

Quotation and Psychogeographic Experience as Repetition in the Music of Bernhard Lang and Chico Mello.

Lauren Redhead

A psychogeographic reading of the music theatre works of composers Bernhard Lang and Chico Mello can aid an understanding of the more subtle approaches to 'quotation', borrowing or ownership and intertextuality in their works. These are signalled by competing cultural geographies which also indicate the composers' differing experiences of place and of modernism. Geographically, Lang's and Mello's works are situated as modernist, but their features cause them to appear postminimalist. This analysis will allow for a greater understanding of the motivations of the two composers' borrowing practices, and the link between personal experience, quotation, and repetition, as well as an assessment of whether applying labels such as minimalist or modernist to their work might even be helpful or appropriate. It will conclude by considering the status of time in their works, as constituted in the use of quotation and repetition, and the nature and context of quotation as repetition.

Keywords: Bernhard Lang, Chico Mello, Postminimalism, Psychogeography, Debord, Deleuze.

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This article seeks to explore the relationships between the music of two composers whose musical or compositional styles might (perhaps unhelpfully) be described as 'European Post-Minimalism', and the respective minimalist and modernist traditions with which they might be aligned. These two composers are Bernhard Lang (1957*) and Chico Mello (1957*). However, in doing so, this investigation also highlights the cultural geographic issues that are present in any assessment of the music of these (and, indeed, other composers); the concurrent and competing cultural geographies present in the work of both composers are signified and exemplified by their use of quotation and borrowing practices. Where quotation, borrowing, and postminimalism meet, a discussion of the nature and context of repetition in their music is also necessary to develop a fuller picture. The theoretical work of Gilles Deleuze and Guy Debord will be of equal importance in assessing the music, its geographies, and context. However, I will begin with an introduction to the two composers, who are perhaps not currently well-known outside Germany and Austria. This will be necessarily brief, but may serve to introduce the issues at hand, and to give some background into the work of two artists about whom very little is written in English at the present time.

Bernhard Lang is an Austrian composer, who, on account of his music which on first listening appears to consist of many repeating sets of fragments or cells, stands out amongst other Austrian composers of his generation first introduced to the international

scene by the ensemble Klangforum Wien.¹ His innovative compositional technique which generates this music also sets him apart from other composers who come from the same geographical area. To some extent, his work appears to have been subsumed into the ‘Darmstadt’ or ‘New Music’ culture; for example, a piece by Lang was featured in the closing concert of the 2010 Darmstadt summer course which demonstrated its prominence in this culture. Lang’s geographical proximity to Darmstadt, his German-speaking heritage, and his close relationship with the Austrian New Music ensemble Klangforum Wien might explain the acceptance of his music into this sphere, despite its surface difference from other music considered part of the same tradition. However, a large body of his music presents explicit quotation of French philosopher Deleuze’s theoretical work, in the titles at least (some twenty-three works now bear the title *Differenz/Wiederholung*), and this use of quotation reveals a relationship with critical theory that has similarly been claimed by many other members of the so-called European avant-garde for their own music. Therefore, this relationship causes Lang to seem to have an immediate relationship with that tradition, as well as an explicit link with a theoretical position that perhaps indicates post-minimalist elements in his compositional style.

Chico Mello is a Brazilian composer who now lives in Berlin. His music is less well-known outside of Germany than Lang’s. Mello is one of a number of South American composers who, in the (narrative) tradition of Kagel, have travelled to Germany in search of a more ‘authentic’ *Neue Musik* experience, framed both in terms of the number of compositional opportunities available to them and the larger artistic community in which they can take part. Kagel is, indeed, an important composer to mention in terms of the perception of this geography, since it is generally accepted that he would not have been as successful had he remained in South America. Such perceptions have caused both Europeans and South Americans to believe that the ‘New Music’ culture in Europe must be experienced geographically in order to be both understood and fully participated in. I will return to the idea of an ‘indigenous’ culture later on, but this narrative idea can be said to situate late musical modernism² geographically in Germany. Like Lang’s, Mello’s music is also highly repetitive both in terms of the inclusion of repeated rhythmic cells and motifs, and in the repetition of whole sections—which is where it can be said to be most similar to Lang’s compositional style. Furthermore,

Mello's music privileges the inclusion of references to his own personal history through quotation and allusion to quotation, something which is understood in the reception of his works as a link with his geographical heritage.

Given that geographical factors are already a recurring theme in these short descriptions of both composers, my analysis will be particularly interested not in the fine or material details of their compositions, and whether those details could be considered minimalist or modernist respectively, but in the discourses which contextualise this music and how it might be considered part of one discourse or another. In particular, it is by considering cultural geographies as discourses in themselves—which meet and interact with each other in artworks—that the interaction with these discourses can also be understood as forming part of a psychogeographic experience of modernism for Lang, Mello, and their listeners. Furthermore, the notion of repetition in past or historical time, quotation as repetition, and musical repetition can be understood by the introduction of the consideration of the intersection of these ideas with cultural geographies.

A sense of place in music is a relational construct. The use of quotations which are linked to a place, or of tropes which can also be linked to a particular place by virtue of a musical style, may be as revealing about the way music is discussed and valued as they are about the composer, her or his heritage, or the tradition in which they find themselves. Debord describes psychogeography itself as, 'the precise laws and specific effects of the geographical environment, consciously organized, or not, on the emotions and behaviours of the individual'.³ As such, psychogeographic experience is something which can be read as mapped onto a musical work, particularly where the experience of place and geography might be seen as important to the composer. Sadie Plant notes that this experience is essential in the construction of individual difference since, '[o]nly an awareness of the influences of the existing environment can encourage the critique of the present conditions of daily life, and yet it is precisely this concern with the environment in which we live which is ignored.'⁴ The 'environments' of musical modernism and postminimalism are less often discussed, perhaps, because they seem so deeply rooted in the Northern and Western hemispheres. Modernism is particularly linked with Northern Europe and centred in Germany. Minimalism has strong links with North America, and in addition it also has a distinct European tradition within the

Netherlands. In both cases the cultural geography of musical tradition can be said to be relatively small. And yet as, for example, musical modernism in becomes a cultural export to countries such as India and China its link with place becomes important. Within Europe, or for Northern European composers, the 'geography' of modernism might seem to be that of a neutral space. Yet once 'exported', or removed from the space, it is clear that modernism does not inhabit a neutral space: it asserts a geographic pressure.

The two musical examples presented here are both music theatre pieces. Both are idiomatic examples of the characteristics of the music of their composer, and as such they are good starting points from which to begin this investigation and to make comparative comments about the music. These pieces are *Das Theater der Wiederholungen* by Bernhard Lang and *Fate at Eight* by Chico Mello. In both of these pieces, the influence of minimalism, and in particular European minimalism and postminimalism can be immediately observed in surface features such as the use of exact repetitions and also in the relationship of the music to the traditional materials of the western modernist and avant-garde traditions.⁵ Some of these features could be equally described as references to—or a relationship with—the historical avant-garde: in particular, the way that both composers use repetition subverts the expectations of the audiences of Western Modernist Music and penetrates the norms of 'material' as conceived within this social context. Indeed it is this social context and the way in which Lang's and Mello's musics relate to it that is most important to this investigation, rather than the ultimate ability to pin labels such as 'modernism', 'minimalism', or 'avant-garde' to it. The reason for this is explained well in Hubert F. van den Berg's investigation of the politics of the label 'avant-garde'. In his exploration of the concept of an historical avant-garde, van den Berg writes that, 'in the historiography of the European arts of the past centuries, a number of different styles, phenomena, isms, artists, etc. have been labelled as avant-garde by different authors.'⁶ Furthermore, he goes on to describe this process of labelling as an exclusionary and ideological, rather than elucidatory, practice, writing that, 'both the preference for and neglect of certain movements is mostly related to some theoretical rationale as well.'⁷ Finally, he disputes the use of labels at all, noting that, 'the label "avant-garde" is often used as a rather arbitrary qualification, and not so much as a quasi-neutral historiography denomination.'⁸

A result of the problematizing of labels such as 'modernism', 'minimalism', or 'avant-garde' is that in this investigation it is more useful to think of the groups of things that they supposedly denote as 'geographies'. There are two reasons why geographical labels might be more enlightening than those which refer to historical movements. First, the categorisation of composers' work as a result of their geographical proximity to other musics traditionally given similar labels (such as 'modernism') can in some way explain the great disparities between different works which seem to be assigned to the same tradition. Such geographies are primarily assigned by the geographical placement of important composers (dead or alive), festivals, and other musical institutions, to the music which is assigned that label. So, 'modernism' can encompass music written by composers as diverse as Boulez, Nono, Stockhausen, Kagel, Lang and Mello, and in these cases the strongest unifying factor of the composers and the music is geography. The result is that even when, for example, Western Modernist Music is exported to countries such as India or China, the music composed and performed in those countries which retains links with the composers, festivals, and institutions of modernism can be 'geographically' placed in Northern Europe and particularly Germany. The second reason is that it is possible for composers or music to inhabit multiple geographies whereas, as described by van den Berg above, the use of labels is exclusive for theoretical or ideological reasons. Therefore, whilst composers of modernist music in India or China may feel the need to situate it within either a modernist or indigenous tradition, it is possible to identify both a modernist and an indigenous cultural geography in their works. Even more importantly, the composers themselves need not be physically present in any of the actual geographic spaces of Germany, India or China, for such cultural geographies to be perceived in their music; it is for this reason that they can be understood of as psychogeographies.

One way in which psychogeographic relationships can be examined is through quotation and borrowing practices. Many aspects of cultural geographies can be revealed through borrowing and, as a result, the definition of quotation and borrowing in this context is necessarily broad; quotations are not merely those aspects of the music which seem to be heard as Other, or in 'quotation marks'. Most often, the use of quotation in these cases is signalled where incongruence between cultural geographies can be identified. This, then,

implies that the term 'quotation' should include cultural practices, and modes of performance and presentation which can be considered reference systems, alongside the use of existing music in a new context.

The music of Lang and Mello contains many references to parts of their own personal history: for Mello this includes his aforementioned South American heritage, and in particular its popular cultural and political aspects; and for Bernhard Lang it is also popular music and popular culture (or his experiences of these), as well as a reading of his own personal experiences with Western Classical Music History and further political aspects. The primacy and explicitness of these references in the music of both composers means that both can be considered as quotations for analytic purposes in order to describe the effect that these references have on the listener. This follows in line with Nicholas Bourriaud's discussion of different types of quotations, in fact,⁹ and also with Bourriaud's description of the work of art as a 'journey form,'¹⁰ which would make, by his definition, Lang and Mello not just composers but 'semionauts'¹¹: artists who deal with a range of conflicting and competing signs in order to draw out an artistic pathway within the course of their work.

A tension therefore exists between the actuality of the quotations or references and their perception. I will discuss this in more detail with respect to Mello's music later on. For now, suffice to say that such composers and their musics do not rely on the correct identification of quotations by the listener, but incorporate a tension between their own personal history and geographies and the perceived history and geography of the tradition in which their music is placed. The use of such influences means that the works do not suppose a developmental form. In this particular case, the importance of developmental narratives to Western Modernist music—both historical narratives and musical—is what sets Lang's and Mello's music apart from the label, despite their placement within it; their divergence from these is the reason why it is possible to suggest that, compositionally, their work holds more in common with a postminimalist tradition. In the case of these composers, the degradation of development that comes with their approach to cultural borrowing also enables them to restrict musical elements usually considered the target of modernist process-based

composition (particularly pitch and rhythm), and causes repetition to become most immediately important in the perception of their work.

The effect of this influence is to allow the composers to include fairly disparate personal elements of musical experience in their music so as to present repetition to the listener in a way in which the perceptual aim and actual outcome is not the focus on a particular sound heard many times, but repetition as a cultural practice experienced both within and outside of the music. These works, then, are good examples of ‘journey forms’ which link experiences in personal and musical histories and geographies: the ‘journey form’ links time and space not as concurrent parameters but as a single material which offers the possibility for exploration, topological fluidity and temporal bifurcation within a single artwork. With respect to this ‘journey form’, Bourriaud writes, ‘[t]he artist has become the prototype of the contemporary traveller, *homo viator*, whose passage through signs and formats highlights a contemporary experience of mobility, displacement, crossing.’¹² It is then possible for Bourriaud to say of artworks:

[t]hrough a compositional principle based on lines traced in time and space, the work (like the Lacanian unconscious) develops a chain of linked elements—and no longer within the order of a static geometry that would guarantee its unity. This spontaneous conception of space-time [...] has its sources in a nomadic imaginary universe that envisages forms in motion and in relation to other forms, one in which both geography and history are territories to be travelled.¹³

Therefore the distinction between space and time becomes blurred within the ‘quotation’ of personal history; the act of composition becoming a kind of performative writing of the psychogeography—and psycho-history—of the composer.

A particularly good example of this can be found in Mello’s music theatre piece *Fate at Eight* (2005). The 40-minute opera is based on the play *Heart’s Desire* by British playwright Caryl Churchill. *Fate at Eight* is premised on the multiple possible outcomes of one domestic situation, ranging from a variety of emotional responses, to extreme soap-opera style conclusions, to hints at sinister relationships under the surface of a harmonious everyday arrangement. In Churchill’s original play, the focus is on the act of waiting, using a cyclic structure to capture the audience within the futility of the situations

presented. In Mello’s music theatre, ‘traditional’ musical elements such as pitch, rhythm, gesture, etc. are restricted, with only certain pitches, rhythms, and accompanying instrumentations permitted to each character.

CHARACTER	INSTRUMENTATION	MATERIALS
Brian (Father)	Tenor, with bass clarinet and contrabass	Bossa-nova rhythm.
Alice (Mother)	Mezzo soprano with clarinet and viola	Rising and falling melodic line.
Maisie (Maid)	Soprano with oboe and violin	High tessitura, quick rhythmic pattern with leaps into the highest register.
Lewis (Brother)	Bass with tuba and contrabass	Low tessitura, longer rhythmic values.
Susy (Daughter; and also Susy’s friend who is played by the same singer)	Soprano with violin and viola	Large leaps across the whole vocal range, three-note phrases.

Figure 1: Table detailing the link between characterisation, instrumentation and musical material in *Fate at Eight*.

This in itself may on the surface seem not to be as restricted as music which might be described as minimalist *qua* minimalism—the restricted sets of material and their assignment to the characters themselves has something in common with Berg’s transformation of the concept of *leitmotif* in his operatic works. In fact, during *Fate at Eight*, each repetition could itself be considered a legitimate 5-minute piece. This repetition concerns the repeated analysis of a short scene in which a husband and wife deliberate as to when their daughter might return home from abroad, sometimes interrupted by their maid, and, as the piece goes on, increasingly interrupted by other characters and revelations. In each repetition, the music remains the same, although more variation is present in the latter parts of the sections as the piece goes on. The music itself is built out of repetitive rhythmic cells which draw on Brazilian popular music.

SECTION	CONTENT	COMMENTS
I	Ensemble chord introduces video. Scene is set by the first entry of Brian and Alice.	Short introduction of the Bossa-Nova theme and of Brian's (B) and Alice's (A) motifs.
2	Repeat of section I, followed by an interruption by Maisie.	Maisie's (M) motif introduced. Maisie introduces the first of the long, held notes (X) which punctuate some scenes.
3	Repeat of section I, followed by an argument. Alice leaves Brian.	B and A motifs are the primary material. X performed by Brian and Maisie together.
4	Repeat of section I, followed by a long dialogue. A tube accident is announced.	B and A motifs are the primary material.
5	Repeat of section I. Maisie is injured.	Material from section I is modified by long pauses between each phrase.
6	The video is replaced by a sofa advert. First entry of Lewis.	Introduction of Lewis's (L) motif.
7	Repeat of section I and dialogue of B and A. Ends with a "freeze frame".	Faster tempo. "Fast-forward" effect is achieved by combining B, A and pauses as in section 5 in order to miss some repeated material. L motif introduces this scene and punctuates the pauses.
8	Dinner course, beginning from "freeze frame". Dinner is interrupted when a large group of children run through the set.	B and A motifs used with new libretto.
9	Short repeat of the beginning section 8. A gunman enters and shoots Alice.	
10	Repeat of section 8, with announcement of Alice's affair.	Motifs B and A are still the primary material.
11	Repeat of section 8, with Brian's suggestion of autocannibalism.	Motifs B and A are still the primary material.
12	Repeat of section 8 interrupted by a spoken interlude by Maisie.	
13	After dinner-scene. Brian moves to strangle Alice but is interrupted by Lewis.	X is prominent in Maisie's and Brian's parts.
14	Family argument. Lewis is ejected from the house by Brian for drinking.	Combination of A, L and B.

SECTION	CONTENT	COMMENTS
15	Unannounced arrival of Susy's friend.	Prominence of X. Long notes and pauses are used to highlight points of dialogue quickly 'fast-forward' through repeated material without using B or A. Introduction of Susy's (S) motif by her friend (same performer as Susy).
16	Key points are recapped up to the strangulation scene.	Very short section. Brain sings X. Ended with a long pause.
17	Repeat of section 16. Alice leaves. Text is displayed on the video screen between Brian and Maisie.	Text on the screen is accompanied but solo castanettes.
18	Susy returns. Brian tells Susy "you are my heart's desire".	Return of S motif.
19	Return to section 1. Recap of original storyline.	Motifs B, A and M.
20	Return to section 8. Recap of original storyline.	
21	Recap of strangulation scene with role reversal: Alice strangles Brian. They are interrupted when Susy returns.	Brian sings motif X.
22	Shortest repeat of section 1, consisting only of the first few phrases.	Motifs B and A only.

Figure 2: Table detailing the structure within *Fate at Eight*.

In *Fate at Eight*, then, the relationship with minimalism is one which reveals itself in the repetitive qualities of the work as a whole, and the restrictive qualities of the music only when individual parts or characters are considered in isolation. Needless to say, despite the presence of variation, development in the work notably absent; the piece returns always to the same situation both in terms of narrative and music. This sense of time created by the piece is also one which makes sense in a minimalist context; in particular it fits well with Kramer's conceptions of both time and quotation which are often accepted or implied within minimalist discourses. Kramer writes that as a result of quotation, and therefore repetition, 'history is recast as a process of rediscovering what we already are, rather than a linear progression into what we have never been.'¹⁴ Thus, Mello's use of concurrent repetition and quotation produce a situation in which his audience slowly discover the dark side of a seemingly innocuous situation. Furthermore,

Kramer's conception of 'vertical time'¹⁵ as a time-experience in which present listening conditions rather than historical and developmental understanding are emphasised can equally be applied to Mello's work.

The references present in the work result in it having three concurrent geographies. The first is actually ascribed to the work: the scene claims to be set in London. But the second, which is arguably most prominent, is that of South America, and specifically Brazil. There are a number of rhythmic devices in the accompaniment which relate and belong to Brazilian popular culture, and are lifted from the politically subversive Brazilian popular music style of Bossa Nova. Charles A. Perrone writes that Brazillian popular music has, 'rightly been regarded as a "field for reflection on social history."¹⁶ It is through its popular music references that the work, on one level, transcends the perception of a generic South American 'Other' and presents its Brazilian identity as a facet of the work's (and the composer's) social and cultural history. In addition to this, the *mise-en-scene*, and the premise of the work, seems to relate directly to Mello's South American heritage. Prominently signified by the bright colours of the set, the presence of a domestic employee in what appears a middle-class home, and the outrageous and centre-stage reactions to events, is the telenovela form which is especially popular in Brazil, but also throughout South America. It is this combination of Brazillian popular music and Brazillian cultural references that lead Mello to describe the work as a 'Telebossa'.

These elements make the work seem incongruous with its London setting; this setting is revealed only through the relationship with the original play and its author and to some references within the libretto (for example, to the 'tube'). The final geography present in the work is of that of Germany. The piece was premiered at MaerzMusik in Berlin, and the link of Chico Mello as a figure with the northern European modernist tradition also goes some way to situate the music as 'German' through belonging to this tradition. This is not a geography that is signified by or through the work. Due to the prominence of what might be characterised as 'minimalist' rather than 'modernist' musical language, this geography is also not signified specifically by the musical content of the work. It is a geography which is signified by Mello's proximity to Germany, and the proximity to Germany of the New Music discourses which contextualise the work.

All three geographies are present as psychogeographic experiences. The 'London' evoked by Mello is a generic capital city, and invites the projection of the listener of their own conception of such a place onto this blank canvas. 'Brazil' in this case might be experienced through musical and visual signifiers, although this requires some prior listener knowledge. 'South America', however, is signified if not as an experience then as a cultural other; some experience of difference supposes the success of this signification. Finally, 'Germany' is signified only by the relationship of the work with its own history. Still, 'Germany' exerts a psychogeographic pressure on the work that is there to be experienced. As a result of the narrative relationship between South America and Germany, established by the biography of Mauricio Kagel described earlier, the work feels this pressure as a result of being the work of a South American composer in Europe; all the more so due to its acceptance into a European musical narrative.

Bernhard Lang's *Das Theater der Wiederholungen* (2000-2002) similarly causes the listener to experience a number of concurrent geographies. The work presents three contrasting situations in three languages belonging to three distinct time periods, which are disparate in content despite the seeming similarity of his compositional approach throughout the work. The first act, 'In Praise of Cynical Reason' is set in France in the eighteenth century, and uses texts by de Sade and Huysmans. The second act is set in America in the nineteenth century, and utilizes William S. Burroughs's *The Place of Dead Roads*. The final act is set in Germany in the twentieth century and uses the text and records of the Nuremberg trials as its source. Repetition is central to the composition and concept of the work, and is the means by which differences of historical period and geography are transcended. The first act introduces the theme of the absolutism of natural law and the Enlightenment in Europe; the second act represents the colonization of America as a 'repetition' of Europe—Burroughs' text introduces themes such as the extermination of the indigenous population; the final act presents Europe in the twentieth century as a final repetition, a fulfillment and completion of the 'American Dream' which had begun in Europe in act one.

As such, intertextuality is important in both the construction and the perception of the work. Lang himself publicly identifies many of the influences in this piece, including that of Deleuze, the Marquis de Sade (who appears in the work), Artaud, and the musical influence of Robert Ashley.¹⁷ Of Lang's repetitive compositional technique, Sabine Sanio writes, 'this technique allows for repetition as an appropriation of reality.'¹⁸ And of the use of loops particularly in the piece Lang has written that *Das Theatre der Wiederholungen* 'used loops exclusively as an instrument of differential features and content, the image of history as inevitable machine of torture.'¹⁹ The intertextual nature of the work, and the central importance of the concept of repetition to its construction, mean that Lang's use of repetition slowly becomes understood as an act of self-quotation as the work proceeds. Only when his material is understood as quoted rather than simply repeated does the nature of historical events become clear: presented as 'quoted' rather than coincidentally or accidentally repeated.

It is often noted about Lang's music that a dialectical relationship is presented between his (perhaps) hypnotic uses of repetition, and the essentiality of repetition to learning and memory. This point was made by Wolfgang Reiter who commented upon it at the premier performance of the work:

Difference, in its turn, makes it possible for us only to progress from the identity of the kind of perception and memory specifically designed [in the piece]. Sophisticated music demands an analytical consciousness, one's on-going intellectual detachment from the immediacy of sound experience.²⁰

And Lang himself describes to what ends this experience might be turned when he says of the work:

In exploring the concept of repetition, of course, this also revealed the dimension of historical repetition, particularly the return to armed violence in the course of human history. Added to this was the political situation in Austria, in the saga of the orderly employment policy in the Third Reich which afforded a new, cynical, connotation to *das Theater des Wiederholungen*. This return of cynical reasoning gave me the impetus to write my first explicitly political piece. (DW2 had exhibited an implicit political connotation).²¹

The result of Lang's use of quotation (of text and of situations), repetition, and his comments upon his own work produces three, or perhaps four, geographies. Three of these are present in the piece: France, America, and Germany (a different psychogeographic Germany from that which represents musical modernism, of course). They are each linked with a time period but also presented as a developmental historical narrative which makes sense in a modernist context. The fourth geography is also Germany, or northern Europe, but it is a present geography. It is represented as the political situation contemporary to the work, understood as a quotation or repetition of previous political situations, and as a place represented by the modernist understanding of music. The intertextuality of Lang's work is therefore best understood as the intersection of these cultural geographies; the final 'text' or present context and cultural geography is necessary to make full sense of the work and its quotations and borrowing practices. In Bourriaud's terms, Lang 'inhabits' his own repetitions.

Unsurprisingly, given Lang's relationship with his work, the use and effect of time in this work can be most effectively understood in Deleuze's terms. Describing the opposition of *Habitus* and *Mnemosyne*, Deleuze writes that, '[h]abit is the originary synthesis of time, which constitutes the life of the passing present; Memory is the fundamental synthesis of time which constitutes the being of the past (that which causes the present to pass).'²² These two dimensions, habit and memory, can be seen to relate to the two dimensions of mechanical and historical repetition in Deleuze's work, and as pointed out in the discussion of the work, this informs the understanding of the political present through quotation and repetition in the past. Deleuze writes that, 'it is as if the past were trapped between two presents: the one which it has been and the one in relation to which it is past,'²³ and then later that, 'it is futile to try to reconstitute the past from the presents between which it is past.'²⁴ In fact, Lang's work is probably best understood as what Deleuze understands from Joachim of Flora as an 'intercyclic repetition,'²⁵ one which refers to future conditions as well as making a present comment on the past. The past, present and future are equally present in Lang's self-quoting repetitive actions. As Deleuze writes, 'in [the] final synthesis of time, the past and present are no more than dimensions of the future.'²⁶

I believe that the most important aspect of the presentation and perception of multiple geographies in these works is that they are relational. Whether part of the piece or a result of the piece's relationship to its context, the presence of such geographies argues for the fluidity of artworks and the unstable nature of their relationship to any particular musical tradition. This relational understanding encourages the idea that what constitutes quotation is also relational to its context. Such examples as those by Mello and Lang discussed here can be read as a constant re-reading and re-writing of the modernist and western avant-garde tradition, since their music engages with both its geography and its language but subverts these using minimalist tropes. These pieces also represent a contemporary approach to quotation and borrowing practices, with both composers 'quoting' or borrowing from their own personal and cultural histories in order to create this subversion. This, then, facilitates a departure from what might be described as the increasingly internal concerns associated with avant-garde composition by the introduction of external elements.

Furthermore, the issue of 'quotation' is compounded in the music of both composers as a result of the use of repetition. Alongside quotation from personal history, 'repetition' in these works becomes a kind of self- or symbolic-quotation, raising questions of musical ownership and authorship, and ultimately of the relationship of the works to a construction of musical time in which quotations are 'past' or historical, and where 'newness' or innovation is present. Repetition itself in both cases references the repetitive nature of constructed and performed traditions: the status of repetition in constructing meaning in popular culture is perhaps undisputed, but within the western classical tradition such repetition is frequently and significantly aligned with the aesthetic formation of the musical canon rather than of its production *per se*.²⁷ As a result, the use of quotation can be understood as a repetition: a repetition both in the sense that performances of existing works are repetitions and in the ritualistic sense that might be linked to such performances.

However, despite standing as symbolic, quotations and repetitions are also subject to a sense of 'ownership' by the composer. It does not matter whether the quoted material is at all familiar or recognisable: the ownership signified is between the composer and the work and does not need to be communicated in the listening experience (just as the

rhythmic material in *Fate at Eight* is able to concurrently signify 'Brazil' for those who are aware of its providence, and 'South America' or perhaps even only 'Latin' for those who are not). The case of quotation is itself secondary to that of cultural ownership by the composer, both the culture signified by the quotation and a symbolic 'taking ownership' of the process of repetition which enables canonical understanding. Hence this approach to quotation can be described as simultaneously contemporary and historical: it is one which can be found, for example, in folk music traditions and consequently marks the difference between, on the one hand, Mello's and Lang's quotations, and the tradition of quoting from folk music styles in classical music on the other: the latter is predicated by a sense of 'otherness'.

Such quotations or references to personal history, in part as a result of their relationship with minimalism and repetition, have the effect of shifting the ownership of Mello and Lang's music from an 'ownership' by the tradition of Western Modernism, which claims them through a performative canonical relationship, to a perceivable personal ownership. This practice of quotation and borrowing shifts the 'time' in which these works are experienced from being placed in an historical timeline which belongs to the Modernist canon to a 'present time' which belongs to the composers themselves. This music therefore confirms a perception of time that does not belong within the Western Modernist tradition. Often quotation and its relationship to tradition is taken as evidence of an internal historical consciousness. Such a thing is important for modernist ideology since it situates works which conform to the notion of being part of a lineage, culture, and psychogeographic landscape. In the music of Lang and Mello this construction is broken down by its inclusion within an atemporal landscape. Indeed, such a perception of time is summarised by Merleau-Ponty in his statement that, 'time is, therefore, not a real procession that I am content to record. It arises from *my* relation to things.'²⁸ The result of these borrowing practices is that 'quotation' from one's own personal history within the constructed history and narrative of Western Modernism becomes the point at which the construction of time within this discourse is revealed. When the 'real time' of such influences meets the temporal discourse of modernism it subsequently breaks down the constructed time of the musical history of which these pieces find themselves part: the time experience they offer is not only that of Kramer's 'vertical time', but a 'vertical history' in which the narrative of time arises from the piece.

A psychogeographical understanding of works has been used here in order to determine the status and effect of quotation and borrowing practices, and to read these works in a wider context – most importantly the reception and ‘placement’ of this music in time (in a narrative of history or tradition) and in space (geography). In particular, their placement within a modernist narrative, situated in northern Europe and particularly Germany, arises more out of geographical proximity than a similarity of musical purpose, but this proximity also allows the two composers to re-appropriate cultural practices such as the use of repetition in canon formation.

In Chico Mello’s work, the trace of his psychogeographic experience of modernism and of place (that place being Germany and Austria) is particularly evident in the assessment of the status of the Brazilian cultural artefacts in his work by others. Brazilian music critic Daniella Thompson writes that Mello finds, ‘greater esthetic expression [sic] in Germany than in his native Curitiba, Brazil.’²⁹ This is something that both Mello, Thompson, and others expect to be the case due to the higher status of Germany in the geographical narrative of modernism. However, while Mello’s music does seem to have been subsumed into the northern European modernist tradition, its content seems to mark it as both musically and psychogeographically different from this tradition. Perhaps what is implied here is that the aesthetic expression of Mello’s Brazilian heritage is also more possible for him at a distance. Implicit within Thompson’s judgement also seems to be a high/low art distinction between what can be perceived as European and Brazilian music. Thompson’s article hails Mello as being one of a select number of artists coming from Curitiba to create something of note despite the place having ‘no indigenous cultural roots.’³⁰ Given the prominence of Brazilian musical signifiers in Mello’s work, this seems strange; to European ears he gives prominence to South American cultural signifiers. Indeed, it seems extremely unlikely that any particular place might have ‘no indigenous cultural roots’ unless one were making a judgement about whether cultural objects are worthwhile or not. In this case, then, Thompson’s article implies that the term ‘culture’ is something which is not indigenous to Curitiba, but instead something must be sought out elsewhere: something which is geographically situated in Europe.

Furthermore, should one wish to pursue this high/low art distinction within Europe, and to consider Mello's quoted sources as a collage within his works, then the following statement by Robert Adlington on the importance of collage in Dutch composer Louis Andriessen's music is of interest: "Collage" and "quotation" works [...] were of course partly a reaction to the emphasis placed on originality and stylistic purity by the fifties' avant-garde. Particularly important, for Andriessen, was the possibility of mixing "high" and "low" musics [...].³¹ So, should Mello's work be considered in this, European *minimalist*, tradition? A psychogeographic placement within the northern European – but outside of the modernist tradition – would imply this, then even within a music where he arguably takes ownership of these influences, he also implicitly downgrades them to the 'low' art end of the spectrum. His placement within the northern European modernist tradition is, in fact, what also provides an argument for the high art status of his music, and its perception as such even by a critic from Brazil, who otherwise affords his own cultural influences no significance or value.

In a similar manner, Lang's psychogeographic placement within the musical modernist tradition—and, for example, his 'physical' musical placement in Darmstadt in 2012—is one which gives credibility to his influences and quotations, despite a perceived lack of such within this tradition but outside his musical treatment of them. Lang's relationship with critical theory is one important element in this construction: in terms of modernist discourse the perception of his music due to this relationship is that it has come from a tradition which is scholarly, considered and serious, and not from one which is 'not serious' (as is the construction of both popular music and minimalism in modernist discourse). Here, again, consideration of a figure from the European minimalist tradition is helpful. Robert Adlington writes that for Andriessen: "The idea that one can "read from the score, from the notes, what is socially progressive and is not [...] is a "mistake" made by "totalitarian thinkers"³² Lang's music essentially proves this statement, having been accepted into the discourse despite its surface features presenting it as something which is not acceptable according to the terms of that discourse.

In order to make some conclusions about the relationship between quotation and geography in the works of these composers, in the course of this discussion I have

considered quotation itself as a reference outward from the music to the listener, and of psychogeography as an inward pressure felt by composers, works, and listeners from places; both are then things which can be perceived as having a direction. But equally, in the cases I have described the quotations have no direction since they both begin and end with the composer. This itself is the definition of the difference in the approach of Lang and Mello to quotation, from what can be considered a more traditional approach within the modernist tradition. This approach can be further described by Deleuze's conclusions about the nature of difference and repetition. As for Bergson, Deleuze notes that,

difference is no longer drawn *from* an elementary repetition but is *between* the levels of degrees of a repetition which is total and totalising every time; it is displaced and disguised from one level to another, each level including its own singularities or privileged points.³³

Indeed, this suggests that there might be a degree of 'quotation-ness' about all musical material, which falls somewhere between outright quotation and a repetition-as-historicity function. As Deleuze writes, 'it is not enough to oppose two repetitions, one bare and material in accordance with the identity and default of the concept, and the other clothed, physical and metaphysical in accordance with the difference and excess of the always positive Idea.'³⁴

Kevin Korsyn describes the 'ideological moment' in any discourse as the one at which the author addresses the discourse itself as the place where meaning is created.³⁵ In Korsyn's words, the author, 'misrecognises the conditions of his own identity and his own knowledge.'³⁶ The points at which both of these composers are accepted into the discourse of modernism can be described, therefore as 'ideological moments,' where those who accept them 'misrecognise' the psychogeographic conditions which cause them to describe Lang or Mello as part of that tradition and discourse. However, the difference created (as a direct result of repeating repetition and quoting repetition) in both cases also means that they reveal what Žižek refers to as the, 'crack in the ideological lie':

in our “post-ideological” era, ideology functions more and more in a fetishistic mode as opposed to the traditional symptomal mode. In the latter mode, the ideological lie which structures our perception of reality is threatened by symptoms *qua* “returns of the repressed”—cracks in the fabric of the ideological lie—while the fetish is effectively a kind of *envers* of the symptom. That is to say, the symptom is the exception which disturbs the surface of the false appearance, the point at which the repressed Other Scene erupts, while the fetish is the embodiment of the Lie which enables us to sustain the unbearable truth.³⁷

This leaves one remaining question: since the music of these composers seems to have been subsumed into a dominant narrative of modernism, in Germany and Austria at least, could minimalism be considered modernist? The arguments for this point of view assume that such postminimalist music as that written by Lang and Mello has been subsumed into the modernist tradition, and that, as touched upon, it is possible for it to reach some of the aims of Western Modernism (e.g. political ones), which some modernist compositions perhaps fail to achieve. An argument against this is that Lang’s and Mello’s music does not accept the history and ideology of the modernist movement, and therefore does not achieve the aims of the modernist project by its own ends: therefore these are not acceptable in the terms of the discourse. Korsyn writes that if, ‘neither text nor context is self-identical, then [...] the attempt to base one’s professional identity on either one can never fully succeed.’³⁸ This non-identical quality of both text and context, revealed by quotation and repetition, is the principle upon which Lang’s and Mello’s works are based, and thus situates them somewhere between a ‘modernist’ and a ‘minimalist’ identity. This raises the question of ideology. The answer to the question ‘are these works ideologically modernist?’ is almost certainly no. However they appear to be psychogeographically modernist due to the discourse’s relationship to them, and the composers’ relationships to their own music. Thus their minimalist influences might be described as an expressive characteristic, an attempt to extend the music’s expressive capabilities (or in Lang’s case political capabilities): a feature European minimalism therefore reveals is lacking in the modernist project itself.

As indicated at the outset, what is not important is the ability to label the musical content of these works as ‘postminimalist’, but the opportunity to understand them as

'journey forms' which exist within overlapping cultural geographies. The result of these psychogeographic experiences is one which might seem better suited to one label or another, but it is the 'journey form' itself, revealed precisely by the quotation and borrowing practices of the composers that enables an understanding of the compositional approaches in context. In this respect, both Mello and Lang can be considered true 'semionauts': their music a representation of complex personal journeys through cultural geographies, personal histories, and musical traditions. Bourriaud's understanding of quotation as something which links inhabiting, using, and giving motion to cultural forms is therefore not only a good descriptor of the borrowing practices in Lang's and Mello's music, but a way to understand the complex uses of repetition in postminimal music as borrowing practices in their own right.

¹ Klangforum Wien are a leading contemporary music group from Austria, whose artistic director is the composer Beat Furrer. They have played an instrumental role in the championing of Austrian contemporary music in the last twenty years. <<http://www.klangforum.at>>

² Each time I refer to 'modernism' in this paper, I will refer to the music of the western avant-garde tradition in Europe, a tradition which considers its conception in the Second Viennese School, and which can be said to embrace the ideologies of musical progress and utopia. As a result, 'modernism' becomes a necessarily wide and perhaps vague term, but as this article progresses it may become clear that there is no single, unifying, term to bring together this body of music and its composers; geography, or experience of geography, may indeed be the unifying factor. Similarly, by 'minimalism' I will refer to a compositional style in which repetition and protracted experiences of time are common and which (in Europe) is geographically centred in the Netherlands.

³ Guy Debord, (1955). Introduction to a Critique of Urban Geography. Les Lèvres Neus. 6. Retrieved from <http://library.nothingness.org/articles/SI/en/display/2>.

⁴ Sadie Plant. (1992). The Most Radical Gesture: The Situationist International in a Postmodern Age. London: Routledge. 58.

⁵ These features show themselves to be particularly *European* in their immediate links with political and extra-musical sources, and in their instrumentally- rather than technologically-driven role within the music. They show themselves to be particularly *postminimal* in their application of minimalist processes to larger sections and the overall forms of their works as well as their materials. Both of these points will be discussed in more detail below.

⁶ Hubert F. van den Berg. (2009) Avant-garde: Some Introductory Notes on the Politics of a Label. In: Robert Adlington, ed. (2009) *Sound Commitments: Avant-garde Music and the Sixties*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 15-36; 16.

⁷ *ibid.* 17.

⁸ *ibid.* 18.

⁹ Bourriaud identifies three types of quotations, which distinguish between different types of outcomes rather than just the re-placing of something in a new context: the first of these he calls quotation or 'citation', the familiar act of placing something 'in quotation marks'; the second outcome he calls 'inhabiting'; the third he calls 'using forms' – sampling or using it to make a comment in a way which is wholly dependent on its new context even to the extent of erasing its previous identity. These categories are not discrete but are useful in demarcating the different possible reasons for, and uses of, quotation, and also lay some emphasis on reading the motivation of the author as well as the function of the quotation in its new context. Nicolas Bourriaud. (2005) *Postproduction: Culture as Screenplay: How Art Reprogrammes the World*. Berlin: Lukas & Sternberg. 9; 32-33; 15 and 85-94.

¹⁰ Nicholas Bourriaud. (2010) *The Radicant*. New York: Lukas & Sternberg. 106-131.

¹¹ *ibid.* 184.

¹² *ibid.* 113.

¹³ *ibid.* p117.

¹⁴ Jonathan D. Kramer. (2002) The Nature and Origins of Musical Postmodernism. In: Judy Lochhead, ed. (2000) *Postmodern Music/ Postmodern Thought*. New York: Routledge. 13-26; 18.

¹⁵ Jonathan D. Kramer. (1981) New Temporalities in Music. *Critical Inquiry*. 7 (3), 539-556; 549.

¹⁶ Charles A Perrone. (2002) Nationalism, Dissension and Politics in Contemporary Brazilian Popular Music. *Luso-Brazilian Review*, 39 (1), 65-78; 65.

- ¹⁷ Bernhard Lang. (19.01.2009) 'Das Theater des Wiederholungen: Revisited' *Abstract zu Vorelsung an der Universität Wien*. Retrieved from <http://members.chello.at/~bernhard.lang/>.
- ¹⁸ Sabine Sanio. (n.d.) *Improvisieren, Komponieren, Schreiben: Über die Musick von Bernhard Lang*. Retrieved from <http://members.chello.at/~bernhard.lang/>. ['Diese Technik der Wiederholung als Aneignung von Wirklichkeit ermöglicht.']
- ¹⁹ Bernhard Lang. (n.d.) *The Difference Engine: Über machinelles Musikdenken und der Begriff der Musikalischen Monadologien*. Retrieved from <http://members.chello.at/~bernhard.lang/>. ['Das TDW verwendet ausschließlich Loops als Instrument der Differenz und zeichnet inhaltlich das Bild der Geschichte als unausweichliche Maschine der Folter.']
- ²⁰ Wolfgang Reiter. (2002) *Das Theater der Wiederholungen, Musiktheater von Bernhard Lang*. Retrieved from http://members.chello.at/bernhard.lang/werkbeschreib/ueber_theaterwiederh_reiter.htm. ['Die Differenz wiederum macht es uns erst möglich, von der Identität des Gleichen zur Wahrnehmung und Erinnerung einer bestimmten Gestalt fortzuschreiten. Differenzierte Musik verlangt analytisches Bewusstsein, ein sich fortwährendes intellektuelles Loslösen von der Unmittelbarkeit der primären Klangerfahrung.']
- ²¹ Bernhard Lang. (n.d.) *The Difference Engine: Über machinelles Musikdenken und der Begriff der Musikalischen Monadologien*. Retrieved from <http://members.chello.at/~bernhard.lang/>. ['In der Erforschung des Wiederholungs-Begriffes ergab sich natürlich auch die Dimension der historischen Wiederholung, besonders der Wiederkehr der kriegerischen Gewalt im Lauf der menschlichen Geschichte. Hinzu kam die politische Situation in Österreich, innerhalb der die Sage von der ordentlichen Beschäftigungspolitik im Dritten Reich dem Theater der Wiederholungen eine neue, zynische Konnotation verlieh. Diese Rückkehr der zynischen Vernunft gab mir den Impuls, mein erstes explizit politisches Stück zu schreiben. (DW2 hatte bereits eine implizite politische Konnotation aufzuweisen).']
- ²² Gilles Deleuze. (2011) *Difference and Repetition*. Paul Patton, trans. London: Continuum. 101.
- ²³ *ibid.*
- ²⁴ *ibid.* 103.
- ²⁵ *ibid.* 116.
- ²⁶ *ibid.* 117.
- ²⁷ cf. William Weber. (1994) The Intellectual Origins of Musical Canon in Eighteenth Century England. *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 47 (3), 488-520.
- ²⁸ Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1962) *Phenomenology of Perception*. Colin Smith, trans. London: Routledge and Keegan Paul. 411-12.
- ²⁹ Daniella Thompson. (December 2000) Song of the South: How a City with no Indigenous Cultural Roots is Creating a Musical Legacy. *Brazzil*. Retrieved from <http://www.brazzil.com/musdecoo.htm>.
- ³⁰ *ibid.*
- ³¹ Robert Adlington. (2004) *De Staat, Volume 1*. Aldershot: Ashgate. 9.
- ³² Andriessen and Schönberger (1979) in Adlington. (2004) 116.
- ³³ Deleuze. 358.
- ³⁴ *ibid.* 361.
- ³⁵ Kevin Korsyn. (2003) The Formation of Disciplinary Identities. *Decentering Music: A Critique of Contemporary Musical Research*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 61-90.
- ³⁶ *ibid.* 71. (Writing specifically about Kramer).

³⁷ Slavoj Žižek. (2009) *First as Tragedy, Then as Farce*. London: Verso. 65.

³⁸ Korsyn. 85.