

2011

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#### Recommended Citation

Kertz-Welzel, Alexandra (2011) "Paradise Lost? A Critical Examination of Idealistic Philosophies of Teaching through the Lens of Theodor W. Adorno," *Visions of Research in Music Education*: Vol. 19 , Article 2.

Available at: <https://opencommons.uconn.edu/vrme/vol19/iss1/2>

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## **Paradise Lost? A Critical Examination of Idealistic Philosophies of Teaching through the Lens of Theodor W. Adorno**

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“And out of good still to find means of evil“  
John Milton, “Paradise Lost” (1667)

### **Abstract**

*Many music educators choose their profession not only for the love of music, but also because of the desire to transform students' personalities and character through the power of music. Idealistic notions such as making the world a better place through music dominate many teaching philosophies. Though these ideals are common in many teaching, they can be dangerous, not only as cause for a potential burnout due to unrealistic goals, but also because of their susceptibility to the influence of ideologies. The German philosopher Theodor W. Adorno criticized such idealistic teaching philosophies and educational approaches, referring to the misuse of music education by the National socialists. He argued for a critical examination of pedagogical beliefs and personal assumptions. Adorno's ideas on music education provide an interesting framework for critically investigating idealistic teaching philosophies.*

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Kertz-Welzel, A. (2011). Paradise lost? A critical examination of idealistic philosophies of teaching through the lens of Theodor W. Adorno. *Visions of Research in Music Education*, 19. Retrieved from <http://www-usr.rider.edu/vrme~/>

For music educators all over the world, ideas such as enhancing and transforming students' lives through music, having a positive impact on the development of students' personality and creativity, or making the world a better place through music are important personal motivations for teaching music. The idea of humanizing and transforming the world and positively affecting students through music is at the core of these motivations. These motivations often dominate private teaching philosophies, the image of music education displayed in public media, and philosophical thinking. While debates over utilitarian reasons for music education exist, such as social, moral, and health benefits or the recent so-called "Mozart effect,"<sup>1</sup> there is still a need to examine the idea of humanizing the world through music. The German philosopher Theodor W. Adorno criticized such ideas, referring to the misuse of music education by the National socialists. He argued for a critical examination of pedagogical beliefs and personal assumptions. Though still widely unknown to the English-speaking world, Adorno's ideas on music education provide an interesting framework for critically investigating idealistic teaching philosophies.

This paper explores the dialectical nature of idealistic teaching philosophies by utilizing some of Adorno's ideas as a point of reference. A quote from *Paradise Lost* by John Milton can provide a guideline, exemplifying the power of good intentions as well as the dangers of potential misuse: "And out of good still to find means of evil."<sup>2</sup>

### **Teaching Philosophies: Discovering the Hidden Foundations of Teaching**

Teaching philosophies affect music education programs and often elicit the consideration of hiring committees, particularly in the Anglo-American academic world. They exemplify an educator's goals, aims, motivation to teach, and preferred methods of teaching. Raising a consciousness for teaching philosophies is of particular importance in music education because students and teachers are often highly motivated and driven by emotional experiences. This can

lead to unrealistic goals, which put the success and happiness of teachers and students at risk because the teaching philosophy is not suited to direct the teacher's efforts in an appropriate way. Therefore, there is a need for critical reflection in order to revise teaching philosophies so music education lessons can be more effective.

The term "teaching philosophy" has three different meanings for music educators: a personal teaching statement, a rationale or paradigm of the whole profession, or a statement of arts advocacy directed towards the public<sup>3</sup>. In this paper, the term "teaching philosophy" refers to a personal statement about the foundations and intentions of someone's teaching. A teaching philosophy defines important terms, ideas, and activities by reflecting upon objectives, teaching methods, content and resource selection, and assessment. Discussion of these aspects can include statements about the nature of music, what impact teaching should have on students, and various educational goals. Stephen Brookfield points out that the development of a teaching philosophy can serve various purposes<sup>4</sup>. As a personal guide, a teaching philosophy works as "... a distinctive organizing vision – a clear picture of why you are doing what you are doing that you can call up at points of crisis – is crucial to your personal sanity and morale."<sup>5</sup> Regarding pedagogical purposes, a teaching philosophy offers a more general description of the intentions behind teaching. Brookfield states:

Teaching is about making some kind of dent in the world so that the world is different than it was before you practiced your craft. Knowing clearly what kind of dent you want to make in the world means that you must continually ask yourself the most fundamental evaluative questions of all—  
What effect am I having on students and on their learning?<sup>6</sup>

While teaching philosophies provide a rationale for the individual teaching, they also often serve professional goals by helping individual teachers evaluate their performance according to their goals. Goodyear and Allchin explain:

In preparing a statement of teaching philosophy, professors assess and examine themselves to articulate the goals they wish to achieve in teaching ... A clear vision of a teaching philosophy provides stability, continuity, and long-term guidance ... A well-defined philosophy can help them remain focused on their teaching goals and to appreciate the personal and professional rewards of teaching.<sup>7</sup>

Institutions in higher education often present the teaching philosophies of their faculty members as examples of how to write a teaching philosophy.<sup>8</sup> This statement from a professor in educational policy and leadership is a typical general statement:

I embrace teaching as an opportunity to inspire and empower. As a teacher, it is my goal to enhance student learning as a transformative experience. Ideally, I want students to feel personally changed by their participation in a course I am teaching.<sup>9</sup>

This statement shows that teaching philosophies are not necessarily focused on the conditions or demands of a specific subject, but rather aim towards general goals such as transforming students. General educational theories such as idealism, realism, and constructivism can also have a major impact on personal teaching philosophies.

Teaching philosophies based on idealism, which was an important educational theory during the 1960s and 1970s,<sup>10</sup> rarely take into account the demands of reality. Particularly in music education, an oversimplified understanding of aesthetic or educational concepts might lead to problematic individual teaching philosophies – or philosophies of the whole profession. Teaching philosophies based on idealism focus on proclaiming the value of music education according to the impact it has on people's lives and behaviors. Idealistic teaching philosophies often have certain characteristics: First, they aim towards utopian goals in terms of transforming human beings and society. Second, they favor holistic ideals that exemplify a balance of the intellectual, sensual, and emotional parts of human beings. Third, they can include religious intentions regarding healing and redeeming human beings. Fourth, they rely heavily on utopian

ideals, such as transforming the world and human beings. Generally, idealistic teaching philosophies have a tendency to aim towards non-musical goals, such as helping people becoming morally better persons or training loyal citizens.

Recently, scholars have presented a new approach of identifying and categorizing these idealistic and problematic notions in teaching philosophies. This new approach is the concept of *Kitsch* in education and music education.<sup>11</sup> Kitsch describes highly emotional yet unrealistic goals of education, such as transforming human beings or fostering their personal development through a certain subject such as music. In general, the German word “Kitsch” describes a very emotional kind of art or non-art that tries to create a world of harmony, fostering only good emotions by being almost too beautiful. There is nothing ugly or difficult in Kitsch; everything fits, the “demons of life” are banished.<sup>12</sup> Kitsch serves psychological functions by presenting a realm of emotional harmony and complete happiness to which people can escape. In music education, the concept of Kitsch means delusions or illusions about musical learning and the goals of instruction.<sup>13</sup> Maria Spychiger describes these delusions as concerning “sentimental ideas and beliefs about effects of musical learning” as well as “false causal attributions about musical (professional) success (giftedness instead of deliberate practice), simplistic ideas about teaching”.<sup>14</sup> Roland Reichenbach, who discussed the concept of Kitsch in education extensively, also identifies Kitsch in major idealistic or unrealistic notions such as the transformation of people’s whole personality.<sup>15</sup>

The intention of identifying and eliminating Kitsch in education and music education is similar to the intentions of Adorno, who intensively criticized the music education approach during the Third Reich called *Musische Erziehung*. *Musische Erziehung* exemplified, in an almost perfect way, the possible ultimate results of idealistic goals and Kitsch in music education. Idealistic thoughts in education have a long tradition in the history of aesthetics and relate to the

ideas of certain philosophers. Therefore, it is useful to examine important ideas in the history of music aesthetics that serve as the origin of many contemporary visions and myths about the power of music and music education.

### **Goals and Vision in Music Education: The History of Pedagogic Dreams**

Since ancient China, music was supposed to foster moral development and thereby support the welfare of the state. The Greek philosopher Plato is an important figure in the history of music aesthetics and pedagogic dreams. He believed in music's ability to initiate moral behavior in people. For Plato, "musical training is a more potent instrument than any other because rhythm and harmony find their way into the inward places of the soul."<sup>16</sup> Plato stated that education in the arts, particularly education in music, helps with "familiarizing the minds of the children with the rhythms and melodies. By this means they become more civilized, more balanced, and better adjusted in them and are so more capable in whatever they say or do, for rhythm and harmonious adjustment are essential to the whole of human life."<sup>17</sup> Music is a means of transforming children and helping them adjust to society's ideal of a well-balanced personality. Plato's ideas are based on the ancient Greek concept of Ethos as well as the concept of music of the spheres. In the concept of music of the spheres, music reconstructs and harmonizes the original order of the soul, according to the cosmic laws, and therefore initiates moral behavior in individuals. Acting according to these cosmic laws is not only the foundation for the well-being of the individual, but also of the state.

These ideas about using music to improve people's moral behavior are prominent throughout the following centuries. A variation of this concept is the notion of humanizing people, which was foremost developed in the age of philosophical idealism at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning 19<sup>th</sup> century. Friedrich Schiller argued for this approach, emphasizing the power of art and music to balance feeling and intellect.<sup>18</sup> In his *Letters on the Aesthetic*

*Education of Man*, he stated that "... there is no way of making sensuous man rational except by first making him aesthetic."<sup>19</sup> If individuals in a society could find an inner balance and a harmony with their own inner drives, then this humanization could change the society into a better, more humane place.

Plato's and Schiller's thoughts are just two examples of historically influential idealistic visions about the impact of music and the arts which. While these philosophers certainly describe important aspects of music and arts education, they nevertheless present abstract ideals and dreams about the impact art and music can have on people. There have been many other versions of these ideas and they are still common in contemporary educational documents, research studies, arts advocacy efforts, and teaching philosophies. The introduction of National Standards for Arts Education serves as an example, stating that "Arts education benefits both student and society. It benefits the student because it cultivates the whole child..."<sup>20</sup> Idealistic notions also support music companies' economic success because they seem to offer a way to fulfill one of music educators' deepest hopes, namely to have an impact on people's personalities and thereby change society and the world. However, idealistic visions of the arts are dangerous because music teachers become susceptible to the influence of various ideologies that they may perceive to help them in realizing their goals.<sup>21</sup>

Adorno criticized the various versions of idealistic teaching philosophies and he would also have criticized Kitsch. His critique of the *Musische Erziehung*, the main music education approach during the Third Reich, exemplifies these criticisms. In order to understand Adorno's critique and the meaning it can have for today's teaching philosophies, it is useful to examine the basic ideas of the *Musische Erziehung*.

### **Musische Erziehung: The Perfect Idealistic Teaching Philosophy?**



The *Musische Erziehung* was the main music education approach during the Third Reich in Germany. It utilized many ideas that would be typical of an idealistic teaching philosophy. At the core of this educational philosophy is the ancient Greek idea of an education through the arts and the transformational power this education has on human beings and society. The German music education scholar Ernst Krieck, who published the programmatic book *Musische Erziehung*<sup>22</sup> the same year Hitler rose to power, based his ideas on an idealistic interpretation of Plato's educational concept.

Several aspects are characteristic for the *Musische Erziehung*: First, it represents a fundamental critique of Western culture and its intellectual approach, underlining the need for aesthetic and holistic experiences that might free individuals from all cultural compulsions. Second, it is a holistic way of education using the arts and physical education as means to heal the overemphasis on intellectual activities. Renewing the harmony of body and soul through the power of music was important as well as the unity of the arts. Third, this approach uses intense aesthetic and emotional experiences for celebrating community, strong leadership, and a simplicity of life, which were thought to support the transformation of the individual and society. Forth, it utilizes its similarity to religious teachings and spiritual ways of living and renewal.

While the idealistic teaching philosophy of the *Musische Erziehung* is connected to the educational reformation movement that emerged all over Europe around 1900, the *Musische Erziehung* was nevertheless flawed in its susceptibility to ideologies. A dictator whose own philosophy of power was similar to some ideas of the *Musische Erziehung* would grant music educators a new influence through the significance of music for the state. Similarities would include healing the society, criticizing intellectualism, and proposing a new era where music was important and the German culture would be superior. Scholars and music educators would certainly support him. This was the case with Hitler, who was always very keen to underline the

significance of the arts and music for the transformation of the German culture, nation, and the world. Frederic Spotts described Hitler's ideas about music and its significance for the German state as follows:

Hitler wanted music to occupy the position in Germany that he had imagined it had held in ancient Greece.

There it was not as an art valid in itself but an instrument of social purpose and that purpose was to exalt the aesthetic feelings of the general public.<sup>23</sup>

For Hitler, music and music education were agents for his ideology. This circumstance was possible because of the idealistic teaching philosophy of the *Musische Erziehung*, which was not focused on music itself, but rather on utilitarian goals. Adorno criticized the *Musische Erziehung* and its idealistic teaching philosophy in a way that examined the nature of idealistic teaching philosophies and the dreams of music educators in different countries and at different times.

#### **Adorno on Education and Music Education: Mature Students and Critical Teachers**

Adorno considered the Third Reich to be a result of the failure of Western civilization and the Enlightenment. He emphasized the danger of promoting a worldview where individuals submit to certain ideals and do not question the current state of society and culture. Therefore, Adorno criticized the role schools played in the rise of the Third Reich by failing to educate critical and self-determined students.

In order to train self-determined and responsible human beings, Adorno considered an education for maturity as well as the establishment of a critical consciousness as the most crucial goals for democracies.<sup>24</sup> Loyal and obedient citizens are most likely to support a dictator such as Hitler and to follow certain ideologies because they are not able to evaluate and critically examine political decisions. Adorno criticized the focus on ideals in education that imply that there is no need for critical thinking. The most critical point of education is the focus on obeying unquestioned authorities that make students rely on the opinions of others. Because of this unquestioning submission, students are not allowed to develop their critical thinking skills or to

make their own decisions, even if those decisions might be wrong. According to Adorno, social norms such as pursuing economic success or finding constant happiness suppress the way to maturity. When these social norms become main goals in students' lives, students avoid learning how to deal with suffering, pain and insecurity, which are important steps in becoming self-determined human beings. Students are somehow tranquilized through schooling in order to stop them from asking essential questions and searching for meaning in life. This type of schooling restricts opportunities for experiencing the world and oneself at an intense level. Adorno also criticized idealistic theories of education that try to endorse abstract and metaphysical ideals such as freedom and humanity. While he would not consider these ideals bad in general, he criticized the abstract nature of such ideals, as they did not consider the conditions of society and remained completely unquestioned.<sup>25</sup>

Through questioning, critical analysis, being confronted with the problems of society, and uncovering the hidden problems of the society, students can begin to realize what it means to be mature. It is only through the negation of the positive ideals that students can reach goals such as maturity. Adorno's main goal of education and schooling was to produce a mature, responsible, and self-determined human being who would be able to overcome the repressive mechanisms of society. This would involve students questioning ideals and authorities as well as being prepared to face real life and its challenges. Therefore, it would be important that students were aesthetically well-trained because they would be able to understand music's connection to the society and the repressive mechanisms which dominate it. It might then be possible to avoid a reappearance of Auschwitz.<sup>26</sup>

Adorno's critique of education was based on his philosophy which he presented particularly in his book *Dialectics of Enlightenment*,<sup>27</sup> coauthored by Max Horkheimer. At the core of their ideas was the fact that an originally good development such as enlightenment,

aiming towards the liberation of people, actually turned into its opposite, the objectification of reason as unquestioned authority. The only way to escape this situation was radical critique of reason, uncovering its objectification and unquestioned authority. This critique had to address the split between ideas, ideals, and reality. Although reason seems to claim that the reality can be fully received by an intellectual approach, this is not possible. Ideals are ineffective in describing reality and instead foster a false perspective of the world that makes the development of personal autonomy almost impossible. They foster a routine of overlooking what does not fit predetermined assumptions and therefore force reality to match those assumptions. Ideals deny the discrepancy between the real world and concepts, and they actively force the real world into general categories, which leads to an alienation of the individual from the world. Due to this alienation, individuals become disoriented and cannot utilize their own judgment and critical consciousness. Individuals become vulnerable to externally imposed relations of ruling and to rational administration. They are therefore eager to follow various kinds of ideologies, even if those ideologies involve preconceptions about races, the goals of music education, or popular music.

This circumstance can happen both on the level of the society and the individual, thereby setting the stage for fascism. According to Adorno, the task of modern philosophy and education is to underline that ideas and ideals are not the reality, but rather a construct of overemphasized reason. The only way to escape this development is through negative dialectics, by criticizing reason, and by uncovering the tendency of reason to objectify itself. It is not possible to propose positive ideals anymore. For Adorno, a dialectical approach is the only way for philosophy in the 20<sup>th</sup> century as well as for education and teaching philosophies.

These ideas on the dialectics of enlightenment give a framework for Adorno's critique of music education. Adorno considered some aspects of idealistic teaching philosophies to be

dangerous for music education, exemplified in the *Musische Erziehung* as a prominent version of idealistic teaching philosophies. The first aspect is the tendency to anti-intellectualism and a naïve holistic approach. As Adorno stated, due to problems in the real world, music educators tend to escape into the realm of music even more, because it is like the sanctuary of irrationality.<sup>28</sup> Music educators often retreat into the realm of the aesthetic in order to escape the problems of the real world. However, according to Adorno, “it is impossible to solve problems that are caused by society’s economic situation through the aesthetic power of music.”<sup>29</sup> This concerns particularly intense musical experiences in joint music making, where being part of community fosters a sense of well-being and escape from the problems of real life. The overemphasis on community nurtures the “the liquidation of the individual (which) is the real signature of the new musical situation.”<sup>30</sup> The individual disappears and only exists as part of a group. Being part of a community, whether in music or in society, can be dangerous if individuals completely lose their ability for critical reflection and free will. Adorno stated that by being part of a community, the individuals might fail to develop their own freedom and personality because they adjust too much to the needs of the group. Additionally, people might enjoy being part of a group because “the happiness which people feel when they are part of a community is the hidden happiness by which they identify themselves with their oppression.”<sup>31</sup> These ideas are similar to those of Paulo Freire or other thinkers, who try to raise a consciousness for the dangers of society, education, and oppression.

Furthermore, Adorno considered the religious intentions and spiritual aims of humanistic teaching philosophies as inappropriate for music education because they are not focused on the music itself. Making or teaching music is not so much about healing or transforming individuals, but rather about the music itself and aesthetic experiences. By using such terms as “holistic,” a

teaching philosophy implies that healing the world and a new human being is the goal of music education,<sup>32</sup> neglecting music as well as critical reflection or reasoning:

The problem of this idealistic music education movement (Mussische Erziehung) is that music does not have its goal in itself, but rather in its pedagogical, ritual meaning or its usefulness for the community. But the real aim of the arts is not to reach beyond themselves.<sup>33</sup>

According to Adorno, music education should not foster religious ambitions, but should be focused on music itself, thereby inspiring critical thinking through the aesthetic power of music as art.

Adorno's critical analysis on the meaning of idealistic teaching philosophies has been challenging for German music education from the 1950s and 1960s through today. Adorno's criticism leads to questions about the importance of ideals and visions for individual teaching philosophies and whether or not Plato's dream about the transforming power of music is one of the most powerful rationales for music education. Adorno's answer is that the paradise of idealistic and humanistic visions in education and music education is lost through the misuse of music education during circumstances such as the Third Reich. This reveals the danger of misuse by various kinds of ideologies, even today. Following abstract ideals makes people vulnerable and ignores education for maturity, one of the main points of education, both on the side of the student and the teacher.

### **Creating a Sound and Effective Teaching Philosophy: Learning from Adorno**

The teaching philosophy is the foundation of successful instruction and teachers' job satisfaction. What somebody believes regarding the goals of music, the meaning of music, and the effects that music education has on students' lives determines how music instruction looks in a classroom. Whether or not teachers know about the various elements of their teaching philosophies, the philosophies exist and have a huge impact on the actual teaching that takes place in the classroom. More often than not, individual teaching philosophies are based on good

intentions and the trust in the power of music to help students become mature individuals. However, having good intentions does not represent a sound and effective teaching philosophy. Milton's statement "And out of good still to find means of evil"<sup>34</sup> describes the dangerous, paradoxical, and dialectical situation that out of good intentions, bad things can happen. The misuse of music education through an ideology, the burnout of a brilliant teacher caused by an over demanding teaching philosophy, or manipulation through the music industry can result from an ideological teaching philosophy. Therefore, important questions are: How can a teacher create a sound and effective teaching philosophy? What can a teaching philosophy look like after the paradise of idealistic and humanistic goals is lost? Which dangers should be avoided?

First, while a teaching philosophy might be shaped by significant musical experiences, it represents a belief system about the appearance and goals of music. Teaching philosophies often emphasize ideals and carry the danger of being too abstract and somehow empty. While they often articulate important aspects of teaching such as fostering an education of feelings, teaching philosophies often have a tendency to disregard reality by presenting only general assumptions. However, as motivation for education, they have an impact on the everyday teaching and become guidelines for the daily instruction. The danger of having abstract or unachievable ideals at the centre of a teaching philosophy is that the philosophy can become subject to misuse or manipulation by ideologies. Unachievable ideals can make a teaching philosophy too demanding by failing to offer the slightest chance of being accomplished.

Second, idealistic teaching philosophies are not only insufficient for the reality in classrooms, but also submit to ideologies that promise to help reach the goal of transforming students. While the connection between the *Musische Erziehung* and the National Socialist ideology was certainly an extreme, there are similar versions of the same mechanism today. The music industry is interested in selling their instruments, musical materials, and textbooks in order

to help teachers provide the best possible music education experience for students. Teachers need to reflect critically about the ideology behind various promises and motivations. Furthermore, the connection between music education and patriotism or nationalism is also a recent concern, to some extent mirroring previous experiences concerning music education and politics.

Third, idealistic teaching philosophies also imply a questionable image of the teacher. The teacher cannot be the only source of learning. Constructivism implies that learning is not only a process the teacher oversees, but rather something students organize in their mind. They have to make sense out of everything they experience in order to learn and to integrate it into the network of information they already have.

Another important point, particularly in view of Adorno's ideas, is to regard music making as mindful musical practice and not merely as an entertaining or fun activity. For Adorno, music has not only emotional and aesthetic power, but also epistemological power that can reveal hidden dimensions of society or the individual. Mindful musical practice is sensitive and critical towards these dimensions.

An effective teaching philosophy should be customized to a teacher's specific needs and talents. It should not only be focused on general statements, but rather describe these ideas in more practical ways that relate to the actual classroom experience. Teachers then have a specific concept for their teaching that relies on widely accepted philosophies of the whole profession, but at the same time addresses an individual's specific needs and goals. A good example of such a teaching philosophy could be the following:

In the past few years, as I have actively practiced the craft of teaching, several major themes have arisen. The emerging themes of my teaching include: mentoring, inspiring, accessibility, skill building, and clarity... Teaching skills, rather than simply content, is important to me. I try to incorporate a variety of skill-building in assignments and daily classes. The content of my courses addresses music history, and in order for the students to be successful, a variety of skills are



needed to engage the material: writing skills, reading skills, critical thinking/reasoning skills, listening skills, technology skills, and oral presentation/speaking/performing skills. To successfully help students to learn about learning music history, they need strong skills in many different areas. Marrying content and skill-building has also helped me to create connections and relevance for students.<sup>35</sup>

This excerpt exemplifies aspects of having clear goals. Teaching music is not so much about transforming the world and human beings, but rather about aiming towards clear goals in education, teaching specific topics, and fostering students' skills. However, this excerpt is missing the commitment to critically reinvestigate the teaching philosophy regularly.

Teachers need to reflect upon their ideals critically, dealing with them in a dialectical way. Music has the power to transform human beings, but it also has the power to manipulate people. A teaching philosophy should not be based on pseudo-religious ideals such as healing the world or transforming human beings through music, but rather be more realistic and focused on students' actual needs. Subscribing to abstract ideals can mean refusing to acknowledge the reality and to continue using education as a tranquillizer for students. Instead of helping students to become happier or better people, it is more useful and effective to work on very precise goals, attending to their strengths and weaknesses, making them acquainted with music and its specific qualities. Being critical as a way of becoming free from wrong ideas leads students and teachers into a new realm of liberty. For Adorno, being critical and refusing to follow unquestioned authorities is the only way to become mature for both students and teachers.

### **Adorno and Critical Pedagogy in Music Education**

Since teaching philosophies shape music education practice, it is important to point out the need for constantly revisiting, correcting, and rebuilding these philosophies. Sensitivity for the sociological, psychological, philosophical, and educational framework is therefore important.

As Adorno indicates, there is a need for being critical towards one's own teaching philosophy, particularly concerning idealistic notions.

As critical theory points out, teachers are always in danger of perpetuating what they are used to. Recent approaches apply the ideas of critical theory to music education. For example, Abrahams states, "much of what teachers believe involves desires or needs that are implanted by the status quo into which those teachers were socialized."<sup>36</sup> This particularly concerns teaching philosophies since peers influence every music educator and "teachers' actions and choices stem from their socialization process and are shaped by interactions with fellow participants within the context of schools."<sup>37</sup> Teachers construct their own teaching philosophy as well as their perspective on the world, music, and music education. It is important for music educators to raise a consciousness for this situation: "A critical perspective allows music educators to view their role in the context of their own realities. Like their students, such realities include previous experiences, and their own conception of the political, cultural, and economic components of schooling."<sup>38</sup> This can help transform educators' teaching philosophies regarding a more effective concept, just as Adorno intended by criticizing music education approaches and idealistic foundations of teaching philosophies.

Even if some of Adorno's thoughts regarding the sociology of music or popular music might be outdated, Adorno's ideas concerning an education for maturity, responsibility, and a sound teaching philosophy in music education are certainly still relevant. In his book, *Democracy and Music Education*,<sup>39</sup> Paul Woodford raises similar issues, referring to John Dewey's ideas. Woodford criticizes music educators' utopian aim towards transforming the world through music education. He also criticizes music educators' neglect of music education's possible responsibility for students' education in fully participating in democracy.<sup>40</sup> He stresses the crucial role of major corporations in introducing rising generations into common consumer culture

without helping them to become mature and self-determined human beings. Music teachers are often indirect agents of ideologies or corporations. It is time to realize and overcome the dangerous roles teaching philosophies can play in this process.

The success of music education highly depends on successful teaching philosophies. Adorno's ideas can serve as guidelines for developing effective teaching philosophies. His ideas regarding the dialectical nature of good intentions in teaching are crucial, as good intentions might have bad or dangerous results. Adorno is certainly right regarding the dialectical nature of music education, thereby drawing an important parallel for consideration between music education and John Milton's statement "And out of good still to find means of evil."<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The "Mozart effect" is the popularized version of the theory that Mozart's music enhances the brain's performance.

<sup>2</sup> John Milton, *Paradise Lost* (London: Simmons, 1667), Book 1, Line 165.

<sup>3</sup> "Writing a Teaching Philosophy Statement," Lee Haugen, accessed July 31, 2011, <http://www.celt.iastate.edu/teaching/philosophy.html>.

<sup>4</sup> Stephen D. Brookfield, *The Skillful Teacher: On Technique, Trust, and Responsiveness in the Classroom* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2006).

<sup>5</sup> Brookfield, *Skillful Teacher*, 16.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 18-19.

<sup>7</sup> Gail Goodyear and Douglas Allchin, "Statements of Teaching Philosophy," *To Improve the Academy* 17 (1998), 106-107.

<sup>8</sup> "Writing a Philosophy of Teaching Statement," University Center for the Advancement of Teaching, The Ohio State University, accessed July 31, 2011, [http://ucate.osu.edu/teaching\\_portfolio/philosophy/philosophy2.html](http://ucate.osu.edu/teaching_portfolio/philosophy/philosophy2.html).

<sup>9</sup> "Philosophy of Teaching," Elizabeth Allan, accessed July 31, 2011, [http://ucate.osu.edu/teaching\\_portfolio/philosophy/elizallen\\_phil.html](http://ucate.osu.edu/teaching_portfolio/philosophy/elizallen_phil.html).

<sup>10</sup> Important publications about the meaning of idealism for education are J. Donald Butler, *Idealism in Education* (New York: Harper & Row, 1966) and John Paul Strain, "Idealism: A Clarification of an Educational Philosophy," *Educational Theory* 25, 3, (1975): 263-271.

<sup>11</sup> Maria Spychiger, "Kitsch in Music Education" (paper presented at the 23<sup>rd</sup> MayDay Group Colloquium, University of Utah, Salt Lake City, Utah, June 16-20, 2011).

<sup>12</sup> Spychiger, "Kitsch," 2.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

<sup>15</sup> "Paedagogischer Kitsch," Roland Reichenbach, accessed July 31, 2011, [http://egora.uni-muenster.de/ew/ew\\_aktuelles/bindata/Antrittsvorlesung2002.pdf](http://egora.uni-muenster.de/ew/ew_aktuelles/bindata/Antrittsvorlesung2002.pdf).

<sup>16</sup> Plato, "The Republic," in *The Best Known Works of Plato*, trans. Benjamin Jowett (New York: Black Ribbon Books, 1942), 67.

<sup>17</sup> Plato, "Exerpts from 'Protagoras'," in *Music Education. Source Readings from Ancient Greece to Today*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, ed. Michael Mark (New York/London: Routledge, 2002), 6.

<sup>18</sup> Friedrich Schiller, *On the Aesthetic Education of Man*, ed. Elisabeth M. Wilkinson and Leonard A. Willoughby (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967).

<sup>19</sup> Schiller, *Aesthetic Education*, 161.

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- <sup>20</sup> National Standards for Arts Education, *What Every Young American Should Know and Be Able to Do in the Arts* (Renton: MENC, 1994), 6.
- <sup>21</sup> Paul Woodford, *Democracy and Education* (Bloomington: Indiana University, 2005), 69.
- <sup>22</sup> Ernst Krieck, *Musische Erziehung* (Leipzig: Arman-Verlag, 1933).
- <sup>23</sup> Frederic Spotts, *Hitler and the Power of Aesthetics* (New York: The Overlook Press, 2002), 270.
- <sup>24</sup> Herta Helena Jogland, "Theodor W. Adorno: Education, What For?," *The Journal of West Virginia Philosophical Society* (Fall 1975): 1-4.
- <sup>25</sup> Theodor W. Adorno, "Education after Auschwitz," in *Never Again! The Holocaust's Challenge for Educators*, ed. Helmut Schreier and Matthias Heyl (Hamburg: Kraemer, 1997), 12-20.
- <sup>26</sup> Adorno, "Education."
- <sup>27</sup>
- <sup>28</sup> Theodor W. Adorno, "Kritik des Musikanten," in *Theodor W. Adorno: Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 14, ed. Rolf Tiedemann (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1973), 68.
- <sup>29</sup> Adorno, "Kritik," 68. This quotation and all other quotations from Adorno are translated by the author of this paper.
- <sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 21.
- <sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 70.
- <sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 80.
- <sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 72.
- <sup>34</sup> Milton, *Paradise Lost*, Book 1, Line 165.
- <sup>35</sup> "A Teaching Philosophy: Colette Patricia Simonot," Colette Patricia Simonot, accessed July 31, 2011, <http://www.usask.ca/gmcte/drupal/?q=node/234>.
- <sup>36</sup> Frank Abrahams, "Musicing Paulo Freire. A Critical Pedagogy for Music Education," in *Critical Pedagogy*, ed. Peter McLaren and Joe L. Kincheloe (New York: Peter Lang, 2007), 225.
- <sup>37</sup> Abrahams, "Musicing," 228.
- <sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 229.
- <sup>39</sup> Woodford, *Democracy*.
- <sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 2-37.
- <sup>41</sup> Milton, *Paradise Lost*, Book 1, Line 165.