elements to make their contrast with “normal” musical language evident.

67 “Ustvol’skaya builds her compositions from the repetition of musical patterns that often result in stasis.” Maria Cizmuc, “Performing Pain Music and Trauma in 1970s and 1980s Eastern Europe” (PhD diss University of California, Los Angeles, 2004), 105

68 B. Lossky quoted in Fay, *Shostakovich A Life*, 24 [Check Chicago Guide on this]

Shostakovich, *Symphony No. 8*, Op. 65 (1943)

The first movement of Shostakovich's *Symphony No. 8* in C_{minor}, Adagio – Allegro ma non troppo, allows us to speak about many of the semiotic elements discussed in the foregoing section. Most especially, we find the foregrounding of stylistic elements to produce a dominant or limiting gesture, which is therefore unmarked within the context of the movement and the symphony as a whole. In the first movement, the opening sections (Rehearsal A and B, bars 1-144) foreground tragic and lyrical stylistic elements, creating a gestural norm of moderation and self-control, as well as a harmonic and melodic norm of fairly conservative tonality and lyricism. However, beginning in bar 67, this unmarked norm (orthodoxy) begins to be threatened by heterodox elements (i.e., elements which do not correspond either gesturally or harmonically/melodically to unmarked elements). The primary marked element is the solo in the first violin, kept in check by the restraining, controlling presence of an ostinato in the rest of the strings (for Shostakovich as for Ustvolskaya, repeated ostinati signify control). (See Appendix 2, Ex. 1).

Melodically and gesturally, the ostinato and the violin motif depart from the norm, but the gestural association of ostinato with control along with the harmonic conformity of this sections keeps the extreme elements strictly in check.

At Rehearsal C, however, the harmonic norm itself begins to come under attack. Until now the music has been mainly diatonic with some moments of dissonance, but now it begins to become much less stable, signifying a loss of control in the material, after the previous setting up of such a strong stylistic preference for harmonic conservatism. Gesturally, the moderate adagio of the main theme continues without being threatened, for example, by immoderate, uncontrolled movement.

The narrative of increasing loss of control develops further in Rehearsal D as the rhythms, which had always been stately and moderate (whether controlled via ostinato or not) begin to break up, as does the harmony. A more extreme tactic of controlling the

rhythm than through string ostinato is introduced in the form of a march-like ostinato in the tamburo from bars 169-178 (Rehearsal E), at which point the loss of control becomes completely unmanageable, and the attempt to maintain it is given up. (See Appendix 2, Ex. 2).

The temporary foregrounding of the grotesque proper is marked at Rehearsal F with the entrance of an out-of-control trombone solo at bar 186 (typically played with impure tone, signifying a lack of control over her instrument on the part of the performer). The carnivalesque aspect of the grotesque is foregrounded through the celebratory tone of the trombone, a caricaturing oompah-oompah figure in the third trombone and the tuba,⁶⁹ as well as the similarity of the melody to the Italian national anthem.⁷⁰

This second de-stabilization of the norm continues until bar 193 (Rehearsal G), when the tamburi once again enter to reestablish control. However, this control is short-lived, since at bar 196, with the introduction of the Allegro non troppo section, the “danse macabre,” noted by Sheinberg as an integral element of the grotesque, breaks out. This continues for almost one hundred bars until the reintroduction of the main theme (adagio) at bar 285, signaling the re-establishment of complete control. (See Appendix 2, Ex. 3)

The process of re-establishing control takes a whole 15 bars, up to bar 300, at which point, almost exhausted, a gesturally, melodically, and harmonically moderate theme in the Cor anglais (supported by the oboe and the clarinet) brings the movement back to its conservative beginnings and a quiet dying away.

The remainder of the symphony continues this opposition between unmarked normality (orthodoxy) and marked heterodoxy (in the form of the grotesque). It might seem as if the “normal” style is itself marked by a self-conscious return after a period of grotesquerie, but since the normal style is established at the beginning of the piece, it is unmarked

⁶⁹ It should come as no surprise that the quintessential “grotesque” instruments for Shostakovich are the lower-register brass, combining both the mouth and the (gesturally) lower extremities of the body, and therefore doubly-conforming to Bakhtin’s conception of “the grotesque image of the body.” Cf. also Judith Butler’s conception of the discursive definition of the limits and boundaries of the body. Butler, *Gender Trouble*, 175-193

⁷⁰ “Il canto degli italiani,” composed by Michele Novaro in 1849. The hymn was popular during the Risorgimento and became national anthem of the new Italian republic in 1946

within the dynamics of the piece itself, and so the return is an ending of a marked period, rather than a transition to another – equally marked – phase. What is important is that the grotesque in Shostakovich is *always* brought (back) under control, either through the resolution of dissonant elements, or by coming up against topics that are always associated with control (e.g. ostinati in the strings or the percussion). The reimposition of control after periods of grotesque abandon are homologous to the return to the *status quo ante* after the medieval carnival. If one equates official Soviet culture with the cold and serious Christian realism described by Bakhtin, and one sees the dominant, imposed, cultural orthodoxy (socialist realism) as a metonym for the regime, then the subversive nature of Shostakovich's grotesqueries can be more clearly recognized. With laughter and the grotesque came

a temporary suspension of the entire official system with all its prohibitions and hierarchic barriers. For a short time life came out of its usual, legalized and consecrated furrows and entered the sphere of utopian freedom. The very brevity of this freedom increased its fantastic nature and utopian radicalism, born in the festive atmosphere of images.⁷¹

Just as there was no doubt in the mind of medieval men and women (of any class) that carnival had to give way to the return of order and seriousness, so one can never doubt that in Shostakovich's music, the “utopian radicalism” of the grotesque will always be tamed by the orthodox music of socialist realism.

After a striking opening, the second movement (Allegretto) takes on the features of the grotesque through a standard Shostakovich device: walking or marching that is out of control (i.e. a march becoming a sort of St. Vitus dance). The performers – as in the “national anthem” theme from the first movement – play the music “badly” (i.e. with bad technique, bordering on flubbed notes) to express a lack of control over their instruments, cognate with the lack of muscular control in the marchers/dancers. This motif too is reminiscent of the carnivalesque. (See Appendix 2, Ex. 4) The grotesque body in Rabelais and, by implication, in Shostakovich, is unruly, out of control, bursting its limits (both physically and socially). The unruly dance, march, or parade, that is both a product of the unruliness of the bodies and prolongs it, eventually comes back under control, as

71 Bakhtin, *Rabelais*, 89.

the carnival ends, mirroring the social laws, rules, and norms that control the physical bodies of the carnival-goers

The third movement opens with a theme in the violas reminiscent of Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring* (especially in the accented syncopated rhythms of the cellos and basses) The rhythmic and melodic devices that were present in the second movement have here been transformed into something serious and noble the grotesque excesses of the second movement have been tamed What is interesting here, however, is that the rhythmic control exerted over the theme is under so much pressure (257 bars of repeated staccato quarter notes) that this pressure must be relieved, which occurs in bar 258, firstly by a relaxation of the quarter-note rhythm, but secondly by the introduction of a grotesque fanfare in Shostakovich's favourite grotesque instrument, the trombone The grotesquerie is supported by the "oompah oompah" figure in the basses and the "chase music" topic in the violins and violas ⁷² (See Appendix 2, Ex 5)

When the quarter-note rhythm returns, it remains somewhat undercut by new harmonies (both in the quarter-note figures themselves and in the cello-bass accents), eventually devolving into a frenzy of drums, beaten out of control as if by a child, a snare drum roll leading directly into the somber and dramatic opening of the fourth movement This *largo* is somber and serious, with all musical elements firmly under control, but not the kind of pressurized control which, in the third movement, required an injection of the grotesque to relieve the tension

The fifth movement mainly continues the sombre mood of the fourth, but with the occasional hint of grotesque laughter, marked by trumpet fanfares and childlike figures on the snare drums The brooding and ambiguous – or at least, non-celebratory – finale proved unsatisfactory to the Soviet cultural establishment, providing ammunition for the second – and last – denunciation of Shostakovich in 1948

⁷² This kind of tension, created through seemingly endless accented quarter notes, would never be relieved in Ustvolskaya The control is important and unavoidable, a necessary element in her music which she never allows to be undercut or relieved by a reassertion of normality or a descent into the grotesque See Chapter Four

As we have seen through this example, then, Shostakovich's musical language, which moved in the 1950s from an avant-garde position in the field of Soviet music to an established, recognized and consecrated one, contained within itself aspects of the grotesque which themselves became dominant. Later avant-gardes (such as the unofficial composers of the 1960s onwards) would have to deal with this element of the grotesque either by willfully denying it (one thinks of the seriousness of Arvo Part or Gubaidulina) or by composing along generally similar lines (the classic example in this case is Schnittke). It appears that Ustvolskaya alone transgressed the limits of the grotesque by removing the elements of the ridiculous and by developing a musical language which valued precisely the opposite characteristics to those of the grotesque employed by Shostakovich (motion, lack of control, etc.). In a double-sense, then, Ustvolskaya's music was condemned to be "turned away from" by its distance from the discursive poles of orthodoxy (Shostakovich) and heterodoxy (the unofficial composers), and by its revolting, abject quality which forced its listeners to turn away as from something unclean. We shall read more about this in Chapter Four.

What Ustvolskaya learned from Shostakovich was that grotesque music that allowed itself to be placed back under control, to be moderated, ended up being completely reconciled with the norm. In her struggle to create music different from both the orthodox and the heterodox positions of the time, Ustvolskaya took an element of Shostakovich's musical language – the grotesque – and did not allow it, in her music, to be reconciled to any kind of norm or to be moderated in any way. Simon Bokman writes

[Ustvolskaya's] music is a voluntary constraint and veto she imposes on herself, her life, and her work. It naturally leads to a loss of ingenuousness. She is not fully in her music and her music is a fight between herself and something invisible, yet very strong and dreadful. Who wins? Galina Ivanovna liked to say "to carry bricks is a thousand times easier than to compose music."⁷³

The grotesque is bearable when one is reassured as to its powerlessness in the face of limits and boundaries, once those boundaries are transgressed, the grotesque becomes abject, and is an object no longer of naughty fun but of, in Kristeva's phrase, the fascination with the "powers of horror."

73 Simon Bokman, *Variations*, 19

4. TRANSGRESSION, THE ABJECT AND THE EROTIC

Kristeva, Lacan, and the Abject – The Soviet Symbolic Order – Abjection in Ustvolskaya’s Music – Abjection and Transgression – Transgression and Heresy – Silence or the Inability to Speak – Erotics The Silent Speech of the Body

Kristeva, Lacan, and the Abject

Kristeva’s notion of the abject is formulated in Lacanian terms, which are not incompatible with Bourdieu’s theory. Indeed, the notion of institutions and agents possessed of the symbolic capital required to *name* fits precisely within the Lacanian understanding of society, constituted through language (the symbolic order) – known as the Other¹ – and achieving its apotheosis in the figure (or, rather, the *name*) of the Father. For Lacan, the ego achieves first an “imaginary” relationship to the world which eventually becomes overcome or overdetermined by the inculcation of language, leading to a new, “symbolic,” relationship between the subject and the world. While it is important to distinguish between Lacan’s and Bourdieu’s definitions of “symbolic”, the Lacanian model of subjectivity has a direct corollary with Bourdieu’s understanding of the habitus as constituted pre-linguistically, through the body, and eventually becoming implicated within various fields (of culture, of politics, of power more generally) that are constituted linguistically. This linguistic formation occurs both in the sense of being structured “like a language” and in the sense of being socially constituted through the use and power of words. Such an induction into the symbolic order is not devoid of affective response or of power dynamics, however: in the process of being inducted into the symbolic order the subject creates within itself – alongside the ego – a Superego which represents the Other (Law, Father, Society) and an Unconscious. This Unconscious is composed of all signifiers (e.g. words) which, for one reason or another, need to be suppressed. The contents of the Unconscious come to the surface in all the standard Freudian ways (dreams, linguistic slips, etc.).²

1 For Lacan, everything the self recognizes as “not itself” is either a neutral “other” (as in other people) or “Other,” which carries with it obligations and an affective load, and is equated with aggregate or symbolic phenomena such as The Law, Society, or Father.

2 Kristeva, *Powers of Horror*, 7

In addition to the self, the other, and the Other, Kristeva posits a fourth category of the subject, the abject, though strictly speaking the abject seems to exist pre- or non-linguistically, that is, as a continuation of those elements of the Real which provoked a specific affective response in the pre-Symbolic subject. Since the abject impinges upon the Imaginarily- rather than the Symbolically-organized subject, there is nothing between the abject and the subject to protect the subject from what Kristeva calls “the power of horror.” This protective role is typically played by those symbolic structures (such as language) that act as a cushion between the self and the world. Since the abject is not subject to symbolic apprehension, the self has no protection when faced with abjection. Those characteristics constitutive of the abject are not signs (and therefore not subject to the rational rules or laws of the symbolic order); they are, in a very real sense, affective in a bodily sense, rather than a linguistic one.

[Kristeva] argues that the “semiotic” is a dimension of language occasioned by that primary maternal body, which not only refutes Lacan’s primary premise, but serves as a perpetual source of subversion within the Symbolic. For Kristeva, the semiotic expresses that original libidinal multiplicity within the very terms of culture, more precisely, within poetic language in which multiple meanings and semantic non-closure prevail. In effect, poetic language is the recovery of the maternal body within the terms of language, one that has the potential to disrupt, subvert, and displace the paternal law.³

For Kristeva, the abject never ceases to threaten the symbolic order (of the Other, the Law, the Father). If the abject could be constituted as a sign, that is, with a signifier, then its challenge to the Superego could simply be dealt with by repressing the signifier (consigning it to the Unconscious). But, since the abject *has* no sign, it must continue to exist just beyond the power of the Superego. Furthermore, since it is the structuring of signs according to the law of the Other (the Superego) that creates meaning, the abject is by definition meaningless, and yet it carries an intense affective load through its challenge to the established order. Kristeva’s conception of the abject recognizes the conflict between the abject and the Other, but like the linguists critiqued by Bourdieu in *Language and Symbolic Power*, she is looking within the abject for the power of the abject, “that is, looking for it where it is not to be found.”⁴

3 Butler, *Gender Trouble*, 101-102.

4 Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power*, 107.

Just as with language and the ability to speak, it is necessary to understand the dynamics of power that determine the relationship between subject, abject, and Other. For Bourdieu, the Other is not, as it is in Lacan, a purely philosophical construct; the Other actually exists in institutions, discourses, and practices whose effects are felt throughout a given field. The Other is a position more than anything else, as are both any given subject and any given abject. But where the subject and Other exist in the same field (or at least in relative fields where the dynamic of domination runs from the Other to the subject), the abject exists outside of all fields. However, this existence outside is by its very nature threatening to the dominance of the Other. In Bourdieu's terms, the Other determines what is orthodox, and by a typical structuralist move, this determination brings into being heterodoxy. We can understand this in the terms under discussion as: the dominance of Shostakovich's musical language necessarily implied other musical languages (e.g. serialism) as being defined in opposition to it, but in an opposition which it could accommodate. Ustvolskaya's music, as opposed to the heterodox music of the young composers, was totally beyond discourse, beyond doxa: it was quite literally unthinkable. And yet its pull, as abjection, could not be met with dispassionately: it could only be violently rejected, turned-away from. Even Shostakovich's attempts to assimilate or accommodate her music were rejected and came to nothing. Louis Blois raises the possibility that Shostakovich's quotation from Ustvolskaya's Clarinet Trio in his own Fifth String Quartet might have been an attempt on Shostakovich's part to help Ustvolskaya's career "possibly to counteract the effects of her professional reticence."⁵ However, Blois goes on to say that this is unlikely for the simple reason that no advancement of Ustvolskaya's career was apparent:

In any event, such an effort must have had a negative effect, if none at all [sic]. As late as 1966 Boris Schwarz observed a reluctant attitude in Soviet musical circles toward Ustvolskaya's more advanced work written more than a decade before. And by 1970, Melodiya had recorded only two of her works, the *Children's Suite* and the symphonic poem, *Light on the Steppes*, each written in a conservative style and each unrepresentative of her gifts. Both works have been repudiated by the composer and are not listed in her official opus listing.⁶

⁵ Louis Blois, "Shostakovich and the Ustvolskaya Connexion": 14.

⁶ Ibid.

For this reason the cultural capital that passed from Shostakovich – the social recognition of the established avant-garde – passed directly to the heterodox avant-garde of the young composers, shunning Ustvolskaya and her music as if they were unclean. Despite Shostakovich's recommendation and high opinion, her “renegade music has always remained as resistant to tradition as it has to the avant-garde”⁷

The Soviet Symbolic Order

Regarding the composers who came after Shostakovich, we might say that the signifiers repressed in Soviet musical language through the symbolic power wielded by Shostakovich himself⁸ – serialism, for example, or religious content – returned from their exile in the musical unconscious as Shostakovich's power began to wane. Ustvolskaya's music, on the other hand, could not be repressed by Shostakovich's power – indeed, as we know, he quoted her music in two of his own pieces⁹ – but neither could it be assimilated fully. It remained “outside” the established order, constantly challenging it, never being either fully coopted into the dominant musical language (symbolic order), nor being completely, finally, repressed. Unlike the “young composers” of the 1960s (and unlike Shostakovich himself), Ustvolskaya never explicitly challenged the established social and cultural order, either through an avowed adhesion to an alternative theory of composition (e.g. serialism) or through circumventing official institutions and conditions of performance.¹⁰ In bodily terms, this existing “outside,” this unwillingness or inability to either “come inside” or “go away,” is typically related to the category of perversion.

The sense of abjection that I experience is anchored in the superego. The object is perverse because it neither gives up nor assumes a prohibition, a rule, or a law, but turns them aside, misleads, corrupts, uses them, takes advantage of them, the better to deny them.¹¹

7 Blois, “Shostakovich and the Ustvolskaya Connexion” 10

8 In this case, Bourdieu's “symbolic” is meant, not Lacan's

9 Blois, “The Shostakovich Ustvolskaya Connexion” 11

10 Both of these kinds of rebellion were characteristic of the “unofficial composers,” especially Edison Denisov. See Peter Schmelz, *Such Freedom*, 147-178

11 Kristeva, *Powers of Horror* 15

A clue to the form of Ustvolskaya's exclusion can be found in her statement that her music, while spiritual,¹² is not religious, despite the explicitly Catholic titles and texts used in some of her larger-scale pieces. In the catalogue of works included in Gladkova's 2001 biography, Ustvolskaya renamed the pieces initially entitled simply *Compositions* (from 1971, 1973, and 1975), "Dona Nobis Pacem," "Dies Irae," and "Benedictus Qui Venit." All of her symphonies except the first had religious subtitles ("True and Eternal Bliss," "Jesus Messiah, Save Us," "Prayer," "Amen"), but unlike younger composers like Arvo Part, Sofia Gubaidulina, and even the later Schnittke, Ustvolskaya never adhered to the structure or dogma of any given religion. Her spirituality, like the abject, had no signifier, and it is interesting that the structure of her symphonies, for example, reflect a direct, unmediated relationship between a human being and a spiritual or religious realm, that is, a relationship "outside" of the Law, ritual, or symbolic system of an established church.

However, this raises the question of why Ustvolskaya chose explicitly Catholic titles for the *Compositions*, indeed why she attached linguistic labels to them at all. In the first case, Catholicism was heterodox both to the official atheism of the Soviet state and to the pre-Revolutionary Orthodox Christianity which still existed, in unofficial form, in the USSR. It seems likely that, as an artist who wishes to communicate through her music, Ustvolskaya was not totally averse to compromise, and choosing a heterodox method to signal her spirituality rather than leaving the music to speak for "itself" was an attempt to overcome the silence that had been imposed on her through her music's uncompromising nature. Viktor Suslin has attempted to clarify Ustvolskaya's position thus:

Although Galina employs religious texts, she doesn't want her music to be labeled religious. It springs directly from the contact she feels with God and doesn't have any liturgical meaning.¹³

(See Appendix 2, Ex. 6)

¹²Ustvolskaya's "spirituality" was not defined by any orthodox religion or religiosity. In other words, it was not Symbolic, and therefore open to the abject.

¹³Derks, "Sind Sie mir nicht böse!" 32.

This focus on a non-dogmatic, non-symbolic “spirituality” accords with Kristeva’s view that “abjection accompanies all religious structurings and reappears, to be worked out in a new guise, at the time of their collapse.”¹⁴ Abjection, in this case, reflects the “defilement” and “pollution” of the established symbolic order through the continuation of paganism – a concept long-familiar to Slavists through the concept of *dvoeverie*, or double-belief, the combination of pagan and Christian beliefs among certain segments of Orthodox believers.¹⁵ In the dominant Symbolic order (whether that of the church, the Party, or the music of Shostakovich), what is seen as abject is excluded or ignored, and the mechanism of exclusion is, following both Bourdieu and Butler,¹⁶ taking away the ability to speak, to name. This is denied those without sufficient symbolic power, including practitioners whose work most fully exemplifies abjection. In this sense, there is a connection between Lacan’s symbolic order (source of both “naming” and “the law”) and Bourdieu’s field of symbolic power, and it is no coincidence that “the unnameable” is both the starting point for Freud’s elucidation of the subject-object relation, and the culmination of Beckett’s great – abject – trilogy.¹⁷

Abjection in Ustvolskaya’s Music

To return to musicological matters, the question arises, how are we to recognize the abject in the music of Ustvolskaya? Again, Kristeva’s linkage of the abject with religion provides a potential answer: “abjection persists as *exclusion* or taboo... but drifts over to more “secondary” forms such as *transgression* (of the Law).”¹⁸ The Law in this case is the dominant musical language of Shostakovich, so the question becomes in what way Ustvolskaya’s music transgresses a limit imposed in Shostakovich. In Chapter Three we discussed the way by which the grotesque in Shostakovich approached a border or

14 Kristeva, *Powers of Horror*, 17

15 For an up-to-date account of this concept, see Stella Rock, *Popular Religion in Russia: Double-Belief and the Making of an Academic Myth* (New York: Routledge, 2007). This religious formulation is only a particular form of that continuation of the pre-Symbolic libidinal multiplicity which Kristeva sees as constantly threatening the dominant, patriarchal, Symbolic order.

16 For the feminine abject, see “Those females who can wreck the infinite,” in Kristeva, *Powers of Horror*, 157-173. Butler engages with Kristeva in *Gender Trouble*, 101-118.

17 Kristeva, *Powers of Horror* 33-34. Samuel Beckett, *Molloy, Malone Dies, The Unnameable*, 329. Cf. also Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power*, 129.

18 Kristeva, *Powers of Horror*, 17.

limit, only to be resolved and re-assimilated into the non-grotesque norm. It becomes clear, therefore, that Ustvolskaya's transgression takes the form of a *franchissement* of the limits set up by Shostakovich: the object in Ustvolskaya is Shostakovich's grotesque minus the light-heartedness of the carnivalesque. Laughter – always present in the grotesque moments of Shostakovich – was, for Bakhtin, an important element in the difference between the grotesque of Rabelais and its later forms. In the Renaissance, laughter had a therapeutic power, that is the power to exorcize the ills of society through carnival and the grotesque. "Carnival is the people's second life, organized on the basis of laughter."¹⁹ The grotesque in Shostakovich used laughter to undercut the official seriousness of the Soviet regime:

Unlike the earlier and purer feast, the official feast asserted all that was stable, unchanging, perennial: the existing hierarchy, the existing religious, political and moral values, norms, and prohibitions. It was the triumph of a truth already established, the predominant truth that was put forward as eternal and indisputable. This is why the tone of the official feast was monolithically serious and why the element of laughter was alien to it.²⁰

But, as we know, laughter and carnival must always come to an end. The social world must revert to its serious and official nature, as it does in the music of Shostakovich. The absence of laughter, of light-heartedness, in the music of Ustvolskaya, is an attempt to avoid the potential for assimilation, for co-options, inherent in the carnivalesque, the grotesque.

As opposed to the official feast, one might say that carnival celebrated temporary liberation from the prevailing truth and from the established order; it marked the suspension of all hierarchical rank, privileges, norms, and prohibitions.²¹

It was precisely Ustvolskaya's apocalyptic desire to make such liberation permanent that placed her outside the power of discourse. What discourse cannot curb or bring back under control, in order to reimpose the established order, can only be rejected. Even the heterodox can be vilified, and hence used in a negative fashion to reinforce prevailing truth – as serialism was vilified to reinforce Shostakovichian tonality – but what is object can only be surrounded by silence.

19 Bakhtin, 8.

20 Ibid., 9.

21 Ibid., 10.

Abjection and Transgression

The linkage of musical abjection with the transgression of norms has been worked out in some detail by Keith Kahn-Harris, albeit for a very different musical genre, that subgenre of heavy metal known as “extreme metal.” It will be worthwhile, however, to look at the ways in which Kristeva’s category has been applied in Kahn-Harris’ work

For Kahn-Harris’ reading of extreme metal, “transgression” is linked to the concept of an “extreme”, both terms “impl[y] a sense of testing and crossing boundaries and limits,”²² limits which – at their most basic – constitute the dividing line between the binary oppositions that occupy such a central position, in my view, in both structuralism and Russian culture.²³ Over the last hundred years or so, the dividing line between the two poles of an opposition have been seen both as a source of hidden knowledge (as with Saussure) and as a limit to what can be known (as with Foucault and Derrida),²⁴ but Kahn-Harris also presents such a limit as a source of anxiety and instability. The limit of a *body* in particular is an unstable and anxiety-ridden site, as discussed in Bakhtin²⁵ and Butler.²⁶ To take a Lacanian view, this instability or resistance to be accounted for by “knowledge” and the established order renders the transgression of such a boundary extremely seductive to the subject in thrall to the Law.

In traditional societies, such transgression may be ritualized, for example in initiation practices in which initiates retreat for a time from the everyday, ordered world, before returning to that world with a new status. [I]n the medieval carnival, the everyday order was turned upside down [] ‘[L]iminal’, transgressive practice allows people to escape power and authority, if only for a time.²⁷

22 Keith Kahn-Harris, *Extreme Metal: Music and Culture on the Edge* (Oxford, New York: Berg, 2007), 29.

23 The *locus classicus* here is James Billington’s *The Icon and the Axe* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1966), for a discussion of the problem of binary oppositions in Russian culture see Catriona Kelly and David Shephard, *Russian Cultural Studies: An Introduction* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1998).

24 Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, “Translator’s Preface,” in Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, lvii-lix.

25 Bakhtin, *Rabelais*, 303-366.

26 Here, Butler follows Foucault: “Why should bodily margin be thought to be specifically invested with power and danger?” Butler, *Gender Trouble*, 168.

27 Kahn-Harris, *Extreme Metal*, 29.

The potential subversiveness of abjection – through the mechanism of transgression – is central to Kristeva’s view of resistance to the Law of the patriarchal (or symbolic) order. Butler’s critique of Kristeva’s position suggests that this subversion may not have much of an effect, and may not be “anything more than a temporary and futile disruption of the hegemony of the paternal law,”²⁸ but in the localized sphere of a given field of cultural production, such as heavy metal music or European art music, such a temporary, localized disruption may in fact be enough to subvert at least locally established orders. Resistance to the dominance of a broader field can be understood as a localized, contingent attempt to maintain the autonomy of a given quadrant of a subfield²⁹ and a more permanent subversion of the Law may not be necessary, possible, or even desirable.³⁰

The abject, for Kristeva, occupies a position precisely at the limit of the body, hence in *Powers of Horror*, the initial image is of a child nauseated by “that skin on the surface milk – harmless, thin as a sheet of paper, pitiful as a nail paring,”³¹ which she must ingest. This applies as well to Kristeva’s characterization of a cadaver as “the most sickening of wastes – a border that has encroached upon everything.”³² Such delineations of the border or limit of the body is, for Kristeva, a crucial step in the formation of the subject.

Little wonder then that the transgression of *bodily* limits should be the major site of abjection. If the grotesque body in Bakhtin is defined by locations, sites that are precisely those places where the body is salient in space (like the nose), or provides a link between inside and outside (all orifices except the eyes), the *abject* is associated in part with that material which either crosses over (transgresses) those boundaries (like bodily waste) or breaks down those limits (like the decomposition of the corpse). We have seen in Chapter Three how theories of musical gesture and embodied semiotics rely on intermodal sensorimotor mappings,³³ and it is a straightforward move to connect

28 Butler, 103

29 Bourdieu, “Field of Cultural Production,” 38

30 In fact, this seems to be the conclusion Butler eventually arrives at in her theory of “performative subversions.” Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble*, 163

31 Kristeva, *Powers of Horror* 2

32 Ibid, 3

33 Hatten, “A Theory of Musical Gesture and its Application to Beethoven and Schubert,” 24

certain musical elements (gestural or not) to conditions of the body which exemplify abjection.

Kahn-Harris identifies as transgressive the following musical elements in extreme metal: use of modes that have historically been connected with “danger and evil” (i.e. the Phrygian and Locrian); extreme distortion of the tone of electric guitars; oppressive ostinato rhythms unleavened by guitar solos; downtuning (literally tuning the strings of the guitars to much lower pitches); vocal distortion (typically into the lower register)³⁴ with guttural singing; extremely fast tempos; and unconventional songwriting styles. In addition to these we can add transgressive, extreme, abject imagery both in lyrics and in the art and design that accompany albums or concerts (posters, t-shirts, etc). What is interesting about this list is that many of the elements are present in Ustvolskaya’s music, but not – or to a much lesser extent – in the music of her contemporaries.

Rather than employ either heavily chromatic tonality (like Shostakovich) or serialism (like the young composers of the subsequent generation), Ustvolskaya turned increasingly to tone clusters and extremely long repetitions of the same note. Moreover, she employed “harmonies” (if they can be called that),³⁵ that must be understood bodily, not intellectually. Given that the intellect is the *locus* of the Symbolic (of the Law, of the Father), such harmonies *actively reject* an intellectual understanding. In writing about Ustvolskaya’s Sixth Piano Sonata, Maria Cizmic states:

The left hand ninth cluster that had acted as a weight punctuation mark through the composition’s opening passages, now reappears in order to develop its own logic. Spinning into an ominous walking bass line, the series of top notes mimic the whole and half steps of the preceding passage as it ascends stepwise and then winds downward through half steps (B C D E F Eb E Db D C B C). This pattern works against what the body knows. The distance of an octave exists as an ingrained element of my hands’ physical and spacial knowledge... playing these ninths for the one to two minutes they extend through this portion of the piece – or, more to the point, for a half hour or more in order to learn them – pull me away from my known, physical comfort. My palm and fingers push flatly across

34 The lower pitch of both downtuning and vocal register corresponds to *stasis*, slowness and, conforming to Bakhtin’s model, the lower (grotesque) extremities of the body

35 “[S]uch ‘harmonies’ are unlike most that a pianist’s body has become accustomed to over years of practice.” Cizmic, “Performing Pain,” 95

the keys, violating the normative distance that conventional playing creates.³⁶

(See Appendix 2, Ex. 7.)

“Normative distance” and “conventional playing” are, of course, the realm of the Father. What is painful for the pianist to perform is understood as painful for the listener to hear, according to the theory of musical gesture explored in Chapter Three. We can hear the violent hammering of hand and arm into the piano, we can map the violation of the long succession of ninths to other, painful repetitions known to the body, such as chopping vegetables or wood, scrubbing floors, etc. The distortions inherent in the cluster as well as the disorienting effect of ostinato chords serve the same purpose as the driving, unalleviated beat of the guitars, bass, and drums in extreme metal. And just as traditional heavy metal would provide relief from such pounding rhythms with guitar solos, so Shostakovich would leaven his grotesqueries with lyricism, his chromaticism with resolution in the form of a return to diatonic tonality. Such resolution and relief is nowhere present in Ustvolskaya’s music. Kahn-Harris writes of how the ostinato rhythms of extreme metal signify total control over an unruly body (expressed through distortion and extreme speed). In Ustvolskaya too, the body is there to be controlled through extremes of unrelieved rhythmic monotony.

As these patterns [i.e. of repeated clusters] alternate and change register, physical embodiment alternates as well. My left hand rests when the right takes over the series of ninth clusters, playing the series of smaller clusters by hitting different parts of my hand (finger tips or the side of my palm) against the keyboard. My initially sore right hand fingertips release the energy of being pressed together to spread open across a ninth. A brief sense of relief accompanies the moment of trading activities; ultimately, though, I alternate one uncomfortable mode of work for another.³⁷

(See Appendix 2, Ex. 8, 9, 10).

Like the heavily distorted guitar, these cluster repetitions “function as a sign of extreme power and intense expression by... materializing the exceptional effort that produces

36 Ibid., 90-91.

37 Ibid., 93-94.

[them].”³⁸ Vocal and harmonic distortion are common in Ustvol’skaya’s music, as are repeated quarter note rhythms and note clusters. With Ustvol’skaya one is always sure what one is going to get; all of her pieces contain much the same musical language, and it is difficult, if not impossible, to ascribe a particular piece to a particular period of her working life.³⁹ The element of repetition (of the same) obtains throughout her body of work, not just within individual works. For Ustvol’skaya, as for Deleuze, repetition was held to be in opposition to the laws of nature, of society, moral law, and convention,⁴⁰ that is, all the institutions and phenomena that make up the Lacanian Other. This is in sharp contrast to Adorno and Benjamin, for whom repetition has fascistic associations.⁴¹

The question of control is an interesting one. In abjection, the body betrays the subject: it expels waste, it breaks down, and in either event the control of the subject over the body is lost. In extreme metal, Kahn-Harris argues, the uncontrollable is feminine, specifically the feminine body, and it is over the feminine body that extreme metal musicians seek to exert mastery and control. I would argue quite the opposite, that it is the lack of control of the (teenage) male over his *own* body that is painful and problematic. Desire for mastery over a feminine (or female) body is secondary to this primary act of control. The abject is expelled from one’s *self*, not from another; the decomposing body is not repugnant because it shows us the death of another, but because it shows us the eventual death and decay of *ourselves*. In this respect then, the dominance and control of the subject over the abject body must be seen as a struggle of control over oneself, a struggle waged against the external forces of control by the Other, the control of the Law, the Father, and the Symbolic Order. Furthermore, a single all-encompassing act of subversion (i.e. self-dominance, self-mastery, self-control) is not enough: “The

38 Robert Walser, *Running with the Devil: Power, Gender, and Madness in Heavy Metal Music* (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1993), 42

39 This is not to suggest that her work does not contain nuance and difference, simply that this element of change is so small as to only achieve significance against the backdrop of extreme repetition and stasis

40 The moral content of repetition has been noted by Gilles Deleuze who also opposes repetition to the laws of nature, moral law, habit, and convention. Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition* (London: Continuum, 2004), 8 and passim

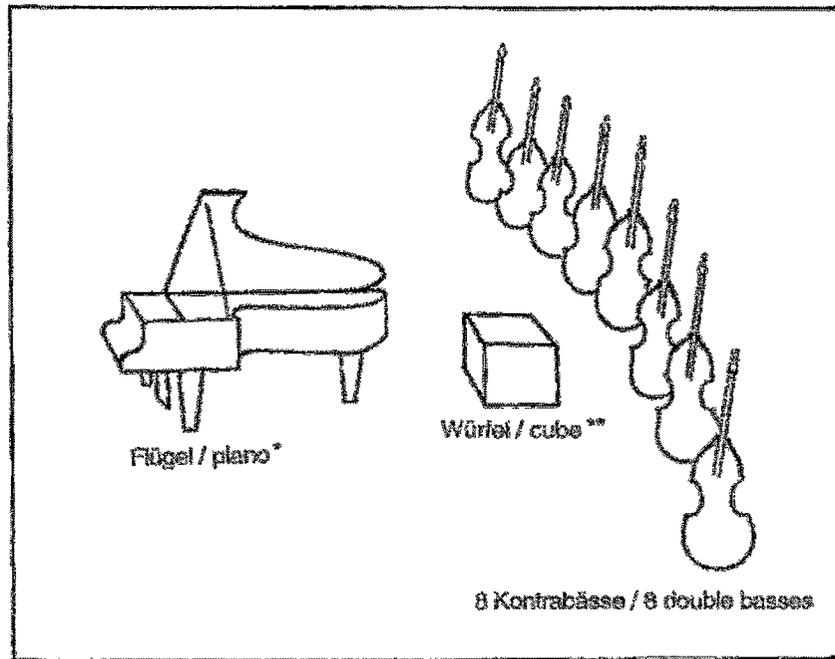
41 Deleuze’s view of the oppositional potential of repetition stands in stark contrast to the fascistic associations repetition hold for the Frankfurt School. Cf. Walter Benjamin, “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction,” in *Illuminations* (New York: Schocken Books, 2007), 223; T. W. Adorno, “On the Fetish Character in Music and the Regression of Listening,” in *The Culture Industry: Selected Essays on Mass Culture* (New York: Routledge, 2001), 35; and Max Horkheimer and T. W. Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment: Philosophical Fragments* (Stanford, CT: Stanford University Press, 2002), 134

object cannot simply be controlled once, dominance has to be proven again and again. This obsessiveness produced extreme metal as its logical conclusion.”⁴² This is the conclusion both of Kristeva’s view of acts of subversion against the patriarchal order and Butler’s “performative subversions” understood as an ongoing series of individual subversions rather than a single act of revolution. There is, in fact, a paradox in the necessity of controlling the object. It is precisely the Superego – acting out the Law, or the rules of the Father – that attempts to control the object. Dominance, control, the bringing back into the limit of the Other, is the only power the self knows or recognizes. It therefore attempts to exercise control over the willful, chaotic subject in an attempt to return to the safety of the Law, of discourse itself. This paradox is perhaps insurmountable, which is why the attempt to control and the attempt to subvert proceed in a never-ending, non-teleological, cycle.⁴³

42 Kahn Harris, *Extreme Metal* 34

43 Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 123 and passim. Repetition in this case, following Deleuze, is equated with Nietzsche’s eternal recurrence.

Anordnung der Instrumente / Arrangement of instruments



*) Der Flügeldeckel ist geöffnet / Lid is open

**) Kiste aus dickem Sperrholz (ca. 43 cm x 43 cm), geschlagen mit 2 Hämmern
Thick plywood cube (ca. 43 cm x 43 cm) struck with 2 mallets

Fig. 5. Ustvolskaya, *Composition #2*. Arrangement of Instruments.⁴⁴

The level of control present in Ustvolskaya's music is not limited to rhythmic and harmonic devices or the mechanics of playing a piece. Her *Composition No. 2*, later retitled *Dies Irae*, is scored for piano, wooden cube, and eight double-basses. Leaving aside for the moment the extreme intensity of sound produced by eight double-basses, what is interesting is that in the score, Ustvolskaya provides a diagram of the relative positions of each instrument on the stage, as if each position had to be rigidly controlled (see Fig. 5). In keeping with the images of death that supply elements of abjection to extreme metal, the wooden cube was initially meant to be an actual coffin, but this proved impractical in performance.⁴⁵

44 Galina Ustvolskaya, *Komposition Nr. 2: "Dies Irae" for 8 double basses, wood cube and piano*. (Hamburg: Musikverlag Hans Sikorski, 1993).

45 As Ustvolskaya told Marian Lee while Lee was researching her PhD thesis. Lee, "Galina Ustvolskaya," 5.

We can see, from the distinctions between the grotesque and the abject in Chapter Three,⁴⁶ it is not simply that Ustvolskaya’s music contains abject elements, but these abject elements directly contradict the grotesque elements present in Shostakovich’s music.

Shostakovich (Grotesque)			Ustvolskaya (Abject)		
Quality (from Fig 3)	Piece	Musical Element	Quality (from Fig 3)	Piece	Musical Element
Motion	Children’s Notebook, Opus 69, Mvt 3 (The Bear)	Dance rhythms	Stasis	Piano Sonata No. 6	Excessively repeated quarter or eighth notes
Approaching a Limit	Piano Trio, Opus 67, Opening Measures	Violin theme played near the limit of what might be considered musical	Transgressing a Limit	Symphony No 1 (Vocal Part)	Boy’s voice stretched beyond the limit of musical singing.
Lack of Control	Symphony No 8	Music almost falling apart through too much music / ostensible lack of musical ability	Too much control	Symphony No 2 (opening bars)	Unchanging rhythms
Laughter	Symphony No. 14, First Movement	“Toyshop” atmosphere, quote from William Tell (Lone Ranger Theme)	Revulsion	Symphony No. 5 (esp. vocal part).	Despondent rhythms, despairing tone of voice

Fig. 6. The grotesque and the abject in particular pieces. (In this table, musical elements from particular pieces are correlated with the grotesque and abject qualities listed in Fig. 3).

⁴⁶ See table, p. 76

Elements of abjection, then, are clearly present in Ustvolskaya's music, and if this were all there was to it, a certain resistance to her music would be understandable, but not its almost total silencing both at the time and in much of the historiography of Soviet music. What seals her fate is not simply that the abject exists, but that it actively threatens and set itself in opposition to the established musical order, the music of Shostakovich.

Transgression and Heresy

We have seen how, once doxa in a society has been exposed as arbitrary and thereby destroyed,⁴⁷ those with sufficient cultural capital (i.e. recognized authority to speak, to create discourse) set up and maintain a conscious orthodoxy. This procedure gives rise to its opposite, heterodoxy (or heresy) which threatens, in the dynamism of avant-gardes, all that is constituted as orthodox.

The propulsive force of heretical criticism is met by the resistant force of orthodoxy. Dominated individuals make common cause with discourse and consciousness, indeed with science, since they cannot constitute themselves as a separate group, mobilize themselves or mobilize their potential power unless they question the categories of perception of the social order which, being the product of that order, inclined them to recognize that order and thus submit to it.⁴⁸

Hence, of course, the novel, "rational" and "scientific" system of composition adopted by the young composers of the 1950s and 1960s: serialism. The reaction of the old guard to serialism was much as Bourdieu could have predicted:

In the absence of being able to restore the *silence of the doxa*, [they strove] to produce, through a purely reactionary discourse, a substitute for everything that is threatened by the very existence of heretical discourse. Finding nothing for which to reproach the social world as it stands, they endeavour to impose universally, through a discourse permeated by the simplicity and transparency of common sense, the feeling of obviousness and necessity which this world imposes on them.⁴⁹

47 See above, pp 46-49

48 Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power*, 131

49 Ibid For an account of the early days of serialism in the USSR and its adoption by the young composers, see Peter Schmelz, "Shostakovich's 'twelve-tone' compositions and the politics and practice of Soviet serialism," in *Shostakovich and his World*, edited by Laurel Fay, 303-354 (Princeton University Press, 2004).

This accounts for the the constituted opposition between orthodoxy and heterodoxy within the field of cultural production in the absence of doxa, but what of positions taken within the field whose allegiances are to the silences outside of what is orthodox or heterodox, whose “taken position” is an abject one?

For Bourdieu, the field itself can act as a “censoring” agent, and positions (other than abject ones) taken within the field are the result of a compromise between an agent’s desire to take a position (their “expressive interest”) and the censorship of the field itself. This compromise is more or less successful depending on the agent’s ability to observe the form of acceptable (orthodox or heterodox) discourse. The ability to compromise, to observe the rules, guarantees the satisfaction of the desire to communicate through the granting of material or symbolic power to the agent who “plays by the rules.” In other words, one is allowed to speak – or to produce any cultural artifact – only to the extent that one does not say what no-one wants to hear.

Censorship is never quite as perfect or as invisible as when each agent has nothing to say apart from what he is objectively authorized to say: in this case he does not even have to be his own censor because he is, in a way, censored once and for all, through the forms of perception and expression that he has internalized and which impose their form on all his expressions.⁵⁰

However, political effectiveness arises from the constitutions of groups which can create, through naming, an alternative social order, a new common sense which one day might replace the existing orthodox one, which in effect is what first Shostakovich and then the young composers achieved. This is, in a nutshell, the dynamic of the avant-gardes at the level of individual artistic works, and it is here that we can discover the heart of the problem Ustvolskaya faced:

The efficacy of heretical discourse does not reside in the magic of a force immanent to language... but rather in the dialectic between the authorizing and authorized language and the dispositions of the group which authorizes it and authorizes itself to use it. This dialectical process is accomplished, in the case of each of the agents concerned and, most of all, in the case of the person producing the heretical discourse, in and through the *labour of enunciation* which is necessary in order to externalize the inwardness, to name the unnamed and to give the beginnings of objectification to the pre-verbal and pre-reflexive dispositions

50 Butler’s major thesis is echoed here by Bourdieu “Among the most effective and best concealed censorships are all those which consist in excluding certain agents from communication by excluding them from the groups which speak or the places which allow one to speak with authority” Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power*, 138

and ineffable and unobservable experiences, through words which by their nature make them common and communicable, therefore meaningful and socially sanctioned. It may also be accomplished in the labour of dramatization, particularly visible in exemplary prophecy, which alone is capable of destroying the self-evident truths of the doxa, and in the transgression which is indispensable in order to *name the unnameable*, to break the censorships, institutionalized or internalized, which prohibit the return of the repressed.⁵¹

We are dealing here with the realm of words, of signs, of the Symbolic. If the unnameable can be named, then it is no longer unnameable, it has been brought firmly and securely into the Symbolic Order, and is now under the Law of the Father. What is truly unnameable, what is abject, is beyond this dialectic, and no amount of transgression will allow it to be named. The transgression itself is the goal, and when the body grows too weak and too tired to transgress further – as the body of the pianist grows exhausted in practicing and playing Ustvolskaya’s sonatas – there is no apotheosis or transfiguration, there is only silence, there is only stopping, not ending. The transgressive music of Galina Ustvolskaya goes on transgressing, goes on “being abject” until, in the words of Beckett, “the words fail, the voice fails, so be it.”⁵²

Silence or the Inability to Speak

Ustvolskaya’s music could never be assimilated into any dominant discourse or musical language. Her music provoked a rejection, a turning away, from the abject qualities it exemplified. Her own unwillingness or inability to speak except through her music means that she remains intractable to critical discourse.⁵³ Her music cannot be understood in any rational, intellectual, Symbolic way, and the critical fallback of biography remains insufficient. It is for this reason, the position of abjection she took in her work in the generational interstix between one avant-garde and another as well as the biographical choices she made *not to* attempt to take positions through anything other than her music (marriage, activism, etc), and above all her unwillingness to foster or join any kind of

51 Ibid., 129.

52 Beckett, *Molloy, Malone Dies, The Unnameable*, 475.

53 Rachel Jeremiah-Foulds, “Spiritual Independence or a Cultural Norm: Galina Ustvolskaya and the Znamenny Raspev,” in *Proceedings of the Third International Conference on Orthodox Church Music*, 314-326. (Joensuu, Finland: International Society for Orthodox Church Music, 2010), 314.

group – even among her students – that prevented discourse, then or now, from having anything to do with her

Having noticed a resemblance between her own music and a student's composition, she strictly remarked that she does not like it when someone writes "like her" "Shostakovich really liked it when others wrote 'like him,' but I don't" ⁵⁴

What cannot be dominated by the Father or repressed in the unconscious simply cannot be, must be avoided, must be silent. Of course, it is part of the human condition to struggle – in vain – against such silence. Which is why, despite Ustvolskaya's "veto," she allowed and desired her music to be performed and published. No-one is capable of remaining silent even when they recognize the futility of speech – not even Samuel Beckett – and not Galina Ustvolskaya either.

We find ourselves, then, in a discursive bind if the abject in general and Ustvolskaya's music in particular are not amenable to discourse, except in an attempt to reduce them to discourse, which is destined always to be frustrated, then how can we speak or write about either (as I am clearly doing)? Kristeva herself, in writing about the abject, recognized this problem: "Mute protest of the symptom, shattering violence of a convulsion that, to be sure, is inscribed in a symbolic system, but in which, without either wanting or being able to become integrated in order to answer to it, it reacts, it abreacts" ⁵⁵ Kristeva escapes this bind through recognizing that the relation to the abject is not and cannot be mediated by discourse but only approached directly, through the body: "No, as in true theatre, without makeup or masks, refuse and corpses *show me* what I permanently thrust aside in order to live" ⁵⁶ This "thrusting aside" of the Real in its apprehension by the Symbolic is a cornerstone of Lacanian psychoanalysis. What Kristeva is asking for is an erotic apprehension of the world that is unmediated by the symbolic order, by discourse. In Kristeva's terms, critiqued by Butler, what is misapprehended by the (paternal) Symbolic is the (feminine, maternal) semiotic. But as Butler points out (following Foucault), the very concept of the maternal is a product of discourse, a creation of the Symbolic which has been repressed.

54 Bokman, *Variations*, 22-23

55 Kristeva, *Powers of Horror*, 3

56 *Ibid*

As we have already seen, discourse not only allows the silencing of Ustvolskaya's music, but *forces* it, by placing it outside of discourse, beyond criticism or interpretation, in the realm of the abject. Some alternative method of engagement with the music is required in order to overcome the constitutive or even repressive consequences of discourse. We have already seen how the concept of the body can be useful in identifying alternative strategies in the analysis of music; the body then, should provide an adequate starting point for a proposed *erotics of music*.⁵⁷

Erotics: The Silent Speech of the Body

Susan Sontag's 1966 essay "Against Interpretation" provides a justification for an *erotics of music*. In aesthetics, Sontag states, the primary mode of operation of discourse is interpretation, based on a theoretical dichotomy between form and content, the relations of which are exposed through analysis. Interpretation in this sense was an invention of the Greeks who required an aesthetics that conformed to their metaphysics, which the earlier "magical" or "ritual" aesthetics did not. Sontag maintains that, despite having moved beyond Greek metaphysics, later interpreters were able to use the same aesthetic theory of interpretation to make old texts usable in a new age: "The situation is that for some reason a text has become unacceptable; yet it cannot be discarded. Interpretation is a radical strategy for conserving an old text."⁵⁸ Hermeneutics was originally a means to conserve a revered text, one that the world could not afford to lose, and thus reflected a pragmatic attitude towards the text. Once hermeneutics had become the rule, rather than a special case reserved for special texts, and had become the default attitude towards texts of all sorts, then hermeneutics lost its pragmatism and was performed for its own sake. We have become, in Sontag's terms "aggressive zealots" in our "contempt for appearances".

The old style of interpretation was insistent, but respectful; it erected another meaning on top of the literal one. The modern style of interpretation excavates,

57 Bearing in mind Butler's recognition that the body itself is or can be discursively defined

58 Susan Sontag, "Against Interpretation," in *Against Interpretation* (New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1966), 6

and as it excavates, destroys, it digs “behind” the text, to find a sub-text which is the true one⁵⁹

This attitude is identical to what Bourdieu calls “objectivism,”⁶⁰ and it is important to bear in mind the violation of lived experience that objectivism entailed. Sontag’s view is much the same as Bourdieu’s interpretation may, in some contexts be a “liberating act,” but in others “it is reactionary, impertinent, cowardly, stifling.”⁶¹

In most modern instances, interpretation amounts to the philistine refusal to leave the work of art alone. Real art has the capacity to make us nervous. By reducing the work of art to its content and then interpreting *that*, one tames the work of art. Interpretation makes art manageable, conformable.⁶²

This, of course, was precisely the situation in the Soviet Union. Socialist realism was imposed to make art manageable and conformable, to extinguish any possibility of art making anyone nervous. The enduring symbol of the victory of interpretation over art is the suicide of Mayakovsky in 1930.⁶³ Interpretation reduces what is most amenable to it – content – to the level of discourse and represses the rest – it is for this reason that “formalism” was such a crime in the Soviet cultural field. In Sontag’s view, interpretation is “*the* modern way of understanding something,”⁶⁴ and a work of art can only be apprehended if it can be recognized as being *about* something.

Ustvolskaya’s music – and perhaps all music – cannot be said to be “about” anything, except metaphorically, even in the case of the most programmatic of music. What socialist realism did was to impose on Soviet art what it *had* to be about. Most Soviet music was more or less amenable to this interpretation: programmatic music like cantatas were generally safe, while less representational music, like Shostakovich’s First Violin Concerto, were repressed. Representational works which violated the – admittedly vague – criteria of Socialist Realist interpretation, like Shostakovich’s *Lady Macbeth*, were also vilified. What is common among these three responses to music by the Soviet cultural authorities is the tacit understanding that music “is composed of items of

59 Ibid

60 See above, p. 11

61 Susan Sontag, “Against Interpretation,” 8

62 Ibid

63 The poet Vladimir Mayakovsky was an outspoken proponent of Russian Futurism both before and after the Revolution. Increasingly disillusioned with Stalin’s Russia, he shot himself in April 1930.

64 Ibid, 9

content” which, in Sontag’s views “violates art.... make art into an article for use, for arrangement into a mental scheme of categories.”⁶⁵ When these categories are given *a priori*, as they are in discourse, then the possibility immediately arises for works of art that violate the scheme to be placed outside it. What is not amenable to interpretation according to the dominant scheme – as Ustvolskaya’s music was to socialist realism – cannot even be recognized as art.

Sontag approaches the more general discursive bind inherent in musicology from a more general position. It is not simply abject music which is (or should be) resistant to interpretation, but all music.⁶⁶ An approach to art, she suggests, which avoids the objectivist trap of interpretation through discourse is to “recover our senses”: “We must learn to *see* more, to *hear* more, to *feel* more.”⁶⁷ In her insistence on bodily senses rather than symbolic structures (e.g. language), it is clear that Sontag sees the body as the site of an apprehension of music that resists the reduction of interpretation.

The aim of all commentary on art now should be to make works of art – and, by analogy, our own experience – more, rather than less, real to us. The function of criticism should be to show *how it is what it is*, even *that it is what it is*, rather than to show *what it means*.⁶⁸

Sontag describes this approach as an “erotics of art”, i.e. an aesthetic position based on the body and desire rather than on language and symbolic structures. While she leaves the term “erotics” undefined, we can conceive of “desire” (ἔρωσις) as the pleasure associated with a change in bodily state. A static body is either dead or confined, and an anticipated change in position is a desire perceived and apprehended immediately by all the senses (including the proprioceptive) without the mediation of discourse. If we take only one change of state as an example, that of “rest after tension” we can begin to see how such a concept of desire, such an erotics of music, might take shape. Much analysis has indeed tried to expose “tension” and “release” in music, and this has been primarily cast in a discursive mode, i.e. what tension and release “means” rather than how it is provoked in a

65 Ibid., 10.

66 Except, perhaps, program music. Ibid., 10-11.

67 Ibid., 14.

68 Ibid.

listening body To paraphrase Wolfgang Iser, an erotics of music would concentrate less on explanation than on effect⁶⁹

Throughout this thesis, we have moved from a high-level cultural model (Bourdieu) down to a low-level one (the erotics of music) using “the body” as a pivot We are able to avoid the discursive bind inherent in abjection by arguing for an apprehension of art by the body rather than by (always repressive) symbolic structures This could imply that the body is natural and non constructed or, in the terms of Butler’s critique, that the body “admits of no genealogy”⁷⁰ However, while Bourdieu maintains that discourse structures the subject through the body, Butler argues that the body itself is discursively constructed The body, then, is both structured and structuring, which conforms entirely with Bourdieu’s concept of the habitus This ambiguity, rather than being a problem, can be seen as a way of maintaining the fundamental instability of an aesthetics of erotics, a way of ensuring that art remains resistant to symbolic interpretation, by maintaining the resistance of the body itself to rigorous, unambiguous theorizing and interpretation

We do not, then, need to jettison Bourdieu’s sociological model, only to understand that the model operates differently at different levels of analysis, and that while practice and field theory are adequate representations of social organizations and institutions, and while the theory of language and symbolic power works to understand how discourse operates at that level, they are inadequate for a theory of aesthetics However, because of the dual-nature of the body and bodily habitus, the body can act as a pivot, fulcrum, or hinge between the macro theory of practice, field, and discourse, and the erotics of music required by Kristeva and implied by Butler and Sontag

The challenge of an erotics of music is to open up the possibility of appreciating art bodily (which is done, for example, in the work of Maria Cizmici), while at the same time allowing for the analysis of art in bodily terms, analysis in this case showing how a work of art is how it is rather than what it means (Lidov, Hatten) This two-fold challenge mirrors the ambiguous nature of the body itself, and situates the aesthetics of the body

69 Wolfgang Iser, *The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976), 10 Iser’s contribution to reader response theory can be read as a detailed working out of Sontag’s “erotic” in the realm of literature

70 Butler, *Gender Trouble*, 176

within the unresolvable problematic of object and subject. This ambiguity must be recognized as problematic only in the discursive logic of the symbolic order, just as the abject is “problematic.” For the body such ambiguities, contradictions, and “horrors” pose no problem, precisely because the body is beyond discourse, beyond theory, beyond interpretation. Sontag asks us to do is to love art, to love music, rather than to “understand it.” The words of Ustvolskaya that stand at the beginning of this thesis show her recognition of the importance of this position: “All who really love my music should refrain from a theoretical analysis of it.”⁷¹

This opening up of erotics as a means to overcome discursive or epistemological limiting (silencing) is one way out of the discursive bind identified with using abjection as an interpretive tool. However, this seems to assume that abjection – as bodily practice – is the only possible alternative to the orthodox-heterodox dichotomy implicit in Bourdieu’s concept of discourse. However, while it seems to be the case that all abjection is bodily practice, not all bodily practices necessarily imply abjection. For Kristeva, the abject is that which does not require discourse in order to be known or recognized, but in a very real sense what is abject has no *meaning*, it simply *is*, in the same way that “a wound with blood and pus, or the sickly, acrid smell of sweat, of decay does not *signify* death.”⁷² These non-discursive elements (events, practices, ideas) constitute a broader field than only the abject. For Foucault, these elements constitute the historical ground which make discourse possible (the Lacanian Real). Foucault’s episteme links the non-discursive with the discursive to “create the connections which make it possible to speak about some aspect of the world in a particular regime of truth.”⁷³ Orthodox, heterodoxy, and abjection are a subset of the wider field of relationships between *episteme*, the discursive and the non-discursive used in this thesis, but they are not the only lens it is possible to use.

Considering this, then, it would be possible to suggest that, given other social or historical contexts, the music of Ustvolskaya might never have been positioned outside of

71 Quoted in Gladkova, *Musik als Magische Kraft*, 1.

72 Kristeva, *Powers of Horror*, 3.

73 Nick J. Fox, “Is there life after Foucault? Texts, frames and *differends*,” in *Foucault, Health and Medicine* edited by Alan Petersen and Robin Bunton (New York: Routledge, 1997), 36.

discourse, or that it might have moved from an abject to a heterodox position at some point in her career. The flexibility of Foucault's *episteme* as an "apparatus" through which to discuss the discursive and the non-discursive certainly would allow for different positions to have been taken at different times, given different historical contexts. It is important to bear in mind the discourses, fields, etc., are not set in stone, but are the product of very specific historical forces in play at any given moment. In an interview, Foucault stated that

the apparatus is essentially of a *strategic* nature, which means assuming that it is a matter of a certain manipulation of relations of forces, either developing them in a particular direction, blocking them, stabilising them, utilising them, etc. The apparatus is thus always inscribed in a play of power, but it is also always linked to certain coordinates of knowledge which issue from it but, to an equal degree condition it.⁷⁴

It follows, then, that the theoretical model constructed and employed in this thesis is only a partial picture, the tracing of only a small set of power relations, taking into consideration only a few of the historical details at play in this interconnected web of reality, discourse, and silence.

74 Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1980), 196.

CONCLUSION

“All works of art,” writes Susan Sontag, “are founded on a certain distance from the lived reality which is represented”¹ But in the view of Raymond Williams, “Culture is ordinary”² These are the two poles between which this thesis has been constructed the idea that culture is amenable to theory and interpretation, and the idea that art can only be apprehended erotically We have seen how Bourdieu’s sociology enabled us to situate Ustvolskaya’s music within the social and historical context of Soviet music Using the theoretical concept of the body, we were able to approach a theoretical understanding or interpretation of Ustvolskaya’s music, but only insofar as it remained connected with the social, the political, and historical In other words, no matter how deeply we penetrated Ustvolskaya’s music, we constantly came up against the cultural, the ordinary, the stuff of lived experience and daily life As we know from Bourdieu, however, this is only part of the story The recovery of lived experience – the experience of composer, performers, and listeners – remained beyond our reach, outside the realm of analysis and discourse Bourdieu could help us understand the social and cultural reasons for Ustvolskaya and her music to be perceived as they were, Echard, Lidov, and Hatten helped us formulate a connection between the social level and the individual piece of music, and Bakhtin, Kristeva, and Butler enabled us to understand what, at the level of the music, determined the position taken by the music in the broader field But we came up against a discursive bind it seemed it was impossible to speak or write about “the music itself”

In Bourdieu’s model, Ustvolskaya’s music occupies a position within the cultural field that is neither orthodox like the music of Shostakovich, nor heterodox like the music of the subsequent generation of composers We are able to understand that, in the succession of avant-gardes that constitutes the history of Soviet music, Ustvolskaya fell between two generations, and never gained sufficient cultural capital to be recognized as an important and significant composer It was through the lens of the body that we were able to understand what elements of her music prevented such recognition and placed her so firmly outside the official history of Soviet music Bakhtin, Kristeva, and Butler

1 Susan Sontag ‘On Style’ in *Against Interpretation*, 30

2 Raymond Williams, ‘Culture is Ordinary,’ in *Studies in Culture: An Introductory Reader*, ed Ann Gray and Jim McGuigan 5-14 (London: Arnold, 1997), 5

allowed us to expose the reaction to Ustvolskaya's music as a reaction against abjection, and to situate the abject in her music against the non-subversive grotesque of Shostakovich.

Finally, we offered up a solution to the discursive bind, which is to learn to engage with music erotically. Sontag's theory allowed us to go a little way towards the artistic, rather than simply the cultural, aspect of music. In this way, we did not have to jettison the theoretical advances made by applying the theories of Bourdieu, Bakhtin, Kristeva, and Butler to the field of Soviet music. They all offer new and interesting insights into the dynamics of the field and into our understanding of Soviet cultural history more generally, and of socialist realism in particular. But we have to recognize that such theorizing, such "objective" work does not, in the end, take us any closer to the "nourishment of consciousness, which is [the] aesthetic experience" of music.³

In terms of what has been accomplished then, the value of this research has been not only to show the advantages of applying cultural theory to the history of Soviet music, but also to show its limits. In investigating the music of a Soviet composer who was ignored and silenced in her own lifetime, and who has now begun to be reevaluated, we have to look at things on both a cultural, everyday level – the level of society and cultural theory, the level of Bourdieu, Bakhtin, Butler, even Kristeva. But we also have to recognize that the cultural level is inadequate for an appreciation and an engagement with the music. In order to overcome this inadequacy, then, we require to engage with music at an artistic, erotic, level. Like the objectivist viewpoint Bourdieu criticized, cultural theory and intellectual understanding have to be supplemented with artistic, *sensual* appreciation.

There are, then, two avenues of further research suggested by this thesis. On the one hand, much more "objectivist" work can be done for the sociology of Soviet culture, the definition of the class structure and class dynamics of the Soviet Union. A book like Bourdieu's *Distinction* as applied to the USSR would be fascinating. A full-scale working out of the dynamics of generations and avant-gardes would be enlightening. Questions of musical taste and appreciation in the face of a seemingly monolithic official

3 Sontag, "On Style," 25.

culture should be asked. Indeed, they are being asked, and much of this work has begun to be carried out by a younger generation of musicologists like Peter Schmelz.

On the other hand, the question of an erotics of music in place of a hermeneutics of music is an interesting one. Can musicology exist apart from the analysis of music? What are the theoretical foundations and ramifications of Sontag's position? What are the objections to it? What are or can be the aesthetics of music at the beginning of the 21st century? Can music be art, or is it merely culture? Is music only culture, or is it also art? If there is no art/culture distinction, then we must be prepared to judge culture by the criteria of art. If the distinction is made, then what could comprise the new canons which are a consequence of that distinction?

All of these are interesting questions that could be followed up by subsequent research. But the most important consequence, I hope, for the readers of this thesis, as for the writer, are an enriched comprehension of the cold and ugly world of Ustvolskaya's music, its richness and ineffable mystery, and the theoretical relations that serve to pin that ineffability firmly to a specific and knowable culture.

APPENDIX 1. "SOCIALIST REALISM" AND MUSIC

By the early 1930s, with Lenin dead, Trotsky in exile, and his own supporters in positions of power and influence, Stalin's dominance in Soviet life was assured. The Seventeenth Party Congress held in April 1934 was called the "Congress of the Victors,"¹ and at a Writer's Congress later that year Andrei Zhdanov – one of Stalin's acolytes – quietly laid down the principles for a new cultural orthodoxy known as *sotsialisticheskiy realizm*, or socialist realism. Socialist realism originally derived from the particular brand of Marxism that had been introduced into Russia by Georgi Plekhanov in 1883, which was then adapted for the Russian situation by Lenin, Trotsky, and others. Following the death of Lenin and the consolidation of his own power, Stalin turned his attention to bringing about the rapid industrialization of the country which was seen as a requirement, in Marxist terms, for economic (and therefore political) development. However,

in order to facilitate the massive and coercive upheaval entailed by his industrial policies, Stalin abandoned almost all that remained of the cultural avant-garde and social utopianism that had flowered across the revolutionary divide from late tsarism.²

All cultural institutions and trends were brought under strict ideological control, and all cultural artifacts were expected to conform to the doctrine of socialist realism, which demanded "a 'realism' that could speak to ordinary people, but also a politically correct depiction of the inevitable march, under socialism and communism, toward a brighter future."³ In practice,

a bizarre doctrine of 'conflictlessness' was introduced, which decreed the impossibility of conflicts in works about Soviet characters, on the pretext that Soviet society was exempt from contradictions. There followed a 'varnishing' of reality, an idyllic representation of Soviet life.⁴

In music, socialist realism meant accessibility in form and musical language combined with socialist content. The Soviet cultural authorities were never able to rigorously define

1 Moshe Lewin, *The Soviet Century* (New York: Verso, 2005), 49

2 Abbott Gleason, "Ideological Structures," in *The Cambridge Companion to Modern Russian Culture*, ed. Nicholas Rzhevsky (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 118

3 Ibid

4 Laurence Senelick, "Theatre," in *The Cambridge Companion to Modern Russian Culture* edited by Nicholas Rzhevsky (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 287

“content” with regard to instrumental music, and so works with texts (operas, cantatas) were extensively promoted. Musical elements that were considered contrary to the tenets of socialist realism (excessive chromaticism or other harmonic complexity, excessively rambunctious rhythms, etc.) were condemned. The term used in such condemnation was “formalism,” a term “used so loosely that Prokofiev once quipped, ‘Formalism is music that people don’t understand at first hearing.’”⁵ The vagueness of the conception of socialist realism in music (the term began and found its most explicit formulation in literature) was not dispelled by official statements from the Composers’ Union such as the following, from 1934:

The main attention of the Soviet composer must be directed towards the victorious progressive principles of reality, towards all that is heroic, bright, and beautiful. This distinguishes the spiritual world of Soviet man and must be embodied in musical images full of beauty and strength. Socialist Realism demands an implacable struggle against folk-negating modernistic directions that are typical of the decay of contemporary bourgeois art, against subservience and servility towards modern bourgeois culture.⁶

In practical terms, socialist realism meant above all accessibility in music. For program music, operas, and other more representational or narrative music, the criteria were the same as for literature. A writer had to be both “historically truthful and concrete, i.e. objective, on the one hand, and ideologically right-minded and properly didactic, i.e. prescriptive, on the other.”⁷ Works produced under such a system would “[replicate], in terms of human biographies the average Soviet reader could understand and identify with, the heroic march of socialism from a mythical past through a problematic present to a mythical future (the attainment of communism).”⁸ Music could not be ugly or avant-garde, neither could it be licentious or vulgar in the manner of jazz, gypsy songs, or other “light genres.”⁹ Music had to have a clear moral, given in advance, which served the cultural advancement of the Soviet citizen and, therefore, of socialism itself.

5 Schwarz, *Music and Musical Life* 115

6 1934 Statute of the Composers’ Union, quoted in Schwarz, *Music and Musical Life* 114

7 David M. Bethea, “Literature,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Modern Russian Culture* edited by Nicholas Rzhevsky 161–204 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 196

8 *Ibid.*, 197

9 Sutes, “The Ways of Soviet Popular music to 1953,” *passim*

APPENDIX 2. MUSICAL EXAMPLES

Example 1 Shostakovich, Symphony No 8, Mvt 1, Bars 62-98.¹

¹ Dmitry Shostakovich, *Symphony No 8* (Hamburg Musikverlag Hans Sikorski, [n d]), 8-10

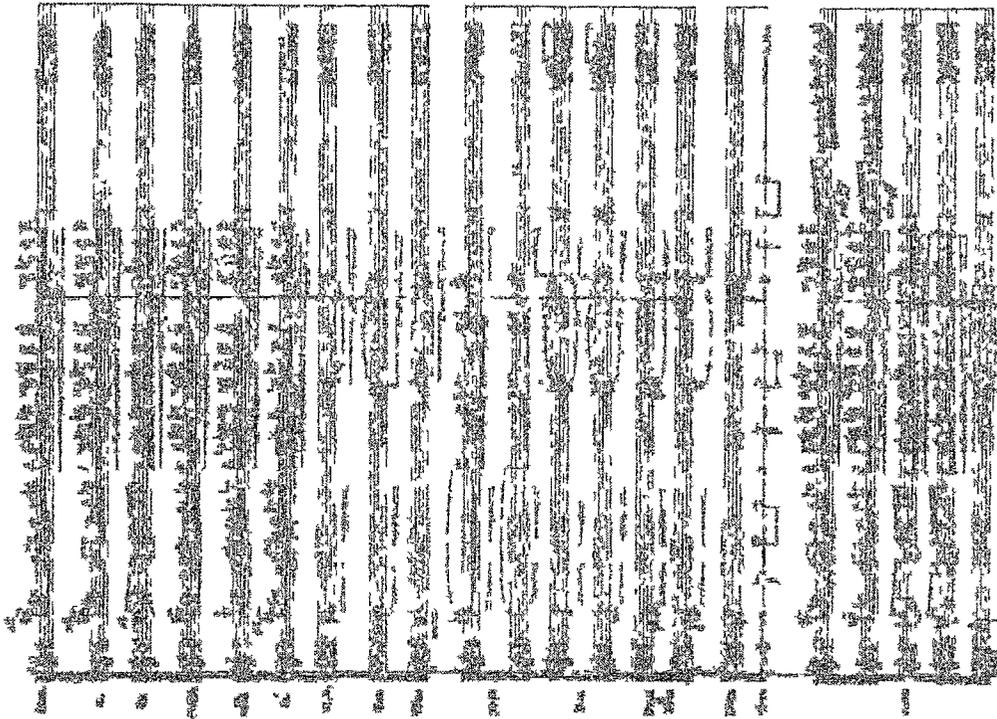


FIG. 17

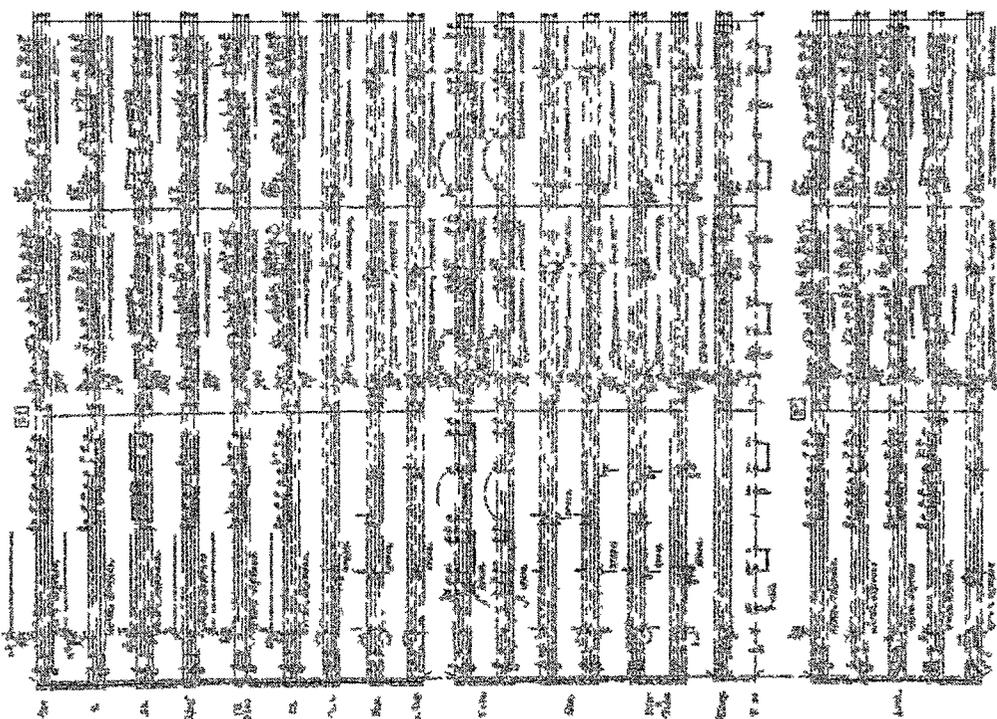


FIG. 18

Example 3. Shostakovich, Symphony No. 8. Mvt 1. Bars 273-291.³

48

3 Ibid., 48-50

Fl. Ob. Eng. Horn Cl. Bb Cl. C Bsn. Trpt. Tbn. Tuba

Vln. I Vln. II Vla. Vcl. Cb.

49

50

ADAGIO ♩ = 80

Perc Fl Oboe Cl. in B♭ Bassoon Contrabass Trumpet Trombone Horn Tuba Timpani Snare Drum Cymbal Archa

HS 2221

Example 4. Shostakovich, Symphony No. 8, Mvt II, Bars 14-20.⁴

ADAGIO ♩ = 80

Perc Fl Oboe Cl. in B♭ Bassoon Contrabass Trumpet Trombone Horn Tuba Timpani Archa

HS 2221

Example 5. Shostakovich, Symphony No. 8, Mvt II, Bars 268-301.⁴

4 Ibid, 60

Fl.
Cl. Bb
Cl. C
Tbn
Cor
Tpt. A
Tbn
Tpt. Eb
Fl. III
Cl. Bb
Cb

Tbn
Cor
Tpt. A
Tbn
Tpt. Eb
Fl. III
Cl. Bb
Cb

125 159 160

Example 6. Ustvol'skaya, Symphony No. 4, Bars 40-43.⁶

The image displays a musical score for Example 6, Ustvol'skaya, Symphony No. 4, Bars 40-43. The score is organized into two systems. The first system includes staves for Violin I (Vn I), Violin II (Vn II), Viola (Vcl), and Piano (P). The second system includes staves for Violin I (Vn I), Violin II (Vn II), Viola (Vcl), and Piano (P). The score contains various musical notations, including notes, rests, dynamics (f, p, sfz), and articulation marks. A vertical line is present on the right side of the page.

6 Galina Ustvol'skaya, *Simfonie No. 4* (Hamburg: Musikverlag Hans Sikorski, 1999), 8.

33

34

1) Alle drei Töne mit dem Daumen anschlagen. / Strike all three notes with the thumb.

Example 9. Ustvolskaya, Piano Sonata No. 4. Unmeasured (p. 4).⁹

⁹ Galina Ustvolskaya, "Sonate Nr. 4," in *Piano Works Vol. 2* (Hamburg: Musikverlag Hans Sikorski, 1996), 4.

The image displays a musical score for a piano sonata, consisting of two systems of staves. The left system includes a piano part (bottom staff) and a right-hand part (top staff). The piano part features dynamics such as *ppp*, *ppp esp*, and *pppp*, along with articulation marks like accents and slurs. The right-hand part includes dynamics like *ppp esp* and *ppp*, and features a complex rhythmic pattern with many sixteenth notes. The second system continues the piano part with dynamics *ppp* and *pppp*, and the right-hand part with dynamics *ppp* and *fff*. The right-hand part in the second system includes a tempo marking of *♩ = 192* and a dynamic of *fff*. The score is written in a key signature of one flat and a 2/4 time signature.

Example 10. Ustvolskaya, Piano Sonata No. 1. Unmeasured (p. 9).¹⁰

10 Galina Ustvolskaya, "Sonate Nr. 1," in *Piano Works Vol. 1* (Hamburg: Musikverlag Hans Sikorski, 1996), 9

APPENDIX 3. LIST OF WORKS

More detailed information regarding each piece as well as first performances is available on the Musikverlag Hans Sikorski website (http://www.sikorski.de/358/en/ustvolskaya_galina.html). The website also contains a biographical sketch of Ustvolskaya and a selected discography.

Concerto for piano, string orchestra and timpani – 1946
First performance: 1967, Moscow

Sonata for piano no. 1 – 1947
First performance: 20 February 1974, Leningrad

Cantata: The Dream of Stepan Razin – 1949
First performance: 1950

Trio for clarinet, violin and piano – 1949
First performance: 11 January 1968, Leningrad

Octet for two oboes, four violins, timpani and piano – 1949/50
First performance: 17 November 1970, Leningrad

Sonata for piano no. 2 – 1949
First performance: 26 January 1967, Moscow

Sonata for piano no. 3 – 1952
First performance: 16 February 1972, Leningrad

Sonata for violin and piano – 1952
First performance: 5 March 1961, Leningrad

Twelve Preludes for piano – 1953
First performance: 20 March 1968, Leningrad

Symphony no 1 – 1955
First performance: Spring 1966, Leningrad

Suite for orchestra – 1955
First performance: 1957, Leningrad

Sonata for piano no. 4 – 1957
First performance: 4 April 1973, Leningrad

Symphonic Poem no. 1 – 1958
First performance: 1958, Leningrad

Symphonic Poem no. 2 – 1959

Grand Duet for violoncello and piano – 1959
First performance: 14 December 1977, Leningrad

Duet for violin and piano – 1964
First performance: 23 May 1968, Leningrad

Composition no. 1: “Dona nobis pacem” – 1970/1971
First performance: 19 February 1975, Leningrad

Composition no. 2: “Dies irae” – 1972/73
First performance: 14 December 1977, Leningrad

Composition no. 3: “Benedictus, qui venit” – 1974/1975
First performance: 14 December 1977, Leningrad

Symphony no. 2: “True and Eternal Bliss” – 1979
First performance: 8 October 1980, Leningrad

Symphony no. 3: “Jesus Messiah, Save Us” – 1983
First performance: 1 October 1987, Leningrad

Symphony no. 4: “Prayer“ – 1985/1987
First performance: 24 June 1988, Heidelberg

Sonata for piano no. 5 – 986

Sonata for piano no. 6 – 1988
First performance: Autumn 1988

Symphony no. 5: “Amen” – 1989/1990
First performance: 19 January 1991, New York

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