

# Introduction

The perspective assumed here is determined by two main points of interests: the theory of culture and particular field of the cultural analysis of music. The former will remain a central topic, while the latter will come into question only marginally, although searching for tools allowing for better explanation of specific phenomena of musical culture is my main and personal motivation.

Anybody who deals with culture, as long as he or she is not blinded by some kind of theoretical dogma or prejudice, meets time as the necessary dimension of every cultural process. We use the word “history” to name a way in which a scholar of human affairs deals with time. Theory of culture then is always lurking on the border of history and vice versa. This crossing has some bad tradition though, founded mainly by Philipp Bagby: the theoretician considers history to be not ordered enough, not enough suited to the particular needs of theory, not theoretical enough. In effect this theoretician feels obliged to instruct the historian how history should be “properly” practiced.

Here I assume exactly the opposite strategy. The theoretical aspect of history is, I believe, deep and effective, and it lies in a multitude of important theoretical consequences of the historian’s work. I’m not searching, then, for “proper” or “correct” model of history. Everything’s all right with history. Instead I’d like to examine the said consequences of historians’ ideas for a theoretical understanding of culture. To confront theory and the history of culture is of course not an astonishingly new idea, although such a confrontation rarely has followed the line I have proposed above. This is but a kind of work that needs to be periodically taken anew: without searching for theoretical consequences, the potential of history cannot be

fully realized, just like theory of culture not grounded in history is always in danger of degenerating into a set of empty conceptual operations. Such a confrontation must of course start with probably the most influential historiographic tradition of the last century: the French history of mentality.