

Symposium on "Rand, Rush, and Rock"

Replies to Chris Matthew Sciabarra's Fall 2002 article

Concerning the Politics of Prog

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Chris Matthew Sciabarra's "Rand, Rush, and Rock" (*The Journal of Ayn Rand Studies*, Fall 2002) raises two important questions concerning progressive rock—the epic, visionary rock style of the seventies of which Rush were arguably the most important North American practitioners. The first question: Is the increasingly conventional wisdom about progressive rock correct? Did it emerge out of a background that was favorably disposed (if not actively involved in forwarding) the Left's political ideology? And the second question: Is the progressive rock style, in its structuring of musical elements and its distinctive visual iconography and thematic subject matter, somehow inextricably linked to left-wing ideology?

In one sense, the first question can be answered fairly quickly: Yes, as a product of the British hippie subculture, progressive rock emerged out of a cultural background in which ideology of the Left was more or less pervasive. This is what I stated in my seminal study of the genre, *Rocking the Classics: English Progressive Rock and the Counterculture* (Macan 1997). I have encountered nothing since writing the book that would make me essentially change my view—although, as I will note below in an attempt to bring greater nuance to the earlier expression of my view, the politics of the counterculture out of which progressive rock sprang were never monolithic, or without self-contradictory tendencies.

Furthermore, just because a given musical style has emerged from a cultural background in which specific political ideologies are endemic, it does not necessarily follow that the musical style in

question will serve as a propaganda mouthpiece (or even as an advocacy vehicle) for the political ideologies of the parent culture. So there are more interesting and significant questions that we might choose to address. Is progressive rock a "political" music? If so, in what sense is it "political"? Did its creators intend to convey a coherent political viewpoint, and should we look for the meaning of progressive rock in its politics—assuming we can discern what its politics are? If not, where should we attempt to find meaning in progressive rock? If we can't discern a coherent political viewpoint in progressive rock (or, at least, in a given progressive rock piece), does that imply that progressive rock has no political dimension? It is these questions that I will spend the major portion of this article addressing. Once I have answered these questions, I will be able to address the second question raised by Sciabarra—whether progressive rock is inextricably intertwined with left-wing ideology—fairly quickly.

When I wrote *Rocking the Classics*, the first full-length scholarly study of progressive rock (published in November 1996), I approached the subject from a musical and historical point of view. I am, after all, a musicologist with some training in the historian's methodology; I am not a philosopher or a cultural theorist, and contrary to Sciabarra's suggestion (Sciabarra 2002, 175), I did not approach the subject with a political or philosophical axe to grind. I pointed to the obvious—British progressive rock is a historical product of the British counterculture, and as such, is steeped in the political, philosophical, and spiritual ideologies and assumptions of the subculture that spawned it. Since my book was a pioneering effort that sought to establish the parameters of what might be called "progressive rock studies," my discussion of the genre's political ramifications—indeed, my discussion of many aspects of the genre—were necessarily incomplete and not definitive.¹ I did not address the question of whether prog, by the very nature of its musical structure, iconography and literary conventions, was necessarily wedded to left-wing ideology.

Hard on the heels of *Rocking the Classics* came two other major studies of progressive rock: Paul Stump's *The Music's All That Matters:*

A History of Progressive Rock (1997) and Bill Martin's *Listening to the Future: The Time of Progressive Rock, 1968–1978* (1998). Stump, a professional music critic, assumes the connection between progressive rock and countercultural ideology, going so far, as Sciabarra (2002, 169–70) notes, to blame the decline and fall of progressive rock as a style on the rise of the New Right. This view represents, at best, a serious oversimplification. Prog as a musical style began its decline at least three or four years before Margaret Thatcher was elected prime minister; I think it's more accurate to say the decline of prog resulted from a natural playing out of the style's possibilities, in tandem with a loss of faith in the countercultural agenda, both among its musical spokespersons and among a goodly segment of its audience.² Nonetheless, there is much of value in Stump's book: for instance, I think his suggestion that the record companies cut the roots out from underneath the prog style by funneling all their money into the megabands (Emerson, Lake and Palmer [ELP], Yes, etc.) and declining to sign young progressive talent during the early-to-mid-1970s is entirely plausible. I was also grateful that Stump demonstrated that prog was not simply a product of the British middle class (an assumption I had too easily fallen prey to), but the product of a "polyacracy" with working class, lower middle class, and privileged upper middle class participation (Stump 1997, 48).

Stump's book came out too soon after mine for him to have been aware of my work at the time he was writing his; the same is not true, however, of Bill Martin's *Listening to the Future*, which extensively engages *Rocking the Classics*. I am grateful, above all, for the way in which Martin, by focusing on some of my suppositions concerning the ideological background of prog, has forced me to think more deeply about the relationship between progressive rock and countercultural ideology, and to formulate my views with more nuance. While Martin, a cultural theorist and Marxist philosopher, found some areas of agreement with my arguments, he felt that I greatly underemphasized the impact of Marxist (or at least Leftist) thought on progressive rock. So I will begin my discussion here by addressing two questions that will doubtless be of interest both to Martin and Sciabarra: Was progressive rock a "political" music? And if so, in

precisely what sense was it "political"?

While I never called progressive rock "apolitical" in *Rocking the Classics*, something that Martin's prose seems to suggest (Martin 1998, 146), he is probably correct to suggest that I didn't sufficiently emphasize the genre's political dimension:

The late sixties was a time when the whole world was rocking, and even if there is a certain insular, middle-class perspective on what a "nicer" sixties would have been, recovered now as pure fashion and without the conflict and struggle of the period, and even if there is a peculiarly "English" gloss on this that is especially insulated (the "island life" again), this does not sever the basic connection between flower power and power to the people. (147)

As a cursory reading of many secondary sources from the late sixties and early seventies demonstrates, rock music of the time clearly did have a political dimension, and progressive rock was no exception. As I pointed out in *Rocking the Classics*, progressive rock *was* political in its insistence on lifestyle as a form of political statement, and its conviction (derived from both romanticism and modernism) that music (and by extension, all Art) is potentially a powerful tool of political change. Allow me to quote Robert Fripp, guitarist of King Crimson, who has expressed the "music as revolution" concept as eloquently as anyone I know of:

Music is a high-order language system, i.e., it is a meta-language. The function of a meta-language is to express solutions to problems posed on a lower-order language system . . . if one were interested in political change one would not enter political life, one would go into music. (Tamm 1990, 128)

What I may not have sufficiently emphasized in *Rocking the Classics* is how keenly aware both rock audiences and rock detractors of the period were of rock's political dimension. For instance, consider this

anonymously written letter to the editor printed on page nine of the March 1972 issue of rock magazine *Circus*, an issue, incidentally, which contained an extensive interview with progressive rock icons Emerson, Lake and Palmer:

It is my duty as a parent to see that my children grow mentally as well as physically. That they have respect for all people and grow to be useful citizens. Three of my children, I know, are going to benefit from my teachings and love. But somehow I have lost my sixteen-year old son, Robert. He has turned to the world of drugs and Communism.

This is not my fault. It is mostly the fault of these Communist magazines such as *Circus* and countless others. I have read some issues of *Circus* when my son wasn't around. In them I saw filthy, long-haired creatures. And to think my child took their way of life instead of the life of a good American . . .

And on it goes. The point is, to this concerned parent of 1972, the link between rock music, drugs, and Leftist politics was self-evident. Now, we could turn this letter into an interesting case study that would go far beyond the confines of this short article. We could certainly ponder to what degree Robert's lifestyle simply reflected a youthful hedonism totally devoid of any political viewpoint. Or we could wonder whether his lifestyle might represent a purely instinctive reaction against social, religious, and political institutions that seemed to him to be increasingly sterile and out-of-touch. We could consider what, if any, core political beliefs the different musicians featured in *Circus* really held in common. We could wonder, too, if by Communist the concerned parent really meant "leftist," and whether the writer understood (or cared about) the distinction. However, the fact remains that for this person, who saw the Establishment not as repressive, imperialist, and militaristic but as a protector of God-given social order and old-fashioned American values of patriotism and hard work, rock music was part and parcel of the counterculture's

Communist-inspired political attack on the American Way of Life. To this person, progressive rock (or any other rock style of the era, for that matter), was not “apolitical” at all, but had deeply political dimensions.

It must also be admitted, in defense of the general accuracy with which our letter-writer grasped the situation, that much progressive rock of the time did evince anti-authoritarian and anti-Establishment sentiments of a vaguely Leftist cast. The concern for the Establishment’s potential misuse of technology evident, for instance, on the debut ELP album certainly echoes countercultural concerns, although it must be pointed out that this concern has been expressed by some members of the Right as well (certainly by Ayn Rand in *Atlas Shrugged*—think of the “Project X” episode). The flip side of this anti-technological bent, an incipient ecological consciousness, marks Yes’s three “classic” albums of 1971–72. The anti-war theme of ELP’s *Tarkus* had “political” ramifications circa 1971 that would have been construed as Leftist by contemporaneous observers (although, again, there were isolated figures on the Right who had always been opposed to the Vietnam War), and the album’s surreal cover (which, at this early stage, still suggested a clear link to hallucinogens) would have been seen as validating countercultural values. So would the album’s agnostic musings (although, again, atheism was central to Ayn Rand’s Objectivism). The quest for enlightenment, for transcendent spiritual experience that characterizes *The Endless Enigma* suite by Emerson, Lake and Palmer or Yes’s *Close to the Edge* can only be understood in the context of countercultural spirituality and mysticism, with its Eastern influences (or Eastern trappings, in the view of some).

However, while it is accurate to say that progressive rock circa 1970–75 reflects some of the broad tendencies of countercultural thinking, it is more from a “philosophical” than an explicitly “political” perspective. I certainly believe that many progressive musicians of the era heartily believed the sixties axiom, “When the mode of the music changes, the walls of the city shake” (see Stump 1997, 16–17). However, desiring political and cultural transformation, or even using one’s art to agitate for political and cultural transformation, is not the

same thing as articulating a coherent agenda for political and cultural transformation. What I was arguing against in *Rocking the Classics* was the notion that progressive rock was propagating some kind of systematic political agenda or ideology. In this respect, I still believe I am correct, both about progressive rock and about rock circa 1970–75 at large, and it is here, I think, that the example of Richard Wagner is instructive.

During the second half of the nineteenth century, particularly between 1880 and 1910, Wagner’s epic music dramas exerted a profound influence on the European cultural landscape. In particular, his enormous *Ring of the Nibelung* cycle (four interlocking music dramas, each about four hours in length) impacted poets (the French symbolist and decadent movements were both inspired by Wagner), philosophers (Nietzsche, in particular), playwrights (George Bernard Shaw), visual artists (Gustav Moreau), and nearly every major composer of the era. There is no doubt that the potent and not entirely healthy strain of German nationalism energizing the music dramas exerted a powerful influence on contemporaneous cultural politics. The term “Wagnerism” was coined to describe the presumed philosophical-political-musical-dramatic “message” of Wagner’s music dramas. Certainly Wagner, a man of unlimited ego, saw himself as a major philosopher and a political figure of great consequence: he was angry, for instance, when Bismarck snubbed him in the era following Germany’s unification.

Yet, as William Weber and the other contributors to the magisterial *Wagnerism in European Culture and Politics* have pointed out, Wagner’s political and philosophical “message” was so distended, jumbled, and ultimately self-contradictory that there is simply no way to define “Wagnerism” in terms of a unified system of either philosophical tenets or political beliefs (see especially Weber 1984, 28–71). In *Rocking the Classics*, I describe progressive rock in terms of what social theorists call a *bricolage*, that is, a loose compound of different elements held together by interdependence, affinity, analogy, and aesthetic similarity:

... progressive rock’s amalgamation of rhythm-and-blues,

folk styles, classical music, science fiction and fantasy iconography, surreal verse, and Eastern mysticism might at first seem illogical; however, a central goal of this book will be exploring the very specific ways in which the component elements of this bricolage interlock to convey well-defined worldviews and lifestyles. (Macan 1997, 5)

Wagnerism was also a *bricolage* of sorts. Wagner's music dramas were so huge and took in so many elements—some of them mutually incompatible—that they were ultimately like a huge mirror, allowing the beholder to see whatever he or she came expecting to see. It is for this reason that a Fabian Socialist like George Bernard Shaw and an extremist racist nationalist like Adolf Hitler could evaluate *The Ring* in utterly contradictory terms—Shaw saw it as a parable of capitalism's corrosive effects on class relations in nineteenth-century Europe, Hitler as a parable of the trials and tribulations of the German *Volk* as they struggle on toward their glorious destiny—without necessarily misrepresenting it. What makes Wagner's music dramas cohere into a meaningful experience is not their supposed philosophical or political "message," but rather their dramatic panache and profound aesthetic and musical unity. It is in the realm of aesthetics and musical style that the essence of Wagnerism is to be located.

As the reader has probably guessed, I see a significant parallel between progressive rock and Wagner's music dramas. As I demonstrated in chapter two through four of *Rocking the Classics*, there is an interrelated set of musical, visual, and literary conventions that govern progressive rock and enable it to cohere as a distinctive genre of music. Furthermore, progressive rock drew on disparate but complimentary elements of romanticism and modernism to develop a coherent aesthetic stance that emphasizes specific notions of individuality, idealism, authenticity, and art-as-transcendence. It is when we reach areas of philosophy and above all politics that I grow less comfortable speaking of a distinctive progressive rock ideology.

Granted, as we've already seen, there are certain topical preoccupations that progressive rock returns to again and again. The music

of ELP, for instance, at various times addresses technological ethics and "progress," militarism, alienation (of both an individual and a social nature), and the quest for spiritual transcendence. If we were to turn to other progressive rock acts, we could identify additional preoccupations (the holistic, environmentalist concerns of Yes, for instance). Therefore, I'm not totally uncomfortable speaking of progressive rock's philosophical "message"—as long as it's understood the "message" is a loosely-linked network of attitudes, ideas, and issues, not a coherent philosophical system *per se*.

However, I am considerably less comfortable speaking about progressive rock's political "message" other than in very, very general terms. As I noted above, some of the issues grappled with by progressive rock bands—such as a pervasive fear that the military-industrial complex would use the technology at its disposal unwisely—were as of much concern to Rand and others on the Right as they were to those of the Left. Bill Martin (1998, 65–66) sees the counterculture as being deeply impacted by contemporaneous Marxist and post-Marxist thought, and points especially to the influence of Herbert Marcuse. While I do not deny such influence on the counterculture, I think it is a more open question whether it was central to the hippie movement—which is not, incidentally, exactly analogous to the counterculture, although it's an important cultural manifestation of it—out of which progressive rock sprang. I certainly think it is an open question whether Marxist lines of thought are central to the progressive rock canon.

For instance, if progressive rock is really closely allied with Marxist thought, does this mean we can extrapolate from "Mass" (a section of *Tarkus*) how ELP felt about the issue of secular governments granting religious institutions tax-free status? Does Yes's "And You and I" give us insight into how that band felt about nationalizing private land as a step toward promoting environmental well-being? Does Genesis's "Selling England by the Pound" clue us in to that band's views about taxation as a tool for redistributing wealth? If the reader says "of course not—they probably never even thought about these issues anywhere near this specifically," then my reply is this: Now you see more precisely in what sense progressive

rock is *not* explicitly political. If progressive rock really had a political ideology, especially in Marxist terms, these are issues these bands could be expected to address in a more or less explicit manner. The fact that they did not, with rare exceptions such as Henry Cow proving the rule, demonstrates, I think that progressive rock's contributions to the cultural discourse of its era was not primarily political. This is why I fundamentally disagree with Bill Martin when he says:

While Macan would recover the aesthetic and perhaps "philosophical" value of progressive rock and discard the "political" aspects of this particular expression of the counterculture, I would argue that there are "political" meanings to progressive rock that have yet to be fully understood. (148)

I hope that my analogy between progressive rock and Wagner's music dramas has demonstrated to the reader that progressive rock's impact on its time was due *precisely* to its aesthetic and philosophical value. It's not so much that I want to "discard" the political aspects of progressive rock; rather, I'm convinced that, at the end of the day, there is no clearly definable progressive rock political ideology.

I would even go so far to say that one would have difficulty positing a clearly defined hippie political ideology. In my upcoming musical biography of Emerson, Lake and Palmer, I argue that the hippie movement is a more or less spontaneous religious (or spiritual) movement with communitarian and collectivist impulses. Like Jacques Barzun (2000, 265), I see the hippie movement having more in common with the radical Christian collectivist sects of mid-seventeenth-century England (the Ranters, the Familiasts) and nineteenth-century utopian communities than with Marxist-inspired movements of 1920–65 in Western countries.

Furthermore, Nick Bromell (2000, 130–32) in one of the more carefully argued analyses of hippie politics I have read, argues that in the development of Bob Dylan's music, one can see a transition from the politics of the traditional Left (in his early, folk-song period), with

an emphasis on action on behalf of specific oppressed groups, to the politics of the New Left, a kind of radical politics with anarchist overtones that Bromell sees as characteristic of hippie politics (so much as there was a "hippie politics"). According to Bromell, Dylan—in his *Blonde on Blonde* and *Highway 61 Revisited* period—projects this new kind of quasi-anarchist, hallucinogen-inspired politics. Experimentation with psychedelics had led the hippie to a feeling that his very consciousness was shackled by a burdensome network of political, social, and intellectual conventions, and therefore led him to struggle for his own freedom from all these "shackles" in unity with anyone else whom he perceived to share the burden of oppression. The anarchist element that Bromell perceives in hippie politics is certainly reminiscent of the seventeenth century Christian collectivist groups that I see as the hippie movement's forerunners.

And, of course, Sciabarra, who builds especially on the arguments of Durrell Bowman, points to the Ayn Rand-influenced libertarianism that is so evident in the music of Rush (especially their music of the mid-seventies through the early eighties) as proof that not only does Randian Objectivism adapt comfortably to the progressive style, it addresses a number of concerns that have traditionally been assumed to be the province of the Left. I do not argue against the notion that a strain of libertarianism analogous to Rand's was probably present in incipient form in the hippie movement; I would caution that it was not fully evident until after the dissolution of the hippie movement around 1970, that is, after progressive rock had already emerged as a full-blown style. Interestingly, where I see this strain of libertarianism in its most unselfconscious and unobtrusive form is in some of the pronouncements of hard rock/early metal icons of the seventies such as Ted Nugent and Ozzy Osbourne.

In sum: the "politics" of the hippie movement—not to mention the "politics" of progressive rock—are not monolithic, are nowhere systematically articulated, are not necessarily coherent, and are certainly far from being understood. It is true there are certain topics and concerns that recur again and again in prog (as they recurred again and again in hippie thought). Such themes were addressed from a multiplicity of perspectives in which Romantic and Modernist

aesthetics, a plethora of “religious” and “spiritual” currents (of which various Eastern schools of thought are most prominent) that defy easy political categorization, and, as we’ve seen, various strains of Marxism, anarchism, and libertarianism—some of them contradictory or mutually exclusive—all play a role.

To quickly summarize my answers to the rhetorical questions I raised at the beginning of this article: In the sense that it usually doesn’t project a precise or coherent political viewpoint, progressive rock is seldom an explicitly “political” music. Its “meanings” are above all a function of its aesthetic stance, where an emphasis on specific notions of individuality, authenticity, idealism and art-as-transcendence cohere into a fairly specific set of values and philosophical attitudes towards life. While progressive rock seldom projects a definite or coherent political viewpoint—and is seldom intended to by its creators—it does in fact have a deeply political dimension. It addresses important issues concerning social relations, technological ethics, spiritual rootedness, etc., from the perspective of its more-or-less clearly defined aesthetic philosophy—which is, of course, of political consequence. However, a common values system or philosophical perspective does not inevitably lead people to embrace a common political viewpoint, or to insist on a common political prescription to a given issue. So, let’s close by examining the second question raised by Sciabarra’s “Rand, Rush, and Rock”: Is the progressive rock style, in its characteristic structuring of musical elements, visual iconography, and literary themes, somehow inextricably linked to left-wing ideology?

As the reader has probably guessed by now, my answer to this question is an unambiguous “no.” As I said above, the hippie movement itself was informed by a number of countervailing currents, some of them contradictory, and there were basic issues about which the hippie movement (indeed, the larger counterculture) could never agree. For instance, how to reconcile the counterculture’s collectivist tendencies with its strong emphasis on the essentiality of individual freedom of viewpoint and expression? After all, Rush were not the only progressive rock band to champion “rugged individualism”: Emerson, Lake and Palmer’s masterpiece, *Brain Salad*

Surgery, is at its roots about the potential of modern electronic media, in the hands of a manipulative, increasingly totalitarian and coercive government-media complex, to undermine individuality and subtly create conformity and uniformity, “robotized” human beings, via an endless and mind-numbing stream of hyperreal “entertainment.”³

In fact, I would argue that the political importance of progressive rock is not that it propagandizes on behalf of a political ideology, either Left or Right, or even that it advocates a particular political worldview. Rather, in keeping with its Romantic ethos of transcendence, progressive rock subjects philosophical, cultural, and social opposites to a Hegelian synthesis. As such, its politics might justifiably be called “utopian.” I’m not sure Rand would approve of the attempt. Although I’m not sure she ever explicitly rejected Hegel’s thesis-antithesis-synthesis concept, the foundation of her Objectivist philosophy is that A is A, and if a contradiction appears to exist, one of two competing premises must be incorrect and therefore should be eliminated. In *Atlas Shrugged*, there was to be no splitting the difference between the politics of John Galt and Wesley Mouch; their competing perspectives could not be synthesized, because (in Rand’s view), one perspective was rational, the other, irrational. There was no viable middle ground.

The counterculture, by contrast, intentionally eschewed the kind of rigorous logic championed by Rand. Like sixteenth and seventeenth-century hermeticists and nineteenth-century Romantics, the counterculture’s tendency towards arcane, symbolic language and enigmatic pictures masked a profound skepticism about the expressive possibilities of literal language; there was a widespread belief throughout the sixties counterculture that Western civilization’s post-Enlightenment “worship” of rationality had squeezed out intuition and had seriously undermined the balance between mind and heart, reason and emotion. Not surprisingly, in their attempts to restore the balance between the two dualities (at this point, Rush fans are probably involuntarily reminded of the band’s progressive rock masterpiece, “Cygnus X-1, Book II” from *Hemispheres*), the counterculture had no philosophical difficulty with attempting to reconcile apparently irreconcilable dualities. What’s rather amazing about prog

is how many of the tensions existing within or of deep concern to the counterculture are submitted to an apparently subconscious synthesis in the progressive rock style. For instance, as I argue in *Rocking the Classics*, in progressive rock, the tension between individuality and collectivism is reconciled by the tendency towards *collective virtuosity*—in theory, all the members of a progressive rock band are given the freedom to express their virtuosity, hopefully without getting in each other's way, so that no one is a "star," on the one hand, or a mere backing musician, on the other.

Likewise, progressive rock synthesizes high culture with low culture; African-American musical traditions with European classical music; instrumentation (and subject matter) of a post-industrial technocratic future with that of an idyllic agrarian past; rational, right-brain composition with intuitive, left-brain improvisation; heavy, "masculine" hard rock with gentle, "feminine" acoustic passages. Each of these pairs of opposites can be seen as symbolic of tensions existing in twentieth-century Western society that affected or concerned the counterculture.⁴ In progressive rock, the merging of some of these paired opposites produces a genuine synthesis in the Hegelian sense (i.e., the progressive rock style itself as a fusion of high and low culture, of European classical and African-American musical discourses). Other pairs of opposites resist the attempts at synthesis. Perhaps a true synthesis of some of these dualities was simply impossible; or perhaps, during the time of progressive rock, the historical condition was not yet ripe for the thesis-antithesis relationship between the two opposites to fully play itself out.

If one accepts this Hegelian view of progressive rock, perhaps it isn't too far-fetched to say that the "politics of prog" are neither apolitical nor political in a narrow sense, but project a kind of post-Left/Right utopian perspective. Even when it projects grim dystopias (Emerson, Lake and Palmer's *Brain Salad Surgery* or Rush's *2112* come to mind), prog remains idealistic and visionary; the style is never cynical, and its warnings of disaster seldom come without an implied pathway of deliverance. In this sense, progressive rock and Rand share the bond of idealism; what is *Atlas Shrugged* if not a dystopian novel that offers a utopian alternative? Ultimately, the

utopian politics of prog, while showing awareness of the struggles and difficulties of the present, project idealized worlds where these struggles and difficulties have been overcome, a world where current definitions of, and differences between, Left and Right have been, not papered over, but transcended.

Notes

1. When I speak of the "parameters of progressive rock studies," I am speaking of my attempt to define progressive rock as (a) a distinct musical style, (b) a kind of *Gesamtkunstwerk* ("complete" or "unified artwork") with recurring thematic subject matter and distinctive visual iconography and versification, (c) a distinct historical/cultural phenomenon rooted in late sixties hippie culture, and (d) a distinct sociological phenomenon attached to a demographically definable fan base. As such, it was necessary for me to combine traditional musicological approaches, which focus on experiencing the musical text as an autonomous, self-sufficient entity, with the kind of popular music scholarship practiced by cultural theorists (which "reads" the musical text for its cultural significance) and sociologists (which focuses on fan demographics, record industry patterns, etc.). Readers wanting a fuller explanation of the "parameters" of progressive rock studies, as I attempted to define them in *Rocking the Classics*, are directed to the book's introduction (Macan 1997, 3–14).

2. It is, of course, this loss of faith in the countercultural agenda that made the rise of the New Right possible.

3. A subtext of *Brain Salad Surgery* is the anxiety, very prominent in hippie circles, that even as people are being de-humanized by bureaucracies (which reduce them to a mere number, an abstraction), and by technology (we often become so dependent on technology that we seem to be at its service as much as it is at ours), technology, especially in the form of computers, is becoming frighteningly omniscient and "human." This is a concern that can be traced back to the nineteenth century (Samuel Butler's *Erewhon* is the first manifestation of this concern that I'm aware of), one that transcends the Left/Right political divide.

4. Not everyone has understood that I use these pairings as symbolic archetypes, not as essentialist categories. In answer to Matthew Graybosch and Karen Michalson (see Scibarra 2002, 178–79 n. 7), who criticize my use of an Apollonian-Dionysian binary in *Rocking the Classics* I would say this: I use these categories (and other pairings) simply to point up tensions that exist within the values framework of the sixties counterculture. I think most would agree that categories such as "Apollonian," "feminine," and "technocratic" do capture or depict tendencies, states of being, or values that to a greater or lesser degree are grounded in our experience of reality. However, I do not claim that there is a literal objective dividing point between say, Apollonian and Dionysian impulses (or "masculine" and "feminine" or "high culture" and "low culture," etc.). As to Graybosch's and Michalson's criticism that I do not apply the Apollonian/Dionysian duality carefully enough to specific sub-genres of progressive rock or heavy metal, I would respond: (1) In *Rocking the Classics*, I was talking about seventies metal as the context makes

clear (see Macan 1997, 83); and (2) there is no sub-genre of progressive rock that I would consider Dionysian in outlook.

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