

patible with the immanent constitution of the work of art, and whatever in the work goes beyond them to an essential perception is sacrificed to them." What this portends is that compositions become "culinary delights which seek to be consumed immediately for their own sake, as if in art the sensory were not the bearer of something intellectual which only shows itself in the whole rather than in isolated topical moments."⁷¹

So we have a loss of thought, action, and freedom. This mode of listening reflects a mode of living, or rather not living. "The romanticizing of particulars eats away the body of the whole." The result is that modern musical culture creates a general malaise of regression and misrecognition.⁷² The triumph of the culture industry is that this social misrecognition is masked by mere brand-name recognition. The regressive state and its concomitant fragmentations become legal tender, and use gives way to exchange value.

The feelings which go to the exchange value create the appearance of immediacy at the same time as the absence of a relation to the object belies it. . . . If the moments of sensual pleasure in the idea, the voice, the instrument are made into fetishes and torn away from any functions which could give them meaning, they meet a response equally isolated, equally far from the meaning of the whole, and equally determined by success in the blind and irrational emotions which form the relationship to music into which those with no relationship enter.⁷³

The cultural inoculation, the "vulgarization and enchantment"⁷⁴ that Adorno outlines in this piece is seen as a general condition and a dire danger. It appears in numerous settings, like in film music. Given this context, strong words of criticism and disapproval suddenly appear as much more than cranky proprietary complaints about incorrect appropriation of the leitmotif.

Concerns like these are essential to understanding this period, its critics (and the tone of its criticism—Adorno, Benjamin, Horkheimer, Keller, and others). I do not wish to propose facile equivalencies. These critics do not constitute a homogeneous group, but they do hold some things to be self-evident. Defenses are needed against the dangers of the popular.

And what was the supreme popular art? The movies, of course.